



## LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Contents

#### Page Number

2. Introduction
3. Aims & Objectives
4. School Ethos
5. Legislative Links  
Links with other Key Policies
6. Definition of Bullying  
Diversity & Inclusion  
Artificial Intelligence (AI)
7. Protected Characteristics  
Baiting
8. Banter  
False Friendships
9. Derogatory Language  
Forms of Bullying
11. Roles & Responsibilities
12. Involvement of Students  
Involvement of Parents / Carers
13. Bystanders  
Classroom Management
14. Bullying Outside of school  
Signs & Symptoms
15. Preventing Bullying
17. Reporting & Responding to Bullying
18. The School's Response
19. What should Students do if they are being Bullied?  
What should Students do if they know someone else is being Bullied?
20. Supporting Students  
Supporting Adults
21. Monitoring & Review  
Useful Links & Support Organisations

This policy will be reviewed at least annually, and following any concerns and/or updates to national/local guidance or procedures

Date Created: July 1996

Previous Review Date: January 2024

Next Review Date: **November** 2025

## **INTRODUCTION**

This policy is based on DfE guidance “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance “Keeping Children Safe in Education”.

Learning Opportunities has signed up to the ‘United Against Bullying’ programme run by the Anti-Bullying Alliance. The overall aim of the programme is to establish United Against Bullying Schools. As part of this programme, we will evidence our work to reduce bullying and improving the wellbeing of all students. The first step has been to complete a baseline audit and for students to complete a questionnaire. During 2024 we will be developing and implementing our action plan.

In developing our anti-bullying policy and response, we have taken account of the Anti-Bullying Alliance guidance. This has included:

- Talking to students, parents, carers and staff about what the issues are and agreeing what is meant by bullying.
- Setting clear boundaries and making sure these are understood by all students and staff.
- Agreeing ways in which everyone can be involved in challenging bullying behaviour.
- Agreeing how to best respond to bullying incidents.

Learning Opportunities promotes values which reject bullying behaviour and promotes cooperative behaviour. We are committed to minimising the instances and the impact of bullying by providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere where they feel safe. We believe that bullying is neither an inevitable part of school life nor a necessary part of growing up. No one person or group, whether staff or student, should have to accept this type of behaviour, or to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. As a school we recognise the negative impact bullying has on the educational experiences and wider development of students, and the considerable emotional damage that it can cause. We therefore provide an environment in which all students are able to prosper without feeling in any way intimidated by the behaviour of others.

The purpose of this policy is:

- to prevent bullying from happening between students who are a part of our school or take part in our activities
- to make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need
- to provide information to all staff, students, and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

Bullying of any kind is not tolerated at our school. If bullying does occur, all students know how to report it, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, consistently and effectively. We encourage anybody that knows bullying is happening to tell a member of staff, or to report it to school anonymously if they prefer.

Learning Opportunities recognise that students are bullied for a variety of reasons – and for no reason. It is among the top concerns that parents / carers have about their children’s safety and well-being, it is also a top concern of children and young people themselves.

Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of security. We acknowledge that bullying (including cyberbullying) is listed as an indicator for emotional abuse, and that Child-on-Child abuse is likely to include bullying including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.

Staff recognise that relationships amongst our student group can be very complicated, and that many have been victims of physical, sexual, and / or emotionally bullying. Research indicates that frequently the bullied becomes the bully!

Inappropriate relationships have the potential to be damaging to the emotional, physical and psychological health, and educational development of individuals. Bullying can be direct or indirect and can take many forms – exclusion from the group can be as devastating for a student with a sensitive temperament, as a physical assault can be against another.

Discrimination at any level is unacceptable; staff will therefore challenge all forms of bullying including racial harassment and that related to sexual orientation.

High staffing levels ensure effective supervision of students; however, we recognise that it is impossible to prevent bullying by supervision alone. Emphasis is therefore also placed on creating an ethos in which bullying is unacceptable and openly discussed. Consistent support and encouragement ensure students feel confident that their concerns will be taken seriously, and will be dealt with in a calm and fair manner.

In acknowledgement of our legal duty to prevent bullying, our policy will identify procedures designed to bring to the attention of staff, students and parent / carers a clear system of effective response, monitoring and evaluation. Details of which will be well publicised throughout the school.

This policy is available via our school website for parents / carers and staff to view as needed. It is also accessible to all staff via the ‘Policies’ folder on the shared area of the school network. Students have access to our child-friendly policy, which is displayed in poster form throughout the school.

## **AIMS & OBJECTIVES**

This policy outlines what Learning Opportunities will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and has been adopted with the involvement of the whole school community.

At our school the safety, welfare, and well-being of all students and staff is a key priority. We take all incidences of bullying seriously, and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and tackle any bullying, harassment, or discrimination. We actively promote values of respect and equality, and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our students to become responsible citizens and prepare them for their adult life. These values reflect those that will be expected of our students by society when they leave school and enter the world of

work or further study. We are committed to improving our school's approach to tackling bullying by regularly monitoring, reviewing, and assessing the impact of our preventative measures.

This policy aims to ensure that all:

- Staff, students, and parents / carers have an understanding of the definition of bullying, know the school policy on bullying and follow agreed procedures when bullying is reported.
- Parents / carers and prospective parents / carers are aware that the policy is available on our website – [www.learningopps.org](http://www.learningopps.org).
- Students know what to do when bullying occurs.
- Students and parents / carers are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

### **Objectives**

- To ensure all parents / carers and students have received and had opportunity to comment upon the school anti-bullying policy.
- To maintain and develop effective listening systems for students and staff within the school.
- To involve all staff in dealing with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly.
- To equip all staff with the skills necessary to deal with bullying.
- To communicate with parents / carers and the wider school community effectively on the subject of bullying.
- To acknowledge the key role of all adults in dealing with incidents of bullying.
- To ensure that all incidents of bullying are recorded, and appropriate use is made of the information and where appropriate shared with relevant organisations.

Fundamental beliefs underpinning this policy:

- All students have the right to feel safe all of the time. This means both physically and emotionally safe.
- All students can all talk with someone about anything, even if it feels awful or small.
- All members of staff also have the right to work in an environment free from any harassment or bullying; whether this is from colleagues, students or parents / carers.

### **SCHOOL ETHOS**

Learning Opportunities is a school where every person has the right to be themselves and to be included in a safe and happy environment. Everyone at our school is equal and should be treated with respect.

We recognise that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, we can help to create a safe, purposeful environment, where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.

We recognise that many students will experience conflict in their relationships with others and as a school we are committed to developing empathy and the skills to manage relationships in a way that does not harm others.

However hard we try; it is inevitable that conflicts / bullying will sometimes occur. This behaviour is never desirable and will always be taken seriously. We believe that it is more appropriate to help students understand the impact of their behaviour, and to consider different ways to behave, rather than the immediate default being to punish them.

### **LEGISLATIVE LINKS**

There are a number of pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990

### **LINKS WITH OTHER KEY SCHOOL POLICIES & PRACTICES**

This policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Positive Behaviour policy
- Complaint policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policies
- Confidentiality policy
- Racial equality, cultural diversity & inclusion
- Teaching, learning & assessment
- Equal Opportunities
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policies (AUPs)
- RSHE and Computing policies

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying behaviour can be defined as any form of unpleasant, intimidating or abusive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

- Bullying is “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017)
- Bullying can take many forms and can include: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- Bullying behaviour may occur directly or indirectly via technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email), sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homo/trans/bi-phobia, special educational needs and disability or certain health conditions, or because of a child’s familial circumstances, such as they are adopted, in care or have caring responsibilities. Bullying behaviour may be motivated by actual differences between children or perceived differences. For example, bullying can still be homophobic if directed towards a student who is perceived to be ‘gay’, whether or not this is the case.
- Bullying can be a form of child-on-child abuse and can be emotionally abusive. It can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

## **DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We will be proactive about:

- seeking opportunities to learn about and celebrate difference
- increasing diversity within our school community
- welcoming new members to our school.

## **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)**

### **Generative artificial intelligence (AI)**

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students, and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Learning Opportunities recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

Learning Opportunities will treat any use of AI to bully students in line with our anti-bullying / behaviour policies.

## **PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS**

Learning Opportunities recognises the increased vulnerability to bullying to those with any of the protected characteristics under the Equalities Act. Bullying frequently focuses on individual differences and anything that is implied to be different from the perspective of the instigator.

Sexual bullying may involve misogyny or homophobia and focus on alleged sexual attractiveness or lack of it.

## **BAITING**

Understanding how to deal with provocative acts designed to bully or cause others to bully.

To 'bait' someone is to intentionally make a person angry by saying or doing things to annoy them.

Baiting is a provocative act used to solicit an angry, aggressive, or emotional response from another individual.

### **Baiting and bullying**

Baiting can be used in bullying both on and offline. It can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretly to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly so that they get in to trouble.

If someone is baiting you, here are some examples of what you should and should not do developed from an article by [Out of the Fog](#).

#### **What NOT to do:**

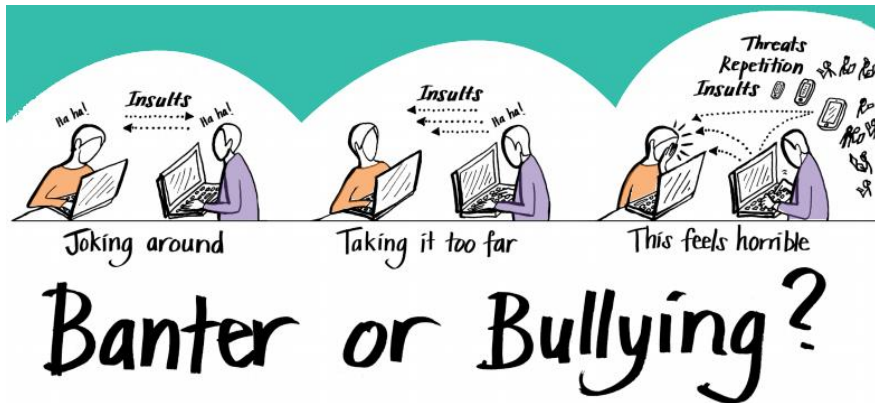
- Don't take the bait!
- Don't argue with a person or appeal to their sense of reason or logic while they are baiting you. They want you to rise to it!
- Don't retaliate and fall into a trap.

#### **What TO do:**

- Learn to recognise baiting for what it is. If you know what they are trying to do it is easier to rationalise it.
- Remember that the bait you can see often has nothing to do with what the other person really wants.
- Remember that what the person is feeling is temporary and they will probably feel different in a few days or a few hours.
- Talk to an adult you trust such as a teacher or parent / carer and explain what they are doing and why you think they are doing it.
- If falsely accused, politely, briefly and calmly state the truth one time only.
- Try to remove yourself from the situation calmly. End the conversation and exit the space/room.
- Get support - describe what has happened to someone who understands your situation and can help you come up with a reasoned, effective plan of how to deal with it.

## **BANTER**

Where do we draw the line between acceptable language and unacceptable language?



**Banter is the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks (Dictionary Definition)**

Some tips for professionals (adapted with Chris Gibbons, Director of Inside Inclusion):

- Understanding the four elements of bullying is vital to knowing whether something is bullying: intentional, hurtful, repetitive, involves a power imbalance
- Just because 'banter' doesn't constitute all the elements of bullying doesn't mean it's acceptable.
- All offensive, threatening, violent and abusive language and behaviour is always unacceptable, whatever your role
- This includes any negative language or behaviour in relation to / referring to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 i.e. age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender), sexual orientation
- Language and behaviour can have different meanings, in different contexts. If you're unsure, ask what was meant.
- Just because someone uses certain language to refer to themselves it doesn't necessarily mean it's acceptable, nor does it make it ok for you to use it
- Just because you think something is banter or a joke doesn't mean other people will.
- People won't always feel confident to speak up if they are offended by something. They might even go along with it so as not to draw attention to themselves.
- Third parties might be offended, even if they're not part of your conversation.

## **FALSE FRIENDSHIPS**

'False friendships' describe relationships where someone pretends to be your friend, or is your 'friend' sometimes, but actually uses their power to bully.



Sometimes bullying isn't as straight forward as someone openly being horrible to another person. It can be much more complicated than that. False friendships can sometimes be hard for adults to identify.

## **DEROGATORY LANGUAGE**

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and recorded and monitored. Follow up actions and sanctions, if appropriate, will be taken for students and staff found using any such language. Staff are also encouraged to record the casual use of derogatory language using informal mechanisms such as a daily log.

## **FORMS OF BULLYING COVERED BY THIS POLICY**

### ***Verbal Bullying***

This may involve name calling, may make use of written notes, emails, or mobile phone messages and/or may include threats of physical violence. Referring to an exchange as 'banter' is unacceptable in an attempt to excuse upset being caused to others.

### ***Physical Bullying***

This often consists of deliberate jostling, bumping or shoving and those responsible may easily maintain that it is accidental when detected for the first time. Physical bullying may also involve theft or damage to property. Not all theft or damage is bullying, but bullying occurs where the intention is to create fear and to use power improperly.

### ***Manipulative Bullying (emotional and psychological bullying)***

This may involve manipulating social networks (including electronic networks) with the intention of excluding, ostracising or marginalising individuals from their friends and normal relationships. Manipulative bullying may also involve the spreading of rumours, posting of electronic images without the other persons consent or malicious accusations.

### ***Homophobic Bullying***

Homophobic bullying is that which is motivated by a prejudice which includes, but is not restricted to, that against lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Homophobic bullying can be experienced by anyone, regardless of their sexual orientation.

In addition to following Anti-bullying procedures, we will also promote the following:

- Prevention is the first step in our strategy to remove homophobic bullying, therefore the use of RSHE lessons play a crucial role in this aspect of our strategy.
- Ensure that students are aware that homophobic language will not be tolerated in school
- All incidents of homophobic language will be dealt with appropriately, ensuring that students are aware of the effects such language has on people.
- If a student makes persistent remarks their parents / carers will be contacted immediately. In the event of the problem continuing, the parents / carers will be invited into school to discuss the issue in more detail and to consider possible consequences.

### ***Racist Bullying (Bullying around Race, Religion and Culture)***

The term Racist Bullying refers to a range of hurtful behaviours, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith, community, national origin or national status.

In addition to following our Anti-Bullying Procedures we will also ensure:

- that prevention is the first step in our strategy to remove racist bullying. The use of RSHE lessons play a crucial role in this aspect of our strategy, providing information in order for students to fully understand the consequences of such language and behaviour.
- That students are aware that racist bullying will not be tolerated in school, and the effects such language has on people
- All incidents of racist bullying will be recorded and dealt with appropriately.
- If a student makes persistent remarks parents / carers will be contacted immediately and if necessary invited into school to discuss the incident.

The school may deem it necessary to contact the police depending on the severity of the situation.

The school is duty bound to record all racist incidents. We will do this using our electronic recording system 'My Concern'.

### ***Sexist / Sexualised online bullying***

This describes behaviour or attitudes displayed resulting in discrimination or prejudice based on a person's sex; usually thought of as discrimination against women / girls.

Learning Opportunities recognises that sexualised online bullying is classified as a form of sexual harassment.

When responding to concerns, we will:

- Reassure all victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe.
- Ensure that victims are never given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment.
- Support the victim to realise that they have done the right thing in making a report – they will never be made to feel ashamed.

If staff have a concern about a student or a student makes a report to them, they will follow the referral process as set out in our safeguarding / child protection policy. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do they should speak to a designated safeguarding lead.

### ***Cyber Bullying***

"Cyber bullying" is any form of intimidation, abuse or unpleasant behaviour that uses information and communication technologies – for example, e-mail, digital and mobile device cameras, text messages, social networking sites, web documents and online blogs. "Cyber bullying" is not restricted to School-based activities and may occur in or out of school and at all times of the day. Any form of bullying, intimidation or unpleasantness that is publicised on such sites or through any form of electronic communication will not be tolerated. Likewise, any posting on such sites that brings the reputation of Learning Opportunities into disrepute will be treated as a serious offence.

An incident of cyber bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures in this policy. See the School's separate Online Safety Policy for further information about cyberbullying and online safety.

**When responding to cyberbullying concerns, we will:**

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include: looking at use of the school systems; identifying and interviewing possible witnesses; contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
  - contacting a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
  - Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the DfE searching and confiscation guidance.
  - Requesting the deletion of content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and students regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
  - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply; providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists; helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

**ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

Under the Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 the Proprietor of an Independent School is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented. In addition, the Proprietor will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.

**It is the responsibility of the headteacher to:**

- implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying.
- report to the proprietor about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.
- ensure that all students know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour, and to draw the attention of students to this fact at suitable moments.
- ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.
- set the school climate of mutual support and praise for success

**It is the responsibility of all staff to:**

- support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the Headteacher.
- do all they can to support the students who is being bullied.
- Record all incidents of bullying that occur both in and out of class
- talk to the perpetrator of the bullying incident, explaining to them why their action was inappropriate
- participate in training sessions and attend staff briefings design to equip them to identify bullying and to follow school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management.

**INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS**

*We will:*

- Involve students in policy writing and decision making at an appropriate level, to ensure that they understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they have to play to prevent bullying.
- Regularly canvas students' views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the range of consequences which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve students in anti-bullying campaigns and in embedding messages in the wider school curriculum.
- Utilise 'student voice' / school council in providing student led education and support as appropriate.
- Publicise the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites.
- Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullying in order to address the problems they have.

**INVOLVEMENT WITH PARENTS & CARERS**

We recognise that the success of Learning Opportunities Anti-Bullying Policy depends on the development of a whole school approach to positive and productive partnerships between parents/carers and students. This is based on a framework of honesty, openness and trust.

Any reports of bullying received from parents / carers will be forwarded to the Head Teacher or in their absence, the Deputy Head Teacher, who will:

- Ask for details and record information
- Follow-up with staff to ensure appropriate action has been taken and that Learning Opportunities anti-bullying policy has been implemented
- Arrange a mutually convenient date to meet with parents / carer to explain actions and to find out if the bullying has stopped.

Learning Opportunities recognise that it is more effective to involve parents / carers constructively at an early stage rather than as a last resort. The parents / carers of the alleged bully will be invited to a meeting to discuss behaviour using a problem-solving approach.

*We will:*

- Take steps to involve parents and carers in developing policies and procedures, to ensure they are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying.
- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the school website.
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents / carers work with the school to role model positive behaviour for students, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

### **BYSTANDERS**

A bystander is “a person who does not become actively involved in a situation where someone else requires help” and in this way is understood to be a passive observer, an onlooker who watches something happening, but stays on the side-lines and doesn’t intervene or get help, even if someone needs it. At Learning Opportunities, we encourage all students not to be bystanders, and teach that they all have a responsibility to report bullying, or other unkind behaviour, if they see it. They also have a responsibility not to get involved in the bullying behaviour and to stand up to the perpetrators.

### **CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

Staff are aware that bullying may be subtle, and that the effect can be as serious as an overt physical assault.

**Staff have a responsibility to:**

- Develop positive relationships with students
- Maintain an ethos in which students accept / recognise that bullying is unacceptable
- Help students acquire the knowledge, skills and values that contribute to the development of non-bullying behaviour.

**Students are encouraged to:**

- Tell a member of staff what is happening
- Allow the bullied student to join in with activities, in order that no student is deliberately left out
- Tell the perpetrator to stop what they are doing and to show that they disapprove of their actions, e.g. by not smiling or laughing when someone is being bullied.

## Use of the Curriculum

Learning Opportunities provides a broad, balanced and flexible curriculum, which promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, emotional and physical development. Within this framework, staff raise awareness of the nature of bullying. Attention is drawn to the school's anti-bullying policy by challenging attitudes, in an attempt to develop increased understanding of the affect of bullying behaviour, and to promote a clearer understanding of how students can constructively manage their relationships with others.

### **Through the curriculum students will explore issues such as:**

- What is bullying?
- What causes people to bully each other?
- How does it feel to be bullied or to bully?
- What are the effects of bullying behaviour on bullied students, on students who bully others: on bystanders?
- What would our school / society be like if bullying behaviour was acceptable?
- Why should we try not to bully each other?
- What can we do to stop bullying?
- What moral dilemmas do we face when we are confronted with bullying behaviour?

## BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, whether it takes place inside or outside of school. Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, before or after school hours, at the weekends or during the holidays, or in the wider community. The nature of online bullying in particular means that it can impact on students' well-being beyond the school day. Staff, parents and carers, and students must be vigilant to bullying outside of school, and report and respond according to their responsibilities as outlined in this policy.

Where bullying outside school is reported or witnessed, it should be investigated and acted on by the Headteacher / DSL. The Safeguarding Lead will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify external agencies of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

It's important that members of staff, and parents and carers are aware of signs that **might suggest** a student is being bullied. Such signs could include:

- Changes to a daily routine, including difficulty in sleeping and waking in the night, or loss of appetite
- An unwillingness to go to school, illness in the morning or truanting
- Withdrawal from others, anxiety, or lacking in confidence
- Changes to attitude to school work
- Possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- The need for money, or concerns about having sufficient money, as well as unexplained losses of money

- Unexplained cuts bruises, or changes to appearance
- Out of character aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable responses
- Being frightened or unwilling to say what is wrong
- Increased concern over use of a mobile phone or social media
- Attempts or threats of suicide or running away

These signs and behaviours could indicate several problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated where it is believed to be necessary.

If a student is struggling to come to school or has not been attending for any reason, a home visit from the DSL may be arranged.

## **PREVENTING BULLYING**

The ethos of Learning Opportunities will help to instil mutual respect and will provide students with the opportunity to discuss the topic whenever necessary, integral to which is relationships education as part of our RSHE programme.

Staff awareness is raised through training, meetings and regular review of the policy to ensure that the principles of the school policy are understood, including the reporting and recording procedures. This includes awareness of cyber-bullying.

Learning Opportunities acknowledge that efficient and effective organisation is the key factor in reducing bullying and potential conflict. Staff have a corporate responsibility for initiating and participating in break time activities, and for ensuring the whereabouts of all students at all times. This includes:

- Effective supervision at all times, with staff moving around the grounds, talking with students and anticipating potential difficulties
- Suspected problems being addressed quietly and promptly – details to be forwarded to the Head Teacher, or in their absence a member of the LT.

### **Preventative Strategies include:**

- Using our extensive knowledge of students, and strong relationships with home, to recognise any changes that might result in 'bullying' behaviours;
- Talking to students about issues of difference through dedicated events or projects;
- Talking with students about how to manage their own feelings and emotions;
- Ensuring that all students are appropriately supervised;
- Ensuring that appreciation and respect for all cultures are promoted;
- Ensuring that all students have the means to communicate, where verbal communication is challenging;
- Ensuring that teaching students about bullying and its impact is embedded throughout the curriculum offer.
- Ensuring that monitoring and filtering software is effective in protecting students from cyber based bullying

### **We will seek to prevent bullying by:**

- developing a code of behaviour that sets out how everyone involved in the school is expected to behave, in face-to-face contact and online, and within and outside of our activities
- seeking the views of staff, students and families about bullying and how to prevent it
- providing support and training for all staff on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and sexual bullying
- putting clear and robust anti-bullying procedures in place.
- practising skills such as listening to each other
- building a positive ethos based on respecting and celebrating all types of differences
- work in school which develops empathy, social skills and emotional understanding e.g. PSHE, social and emotional learning programmes, peer mediation
- dealing with problems in a positive way
- working with all parties to find solutions.
- reflecting and learning from bullying episodes –consider what needs to happen next to prevent future bullying
- raising awareness of online bullying through regular e-safety lessons.
- checking that our anti-bullying measures are working well
- offering training to all school staff around bullying, including specific guidance on those groups who are most likely to be bullied.

We work in a proactive way to teach students the essential social and emotional skills they need to make happy and effective relationships. To fulfil our aim of providing a friendly and safe environment for all students, the following strategies are used:

- **Restorative approaches:** All staff have received training to ensure a consistent, positive and mediatory approach is used to deal with issues between students in the school;
- **Raising awareness of bullying:** We will use various curriculum opportunities, assemblies, workshops and Tutor Time to help students. Bullying is openly discussed regularly. Students are encouraged to think about our school values through assemblies and class discussions, which are regularly linked to bullying;
- **RSHE programme:** Students are informed of their right to be and feel safe
- **Regular e-safety updates:** These are communicated to parents / carers in the newsletter, on our website and through the Digital Parenting Magazine;
- **Online-safety:** Students learn about this in computing and RSHE lessons and their understanding is reinforced throughout the school;
- **Online-safety training** for staff
- Positive, active play is encouraged at break times through effective deployment of staff,
- Child-friendly anti-bullying poster with input from the school council displayed throughout the school
- Celebrating success through weekly Wonderwall”
- Class and whole school positive behaviour policy
- Open door policy

**Learning Opportunities policy is that play fighting is not acceptable.**



## **Environment**

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and students (child-on-child abuse).
- Recognise the potential for students with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable students.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

## **REPORTING & RESPONDING TO BULLYING**

Students are encouraged to talk to staff when they are unhappy or have concerns. Students in our school understand that they have a right to feel and be safe and a responsibility to support others to feel and be safe.

If a student is being bullied they are encouraged to not retaliate but to tell someone they trust about it such as a friend, family member or trusted adult. They are also encouraged to report any bullying incidents in school.

Students are taught that it is important to talk to a trusted adult if bullying is taking place outside of school.

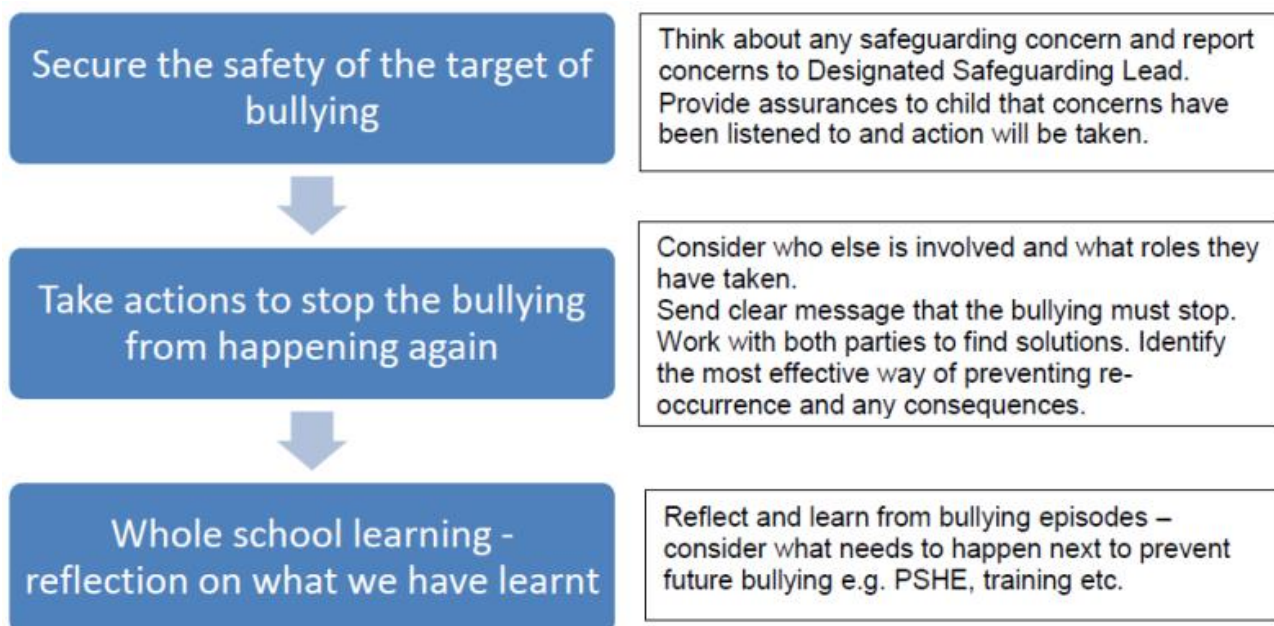
Parents / carers are also encouraged to report concerns and bullying to the school.

We will make sure our response to incidents of bullying takes into account:

- the needs of the person being bullied
- the needs of the person displaying bullying behaviour
- needs of any bystander
- our organisation as a whole.

We monitor and review all bullying incidents to determine any patterns or trends that may require further action. On a regular basis we give students the opportunity to feedback on how safe and happy they feel at school, we do this through pupil questionnaires and School Council meetings.

## THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO BULLYING



- students are made aware of what constitutes bullying and its outcomes.
- Staff are made aware of what constitutes bullying and how the school sets out to prevent and tackle instances.
- We will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensure our students are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively;
- It is important that students reporting incidents of bullying are taken seriously and listened to and that positive action is seen to be taken. Staff who observe intimidatory behaviour or have it reported to them should write a summary of the incident and log it on My Concern and also speak to the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher. The School can then identify any pattern of bullying or intimidating behaviour and take appropriate action.
- We will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them and/or parents / carers in any decision-making, as appropriate. We recognise the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- If the issue persists, then further support meetings (with parents / carers and staff) will be held;
- In cases where a crime has been committed or a student is believed to be in imminent; danger or risk, the appropriate authorities (police, LA) will be informed immediately prior to any internal investigation. At this point our Safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- If it is suspected that the bullying is in the form of staff on student then the disciplinary procedure will be acted upon and a safeguarding concern raised.
- The Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher maintain a clear picture of bullying throughout the school and ensure that measures are in place to identify patterns and minimise instances.
- The School actively listens to students through a variety of channels so insights are provided into how students are feeling about their lives both inside and outside school.
- The school council provides a platform to discuss bullying.
- Childline phone numbers and web addresses are displayed throughout the School.

- The school works with the parents / carers of the bully and the bullied, engaging with them promptly when issues of bullying come to light. This partnership aims to provide consistent guidance away from any bullying behaviour.
- The bully and the bullied may be offered targeted interventions / support to help them with coping strategies so they can be happy and feel safe in school.
- The School ensures that effective policies and procedures are in place relating to the Acceptable Use of Technology, E-safety, Whistleblowing, Mobile Phones and Personal Devices, Behaviour Management, Photographs and Images of children and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The designated safeguarding lead will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- We will speak with and inform other staff members on a need to know basis.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentiality policies.
- Consequences and support for individuals will be implemented, in consultation with all parties concerned.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour. This will include using a restorative approach to repair any harm and allow the perpetrator to accept responsibility.
- Where bullying is of a sexual nature, we will follow the school's child protection procedures
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as: the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services including early help or children's social care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- If internet/social media-based bullying is suspected steps will be taken to check if the filtering and monitoring software protection can be improved
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required the DSL will collaborate with other schools. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and the school's Positive Behaviour policy.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken using 'My Concern'.

#### **WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD DO IF THEY ARE BEING BULLIED**

- Go straight to a member of staff and discuss the matter in private. Remember that silence is the bully's greatest weapon. If you do not feel you can tell a member of staff then tell a friend or parent / carer.
- Tell yourself that the bully will not feel good about their own behaviour and they need help. By informing a member of staff of the whole background, you can help the bully and yourself.

#### **WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD DO IF THEY KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED**

- Take action and do something. Tell someone, ideally, a member of staff, immediately.

- All staff understand the seriousness of bullying and will provide support. All staff will ensure that your concerns are investigated and addressed.

### **SUPPORTING STUDENTS**

*Students who have been bullied will be supported by:*

- being heard
- Reassuring the student and providing continuous support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through Children & Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS).

*Students who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:*

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with the school's Positive Behaviour Management policy; this may include official warnings, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or Children & Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) as appropriate.

### **SUPPORTING ADULTS**

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of staff and parents / carers, whether by students, parents / carers or other staff members, is unacceptable.

*Adults (staff and parents) who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:*

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the headteacher, designated safeguarding lead or another member of the LT.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.

- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools Positive Behaviour policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

*Adults (staff and parents / carers) who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:*

- Discussing what happened with the headteacher / deputy headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

### **MONITORING & REVIEW - putting policy into practice**

- We will ensure that we regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Incidents and patterns of behaviour are tracked through our safeguarding tracking system. The analysis is used to impact practice and policy.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The headteacher will be informed of bullying concerns, and report to the Proprietor on a regular basis on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.

### **USEFUL LINKS & SUPPORT ORGANISATIONS**

Changing Faces Stonewall

Acceptance without exception

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Childline: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- Family Lives: [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)
- Kidscape: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- MindEd: [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)
- NSPCC: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- The BIG Award: [www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php](http://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php)
- PSHE Association: [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)
- Restorative Justice Council: [www.restorativejustice.org.uk](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk)
- The Diana Award: [www.diana-award.org.uk](http://www.diana-award.org.uk)

- Victim Support: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)
- Young Minds: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)
- Young Carers: [www.youngcarers.net](http://www.youngcarers.net)
- The Restorative Justice Council: [www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk/restorative-practice-schools)

## SEND

- Changing Faces: [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)
- Mencap: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)
- Anti-Bullying Alliance Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: [www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying\\_and\\_send - module final.pdf](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/media/750755/cyberbullying_and_send_-_module_final.pdf)
- DfE: SEND code of practice: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

## Cyberbullying

- Childnet International: [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- Digizen: [www.digizen.org](http://www.digizen.org)
- Internet Watch Foundation: [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)
- Think U Know: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- UK Safer Internet Centre: [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) [www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis](http://www.gov.uk/government/groups/uk-council-for-child-internet-safety-ukccis)
- DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteacher/principals and school/college staff': [www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)
- DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying': [www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)

## Race, religion and nationality

- Anne Frank Trust: [www.annefrank.org.uk](http://www.annefrank.org.uk)
- Kick it Out: [www.kickitout.org](http://www.kickitout.org)
- Report it: [www.report-it.org.uk](http://www.report-it.org.uk)
- Stop Hate: [www.stophateuk.org](http://www.stophateuk.org)
- Tell Mama: [www.tellmamauk.org](http://www.tellmamauk.org)
- Educate against Hate: [www.educateagainsthate.com/](http://www.educateagainsthate.com/)
- Show Racism the Red Card: [www.srtrc.org/educational](http://www.srtrc.org/educational)
- Equality and Human Rights Commission: Advice and Guidance: How can we stop prejudice based bullying in schools

## LGBT

- Barnardos LGBT Hub: [www.barnardos.org.uk/what\\_we\\_do/our\\_work/lgbtq.htm](http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/lgbtq.htm)
- Metro Charity: [www.metrocentreonline.org](http://www.metrocentreonline.org)
- EACH: [www.eachaction.org.uk](http://www.eachaction.org.uk)
- Proud Trust: [www.theproudtrust.org](http://www.theproudtrust.org)
- Schools Out: [www.schools-out.org.uk](http://www.schools-out.org.uk)
- Stonewall: [www.stonewall.org.uk](http://www.stonewall.org.uk)

## Sexual harassment and sexual bullying

- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (EVAW) [www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk)
- A Guide for Schools:  
[www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAW-Coalition-Schools-Guide.pdf](http://www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk/data/files/resources/71/EVAW-Coalition-Schools-Guide.pdf)
- Disrespect No Body: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaign-posters](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disrespect-nobody-campaign-posters)
- Anti-bullying Alliance: advice for school staff and professionals about developing effective anti-bullying practice in relation to sexual bullying:  
[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-gender-related](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/sexual-and-gender-related)

**Note:** Additional links can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) [www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)