



## THE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP

# Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidelines

Signed

Emily Hooper-Taylor

Chair of Governors

Date Approved:	2 <sup>nd</sup> November 2021
Approved By:	Full Board of Governors
Date for Review	November 2022

Our Vision within the Valley Partnership is to 'Climb to your highest for yourself, for others and for God'.

Across The Valley Partnership, we believe that 'together, we can build a safe community, that is connected valued and respected, having an encouraging and positive impact upon all'.

Through our Christian Core Values, Trust, Truthfulness, Responsibility, Perseverance, Forgiveness, Courage, Compassion and Creativity we teach children to Love first; we show children how to forgive and reconcile.

We aim to inspire children to learn with curiosity, enthusiasm and positivity, whilst striving for excellence in all that we do. This is delivered in an inclusive, caring and positive environment, where every child experiences a sense of enjoyment and achieves their potential.

### **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. A person has the right to be treated with respect and has the responsibility to treat others in the same way. Children are given the confidence and strategies to speak up and tell of any bullying experiences, knowing that positive action will be taken. There is a staff code of conduct that details procedures for adult conflicts. This policy is for children.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is a conscious and wilful repetitive act of aggression and/or manipulation by one or more people against another person or people. It is also an abuse of power by those carrying out the bullying, which is designed to cause harm. If bullying is allowed, it harms the perpetrator, the target and the whole school community and the culture of safety and wellbeing in the school.

### **The Nature of Bullying**

Bullying is considered to be:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression), both emotional and physical;
- repeated often;
- often difficult for individuals who are being bullied to defend themselves against.

Bullying can take many forms:

- physical: hitting, kicking, taking belongings;
- verbal: name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks;
- indirect: spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours;
- children may also be targeted by bullies using technology.

People may bully others because of varying perceived differences:

- sexism, racism, religion or belief, academic ability, gender identity, homophobia, disability, perceived characteristic (e.g. hair colour or weight) or because of an associate (family member or friend).

### **Our Approach to Bullying**

We believe that if children are encouraged to be good citizens in an environment where they feel stimulated and excited by their learning, where high expectations of behaviour and conduct exist and where children are taught and modelled core Christian values, they will develop an understanding and respect of others and it will minimize the occurrence of bullying. We feel it is important to create an atmosphere where our children know that they will be listened to and where their concerns are taken seriously and responded to with sensitivity.

Bullying is always unacceptable and always serious. We are committed to creating a safe environment where children can learn and play, can talk about their worries, confident that an adult will listen and will offer help. Staff are trained to be aware that children do not always tell us they are being bullied. They may exhibit symptoms in other ways e.g. withdraw and isolate themselves, be unwilling to attend school, complain about missing things or feeling unwell, refuse to talk about problems and become easily distressed and show signs of unwillingness to work or complete tasks and activities or join in PE etc. Staff are proactive in reporting on and following up on any concerns they have in relation to any form of bullying.

Through a variety of planned activities across the curriculum such as circle time, role-play, class performances, sharing assemblies and Collective Worship, our children gain in self-confidence and develop strategies to speak up for themselves and express their own thoughts and opinions. Encouraging children to take responsibility, for example by becoming a member of the School Council promotes children's self-confidence and uses pupil voice. In having this approach, we believe this helps to reduce a code of secrecy where children feel too scared to speak up and tell of any bullying experiences.

## Objectives of this Policy

- All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## Cyberbullying

(Schools should ensure they access Childnet's Cyberbullying guidance)

<https://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools>

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school 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:
  - Support reports to 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 pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the schools' procedures on searching and confiscation. (Note: Schools should ensure they access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the schools' powers are used proportionately and lawfully);
  - Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies;

- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will 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 pupils 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.

### **Supporting Pupils**

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous pastoral 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 to do so;
- 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 the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Pupils who have perpetrated 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 school behaviour/discipline policy; this may include official warnings, time out, 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 the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

## **Supporting Adults**

Our schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, a senior member of staff and/or the Headteacher;
- 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;
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online;
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support; o Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance;

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the 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.

A guide for staff “What to look for”, is attached at **Appendix A**.

## **The Valley Partnership Schools will use a variety of strategies.**

These include the following:

- The School Vision Statement is displayed and taught EXPLICITLY - termly discussion or more with children
- Negotiation and responsibility of class rules WHERE EVERY CHILD SIGNS UP TO THE CONTRACT.
- Positions of responsibility with classes and within the school e.g. special people, Class Monitors, Collective Worship assistants, School Captains
- Clear rewards and consequences are displayed and discussed with all pupils and shared with parents/carers
- School training on policies and procedures for managing behaviour
- Circle time planned into Personal Social Health & Education (PSHE)
- Strategies to promote positive peer relations including buddying, peer supporters, circle of friends
- 1:1 with mentors
- Assemblies; celebration of individuals and achievements
- Rewards system to promote desired behaviour, with team points based on good work, kind deeds and thoughtful actions
- Target/tracking sheets as a behaviour management system
- Linking with inter agency work including county support teams such as the Educational Psychologist, Behaviour Support Workers, Inclusion Team, Social Services, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), GP's, Community Police Liaison
- Raise awareness and provide training

## **Procedures**

1. Report bullying incidents to appropriate staff
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on CPOMS (child protection online monitoring system- a secure information collation and notification system)
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated, and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

“The Valley Partnership Anti-Bullying Procedures” guide for staff is attached at **Appendix B**.

### **Outcomes**

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
3. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled
4. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

### **Prevention**

We will use A VARIETY of methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Together creating a set of school rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- Making up role-plays
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters- this includes cyber & online bullying, including through gaming and texts

### **HELP ORGANISATIONS:**

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	0808 800 5793
Children's Legal Centre	0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4)	0845 1 205 204
Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222
Youth Access	020 8772 9900
Bullying Online	<a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a>



### **STAFF GUIDELINES**

#### **BULLYING – WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR**

##### **Signs and symptoms which MAY indicate bullying:**

Children who experience bullying are often isolates. They feel ashamed that they are failures. In the early stages of bullying, they will try desperately to be accepted by the bully (or bullies). The refusal of the others to accept them, despite all their efforts to please, adds to their confusion and bewilderment. They become convinced that they are unattractive and stupid and will gradually withdraw. Fear and lack of self-esteem render them unable to express their feelings and communicate well. The signs and symptoms they are likely to display are those of an anxious child, under stress. Their clothing and belongings will sometimes be torn and damaged and occasionally these signs are compounded by physical bruising and other evidence of assault.

Staff may see signs that can indicate that an anxious child is being bullied e.g.

- Withdrawal
- Aggressive behaviour
- Schoolwork problems
- Tiredness
- Injuries
- Becoming unusually difficult or argumentative
- Arriving late
- Missing possessions
- Stealing
- Low self-esteem
- A desire to seek adult company
- Relationship difficulties
- Bed wetting, rocking, nail biting, nervous tics
- Increasing lack of confidence, with gradual withdrawal from social activities
- Jumpiness e.g. at sudden noises, flinching or cowering when approached suddenly
- Personality changes - moodiness, sudden outbursts of temper, lots of weeping, tiredness, forgetfulness
- Increased absenteeism dislike of school, refusal to go to school

- Arriving late to school, hanging around the teacher and/or the classroom after school and at play times
- New fears e.g. of the dark, being around and in groups of children
- Wanting to change routine e.g. routes to school
- Frequently complaining of feeling unwell - headaches, tummy aches, odd pains

## **The Bully**

Bullies will also have low self-esteem although they often appear confident. When young, they are quite popular and will draw a crowd of other children who follow them around. They like to get their own way and will respond to stressful situations impulsively and by hitting out.

Bullies will usually be:

- Energetic and hyperactive
- Aggressive towards other children and adults
- Prone to break the rules and indulge in anti-social behaviour
- Positive about their own behaviour, with no shame or guilt and little sympathy with victims
- Able to communicate well and have an answer for everything
- Adept at getting themselves 'off the hook' and out of difficult situations

## **Fact Sheet**

- 1) Three factors are implicit in bullying activities:
  - It is repetitive, over a period of time
  - It involves an imbalance of power - the powerful seeking to dominate the powerless
  - It can be verbal, physical and/or psychological
- 2) At least 10% of children in school are involved in bullying as victims or bullies at any one time. The figure is likely to be much higher.
- 3) Boys usually bully other boys and girls, girls bully girls.
- 4) Boys bully more often than girls in a ratio of 3:1.
- 5) Boys tend to use threat and physical violence while girls employ verbal and psychological forms of bullying.

- 6) Common misconceptions about bullying are that:
- It is a minority problem
  - It does no real harm
  - It is character forming
  - The victim often 'asks' for it
- 7) All bullying damages the self-esteem of victims and bullies and affects their lives as grownups.
- 8) Non-verbal bullying, e.g. staring a child out, winking and nudging, can have as severe an impact on some children as physical violence.
- 9) Bullies are often disruptive and hyperactive in class.
- 10) Bullying children are likely to have parents who bullied.
- 11) Bullies thrive on their sense of power and look for signs of weakness and defensiveness. A firm rebuff can prevent bullying.
- 12) Bullies depend on a code of silence for their success. Breaking that code is often the first step in prevention.
- 13) Children who watch bullying take place without doing anything about it collude in the bullying.
- 14) Bullies need help.
- 15) The most effective deterrent to bullying is other children.
- 16) Bullying is less likely to happen in schools where the problem is recognised.



## **THE VALLEY PARTNERSHIP**



### **WEBBER'S and BURLESCOMBE CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

IF YOU BELIEVE A CHILD IS BEING BULLIED OR IS BULLYING OTHERS:

- INFORM THE HEADTEACHER
- DISCOVER THE DETAILS, DEALING SYMPATHETICALLY WITH ALL PUPILS INVOLVED
- TAKE THE NECESSARY AGREED ACTION TO DEAL WITH THE INCIDENT

#### **ACTION**

##### **First Steps**

Remain calm. You are in charge by staying in control. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it is acceptable to bully if you have the power. Reacting emotionally may add to the child's sense of control.

Take the incident or report seriously.

Make it plain to the child that you disapprove.

Think about whether your action needs to be public or private.

Reassure the victim. Avoid making them feel inadequate or foolish.

Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim by referring to the schools' own strategies.

##### **Next Steps**

Encourage the child to see the victim's point of view and ask if he/she has any constructive ideas.

Use appropriate sanctions.

Explain clearly the sanctions and why they are being applied.

Inform parents.

Inform the appropriate colleagues of what you are doing (if the incident arose where others should be vigilant).

Inform parents.

##### **Final Steps for the School**

Allow everyone to make a fresh start.

Make sure the incident does not live on through reminders.

Try to think ahead to prevent a recurrence.

**Remember To:**

Encourage the victim to help him/herself.

Separate the behaviour/act from the child.

**Dealing with Bullying: Listening to Children**

In dealing with bullying there are three main aims:

1. **Stop** the bullying behaviour
2. **Change** pupil attitudes and behaviour for the future
3. **Promote** positive peer relationships

**Accept Reports of Bullying from Children**

**LISTEN** to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Be patient. Wait during any silences. Prompt gently.

**ACCEPT** what is said (“believe” is too strong) – keep an open mind if you can.

**AVOID** being judgemental.

**MAKE NOTES** of the main details after listening to the child.

**REASSURE** the child that he/she was right to tell you. You may need to pass this information to a colleague so do not promise confidentiality.

**REASSURE** the pupil that it is not his/her fault that he/she is being bullied and that it is vital that the situation is sorted out.

**REMEMBER** that the person the child is talking about may be an adult (parent or colleague).

At this point you may need to inform the Headteacher.

Talk and listen to all sides.

**Finally**

In the rare instances where you discover details which are distressing you may need some support for yourself, if so, ask for it from the Headteacher.