



Anti-Bullying Policy

2024

Key Personnel

Nominated Member of the Leadership Team staff responsible for the policy

Rachel Tye

Designated Safeguarding Leads

Miss Michelle Bennett (Headteacher)

Mrs Rachel Tye (Deputy Headteacher)

Miss Jhaneen Hall (SENCO)

Miss Alexia Waysay (Family Support Advisor)

Named Governor with lead responsibility:

January 2024

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

Introduction:

At Bond Primary School we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. However, we acknowledge that, as in wider society, bullying does happen from time to time and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

This policy is closely linked with our Trauma Informed Schools Relationship and Behaviour Policy, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our School Code of Conduct and the School's Vision, Aims and Values.

We have an approach of 'it could happen here' and therefore even if there are no reports of bullying, it does not mean it is not happening and it may be the case that it is just not being reported.

At Bond Primary School, we are aware that pupils may be bullied in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour Policy, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our School Code of Conduct and the School's Vision, Aims and Values.

The purpose of this policy document is to ensure that the aims, responsibilities and procedures with regard to dealing with bullying in the school are made clear to all staff, parents and Governors. The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and to take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy. This will happen in the following ways:

- The school will meet the legal requirement for all schools to have an Antbullying Policy in place.
- The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in The Children Act 1989, The SEN and Disability Act 2001 and The Children Act 2004.

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents/caress will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- Pupils and parents/guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Whole school initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies etc) and proactive teaching strategies (PHSE [Personal, Health & Social Education] lessons etc) will be used throughout the school to reduce the opportunities for bullying to occur and actively raise awareness.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the school environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

Aims:

1. To ensure that all children are able to come to school free from the behaviours described above.
2. To make clear to parents that bullying is not tolerated in any form.
3. To give children strategies for dealing and managing difficult behaviour from other pupils including bullying.
4. To ensure that everyone in the school community understand what bullying is and what it isn't.
5. To have procedures that are clear, sufficiently detailed and relevant to tackling effectively bullying behaviour.

What is Bullying

In order to deal with bullying successfully it is important that all staff, pupils and parents share an understanding of what we mean by bullying. The Anti-Bullying Alliance and its members have a shared definition of bullying based on research from across the world over the last 30 years:

“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online” (Our definition of bullying (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk))

Physical and emotional: Bullying can include physical and emotional abuse such as name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, peer isolation (e.g. excluding people from groups) and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Online bullying: The same unacceptable behaviours can be expressed online; this is sometimes called online bullying or cyberbullying. Specifically 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.

All forms of bullying can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development. We take all forms of bullying seriously.

Bullying is recognised as being a form of child-on-child abuse; children can abuse other children. Abuse is abuse and it should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including but not limited to:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexualised bullying/harassment
- Bullying via technology, known as online bullying or cyberbullying
- Prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics) which may include:
 - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
 - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
 - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
 - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
 - Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act).

Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Looked After Children
- Children having caring responsibilities
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children from ethnic minorities
- Children entitled to Free School Meals
- Children for whom English is an Additional Language
- Children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual
- Those suffering from health problems, including mental health

Signs of Bullying

Staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues including:

- Physical: unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.
- Emotional: losing interest in school, being withdrawn or secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.

- Behavioural: asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asking for more money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

Bullying Prevention

We foster a clear understanding that bullying, in any form, is unacceptable. We believe that preventing bullying is the responsibility of our whole school community and when there are incidents of bullying we will work together to deal with the situation and to learn from what has happened.

Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential in keeping incidents in our school to a minimum. Through assemblies, as well as PSHE lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, such as two friends falling out, or a one-off argument. An annual 'Anti-bullying Week' is held to further raise awareness.

E-safety is an important part of the Curriculum and information for parents is included in newsletters and on the school's website. E-safety workshops are held to raise parents' awareness of cyber-bullying. Each computing lesson includes a reminder of keeping safe online practices for children. Pupils are taught to tell an adult in school if they are concerned that someone is being bullied.

Code of Conduct

Our School Learning Charter and core values are regularly promoted in assemblies and displayed throughout the school. Through pupils following these rules, and staff reinforcing them, it is our intention that incidents of bullying should be reduced. Our code of conduct underpins our core values:

Confidence – Be brave

Voice – See it! Say it! Sort it!

Challenge – No limitations

Respect – Regard everybody's thoughts, feelings and actions

Risk – Try everything!

Unique – Just be you!

Independence – Do it your way!

Our *Trauma Informed Schools Relationship and Behaviour Policy* as well as providing a clear approach to rewards and sanctions, it also places a strong focus on maintaining the good mental health and well-being of children and staff in order to foster positive relationships promoting positive learning behaviours.

How we respond to Bullying Concerns

In our school pupils are encouraged to talk to staff when they are unhappy or have concerns. Pupils 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.

Pupils are encouraged to report bullying to:

- A trusted adult
- Their class teacher/TA
- Designated Safeguarding Lead

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

At Bond we believe strongly that the best way to minimise and address bullying when it happens is not by sanctions alone. It is important that children understand the impact that their behaviour choices have on others and identify what changes in their own behaviour are required to ensure that bullying stops. As such for each case of bullying that we may have to deal with, there will be a bespoke body of work/support given to both the victim and the perpetrator.

The following steps will be taken when dealing with any incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern. All concerns of bullying must be passed on to a member of SLT.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- The DSL will be informed of all bullying concerns, especially where there may be safeguarding issues.
- The headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) or another appropriate member of leadership staff will interview all parties involved.
- A clear and precise account of bullying incidents will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- The school will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection procedures.
- Appropriate sanctions and support, for example as identified within the school's *Trauma Informed Schools Relationship and Behaviour Policy* and child protection policy, will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, for example the police if a criminal offence has been committed), Early Help or Merton Social Care (MASH) if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.
- Where the bullying of or by pupils takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online/cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated and responded to in line with this policy, and the *Trauma Informed Schools Relationship and Behaviour Policy*. If required, the DSL will collaborate with DSLs at other settings.

When responding to online bullying, the school will:

- Act swiftly as soon as an incident has been reported or identified
- Ascertain facts and gain as much information as possible
- 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 school searching and confiscation policy. (We will access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully).
 - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.

Where an individual can be identified, the school will ensure that appropriate sanctions are implemented to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help or support they may need as well as:

- 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 consider and manage any private information they may have in the public domain.

Procedures for parents:

Parents are encouraged to report concerns and bullying to the school. This would normally be the class teacher or a member of SLT.

- If a parent has any concerns about their child they should speak to the class teacher immediately. If a parent thinks bullying is the issue, the matter will be referred to the headteacher. The headteacher is always informed of any bullying concerns at Bond and monitors the situation carefully.
- If a parent feels unable to talk to the class teacher, they can make an appointment to speak directly with the Headteacher.

- The school will work with both the child and the parents to ensure that any bullying is stopped and that support is given where needed.
- Parents should not confront the bully or their parents. This can complicate the situation and distress the pupil.
- The school will deal directly with all children involved and their parents directly. Parents will be kept informed of any actions the school is taking.
- If parents feel that their concern has not been dealt with appropriately they should follow the schools complaints policy. All members of the school community, including pupils, staff, parents and governors, are expected to treat everyone with dignity respect at all times. This includes both face-to-face contact and online.

How do we support victims of bullying:

Being a victim of bullying is a traumatic experience and can impact a child in many different ways.

A one size all model is not suitable when supporting children who may have been bullied. The child is at the centre of any support plan in place and their views are taking into consideration when devising the plan. Children who have been bullied may be supported in the following ways:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing immediate pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the DSL, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to any further concerns.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence. This could result in accessing therapeutic support such as ELSA.
- 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, CAMHS, MASH

How do we support perpetrators of bullying:

Children who are perpetrators of bullying will be supported 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 this include accessing therapeutic support
- 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
 - detentions/internal exclusions

- removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns)
- in extreme or repeated cases, 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 or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Supporting children who may have been bystanders

We recognise that for children who are bullying they can often be unintentionally influenced by others. Often children who bully have been victims of bullying, are trying to impress their peers or maintain others expectations of them and this can be a really difficult for a child to navigate even if they want to change their behaviour. Often other children will see the bullying but feel powerless to make it stop through fear of backlash or being singled out. As part of our preventative and restorative measures, we also discuss the role of bystanders and what they can do to report bullying behaviour they have seen whilst also securing their anonymity if this is a primary concern .