



Altmore & Lathom Schools Federation

Policy Statement for Anti-Bullying



Guiding Principles for Preventing and Tackling Bullying

We recognise the close link between feeling safe, high self-esteem, achievement and social wellbeing. We acknowledge that bullying is prevalent in all parts of society, including schools, and are therefore committed to challenging it. All staff, children and parents should be aware of the negative effects that bullying can have on individuals and the school in general, and should work towards ensuring that our children can work in an environment without fear.

Bullying in this school is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Bullying Outside of School

Any bullying outside of school, including via internet or mobile phones, will be investigated by the school and dealt with accordingly. The school will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying. Parents will be notified if their child is involved.

We take a very strong stance against bullying of any form, since it indicates a lack of appreciation for others' feelings. Bullying of any type will not be tolerated and will be addressed. Bullying can cause distress, to the extent of victims refusing to attend school or even, in some extreme cases, attempting or committing suicide.

Aims of the policy

Within school we aim to:

- foster an ethos of respect for others;
- reflect attitudes which value all cultures;
- establish an environment in which children have the confidence to report all fears and concerns, including those relating to bullying;
- to ensure all staff are aware of procedures through regular training;
- to demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of children are paramount;
- to promote an environment where children feel they can trust and tell adults if they or their peers are being bullied;
- to ensure that all staff are aware of their duty of care for all children in their charge and the need to be alert to signs of bullying;
- investigate fully all reported incidents of bullying, and deal with bullies in line with the school's Behaviour Policy;

What is Bullying? (definitions, forms, vulnerability factors, indicators)

Definition of Bullying



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We define bullying as action or actions by individuals or groups that are:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression);
- repeated often over a period of time;
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against;
- intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying exists in many forms and may be:

- 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, sending malicious e-mails or text messages;
- Homophobic or gender variant bullying;
- On-line bullying: rumours, teasing, name-calling, harassment, gossiping, lies (see online-safety policy & acceptable users policy).

Both boys and girls bully, and incidents may be carried out by an individual or group. Ethnicity, gender, disability or social class may be the basis for incidents of bullying. Adults may also be victims of bullying.

All forms of bullying, including racial and sexual harassment and gender orientation are unacceptable.

All members of staff have a responsibility to pass on all reported incidents of bullying and witnessed incidents, which may involve bullying. Such incidents should be reported to a senior member of staff and written in the anti-bullying book, which is kept in the Headteacher's office. An adult familiar to the bullied individual should carry out the initial investigation. This may be a class teacher, another teacher or a member of the support staff with whom the individual has a positive relationship.

Vulnerability factors that may contribute to bullying

Any child can be bullied, and although none of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely:

- lacking close friends in school;
- being shy;
- an over-protective family environment;
- being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority;
- being different in some obvious respect e.g. being smaller, bigger or having a stammer;
- having Special Educational Needs or a disability;
- behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a 'nuisance';
- possessing or not possessing expensive accessories.



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Individuals subjected to bullying often suffer in silence. They may behave passively or submissively, signalling to others that they would not retaliate if attacked or insulted. Others may behave aggressively, sometimes provoking others to retaliate. Some children are both bullies and victims.

There are a number of behaviours which may indicate that an individual is the victim of bullying, and these should always be investigated by an appropriate adult and discussed with a parent or carer. It is more likely that a child will disclose bullying to a family member rather than a member of the school's staff.

Possible Indicators of Bullying

- an unwillingness to go to school;
- a pattern of headaches, stomach aches etc;
- missing equipment or personal belongings;
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- damaged clothing;
- tearfulness or anxiety;
- bad dreams, disturbed sleep and bed wetting;
- inexplicable changes in behaviour or attitude;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- attempts or threatens self-harm;
- stops eating;
- changes his/her regular routine.

It is important that adults, and particularly class teachers, are sensitive to the above and provide time where a child can speak privately, without fear. This should generally be at the end of a teaching session and may be outside the classroom.

Racist Bullying

In racist bullying, a child is targeted for representing a group; an attack on the individual therefore sends a message to that group. Racist bullying is defined as "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person," (MacPherson Report, 1999).

Incidents of racist bullying can include:

- verbal abuse by name calling, racist jokes and offensive mimicry;
- physical threats or attacks;
- wearing of provocative badges or insignia;
- bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines;
- inciting others to behave in a racist way;
- racist graffiti or other written insults;
- refusing to co-operate in work or play.



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Responding to Bullying

Both a short term and a long-term response to bullying are required.

A short term response is required to address the needs of the individual concerned and the following procedure should be consistently applied.

When investigating it is important to remember:

- never ignore suspected bullying;
- don't make premature assumptions;
- listen carefully to all accounts – several children saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth;
- adopt a problem solving approach which moves children on from justifying themselves;
- follow up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed.

Following an investigation:

- The individual should be informed of the action that is to be taken immediately to ensure their safety and well being, and what should be done if they continue to feel anxious or threatened;
- A named adult (for example, the Learning Mentor at Lathom) should be identified as the immediate contact for the victim;
- The person to whom the report was made should either investigate the incident or report it to someone else to investigate. The investigator should gather information by speaking separately with all relevant parties. Relevant background information, including pupil records should be consulted. Incidents should be dated and recorded in the 'Anti-bullying' book and action taken recorded;
- The investigator should consider the evidence, reach a conclusion, and discuss the findings with all parties, including relevant staff and parents;
- If appropriate a peer support group should be established to ensure that the individual no longer feels isolated. If a Circle of Friends is established the bully might be included if that is acceptable to the victim;
- If not already involved the Learning Mentor should be informed of the investigation enabling her/him to check regularly with the victim to ensure that there has been no resumption of the bullying. The Learning Mentor will also inform relevant staff, including the Head Teacher to enable playground and classroom monitoring to occur;
- Consideration will be given to the victim joining social skills, self-esteem or after school groups if appropriate;
- Sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy should be applied to anyone found guilty of bullying. A clear message should be given that bullying will not be tolerated, and that repeated bullying behaviour could lead ultimately to exclusion. A record should be kept of the action taken.

Children should be regularly reminded of the procedures for reporting bullying, and what to do if they report a concern and it is not followed up. Clear messages should be given that:



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- **Bullying is not acceptable.**
- **Reporting bullying is not telling tales.**
- **If you tell an adult and they do not deal with an incident, tell another adult and keep telling until someone responds.**
- **If the bullying resumes tell someone.**

Training in dealing with bullying and responding to playground incidents is provided for all staff, including lunchtime supervisors.

Many of the same points apply when the school has to tell parents that their child is involved in bullying.

How we tackle and prevent bullying through our curriculum:

- The school will raise children's awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying in PSHCE topics, English, school assemblies, the school council and anti-bullying week. Circle time is used to enable children to share opinions and share ideas and discuss any issues relating to bullying;
- The School Leaders, the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Leader, Learning Mentor and the RE Leader are responsible for initiating and developing an anti-bullying programme as part of the PSHCE and anti-bullying week programme;
- Teachers are responsible for introducing anti-bullying material in their curriculum as appropriate;
- Once a year we recognise Anti-Bullying Week;
- Online safety awareness is raised through INSET for staff, assemblies, curriculum for pupils and parents meetings;
- Changing the attitudes and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school. **Children's Emotional Literacy is developed by teaching them a wide vocabulary of words for emotions.** We believe that this makes them better able to express their feelings, helping them to resist attempts at bullying. We also consider that being able to understand and express emotions reduces conflict between children and makes them less inclined to misinterpret others actions, which can be a contributory factor in bullying;
- **At our schools, staff recognise that the following are effective methods to prevent bullying, especially for vulnerable children and young people.**
- Work to achieve our core values: show respect; take responsibility; always make the right choice and learn with others;
- Strive for a caring and supportive ethos;
- Support children, especially our most vulnerable, through 1:1 support by the learning mentor;
- Encourage the helpful and nurturing side of children;
- Provide playground and classroom buddies, as well as peer mediators, to prevent bullying and to discuss any issues that may develop in the playground;
- Discuss friendships in small groups with the learning mentor as needed;
- Positively encourage caring and actively discourage bullying;
- Raise the awareness of parents and carers about the need to provide sufficient support at home i.e. for internet safety to prevent cyber bullying;



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- No use of mobile phones for children during the school day;
- Ensure the playground is adequately supervised and all staff including mid-day supervisors are trained and their awareness raised about the impact of bullying.

Working with Parents and Carers

Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures during parent information meetings and through the newsletter as well as our anti-bullying display. Parents will be encouraged to speak to the Headteacher or a member of the Federation Leadership Team (FLT) if they have concerns about bullying.

Parents of children who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate.

If a parent or carer reports that their child is being bullied, good practice includes:

- Recognising that the parent may be angry and upset;
- Keeping an open mind – bullying can be difficult to detect, so lack of staff awareness does not mean bullying has not occurred;
- Remaining calm and understanding;
- Making clear that the school does care and that something will be done;
- Explaining the school policy, making sure procedures are followed.

Supporting Children

Bullied Children: Staff who deals with children who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Children who have been bullied will be given support by the Learning Mentor.

The Perpetrator: Support must also be given to the perpetrator. The school recognises that sanctions in line with the school's behaviour policy and procedures will also have to be used.

All the children concerned should be fully involved in the discussions leading up to the solution and should not be left feeling isolated. Parents will need to be kept fully informed.

Sanctions

Where children do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tougher action will be taken to deal with persistent and violent bullying. Sanctions are determined by the nature of the bullying on a case by case basis. Sanctions might include:

- Writing a letter of apology;
- Visit to the Reflection Room (KS2);
- Removal from the group (in class);
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges.



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Fixed term and permanent exclusion from school. Exclusion would only be considered in a case of **extreme and continuing** bad behaviour, bullying, sexual harassment, etc. Any exclusion for even a short period would be discussed and agreed with the Headteacher, who will then inform the Chair of Governors.

In **KS2 (Extreme behaviour** such as violence, blatant defiance of an adult, bullying, swearing at an adult, use of obscene language) will have the following consequences:

- *Children sent directly to the reflection room. They will remain there until they are ready for learning again. (Whilst recognising that consistency is essential to the effective implementation of the Behaviour Policy, each incident must be considered on its own merits, particularly when a child has special educational needs). While in the room, the child is expected to reflect on their behaviour and consider alternative courses of action;*
- *Parents will be contacted by Learning Mentor.*

Involving Children

- Children will be involved in the positive strategies through the school council and playground buddies. Children, via their school council, will have an input into our anti-bullying strategy;
- A major part of the strategy will consist of educating children in how to cope with bullying;
- Children must know to whom they should go if they are being bullied or if they are concerned about another child.

The Role of Governors

The Governors will be made aware of individual cases where appropriate.

The Role of staff

Dealing with Incidents

- Where bullying is reported or suspected, the incident will be investigated and dealt with immediately by the teacher approached;
- The teacher will record the details of the incident in the 'Anti-Bullying Book' and any action taken;
- The 'Anti-Bullying Book' will be kept in the Headteacher's office;
- All parties involved in the incident will be interviewed and a record kept;
- Staff teaching the bullied child and the class teacher will be informed;
- Parents will be kept informed by the relevant staff;
- Any strategies decided upon will be noted and the relevant staff informed.

Monitoring the Policy



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The FLT will consider reports of bullying to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled, with a view to improving the school's strategies. The Headteacher will report to the governing body.

What informs our Policy?

Our policy is based upon work undertaken in our school with pupils, parents and staff and is based on '*Bullying – don't suffer in silence*', (Department for Education and Skills 2000) and endorsed by London Borough of Newham. **It is also linked to our behaviour, inclusion, and safeguarding and online-safety policies.** This policy has been developed and reviewed by the Federation Leadership Team, the teachers and school council who have also discussed the policy with their classes.