

**Hucknall National C of E (VA) Primary School**

Headteacher: Miss S Barratt

Deputy Headteacher: Mrs H Brown



# **Anti-Bullying Policy**

September 2023

## **Contents:**

### Statement of intent

1. Legal framework
2. Definition
3. Types of bullying
4. Roles and responsibilities
5. Statutory implications
6. Prevention
7. Signs of bullying
8. Staff principles
9. Preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse
10. Cyber bullying
11. Procedures
12. Sanctions
13. Support
14. Follow-up support
15. Bullying outside of school
16. Monitoring and review

### **Appendices**

#### Appendix 1 – Bullying Report Form

## Statement of intent

At Hucknall National C of E Primary School we aspire to educate for wisdom and aspiration with the help of the church and the community through a culture of dignity and respect. We aim to cultivate the wellness, gifts, talents and ambitions of every child and equip them with the wisdom, knowledge and skills to live life in all its fullness.

*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28)*

Jesus embodies the love and compassion of God for each person, and Christians are called to follow him in this, and to join with others in demonstrating it. He paid special attention to the disadvantaged, excluded, despised and feared. Therefore, we aim to:

- Provide a safe setting in which to learn, where children, parents, governors and staff know that they are valued
- Create an open and honest environment where both children and staff are encouraged to take risks, make mistakes and learn from them
- Work to prevent bullying of any kind to ensure that all children experience joy at school
- Afford special provision to ensure equity for children with disabilities or special educational needs
- Recognise that mistakes are part of human experience; therefore we will have a robust approach to dealing with situations when things go wrong and to support children in learning how to manage their feelings and behaviour.

Hucknall National C of E Primary School believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school’s curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school’s response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school’s Behaviour Policy which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.

Signed by:

Sarah Barratt

Headteacher Date: October 2023

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Chair of governors Date:

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## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998 □ Education Act 2011

1.2. This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Primary Relationships and Health Education Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Remote education policy

## 2. Definition

2.1. For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

2.2. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

2.3. Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

2.4. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND.
- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.

### 3. Types of bullying

3.1. Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything.

3.2. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

3.3. Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)

3.4. **Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

3.5. **Homophobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

3.6. **Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

3.7. **Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

3.8. **Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

3.9. **Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

3.10. **Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

3.11 **Ableist bullying:** Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

#### 4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. The governing body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

4.2. The headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a log of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

#### 4.3. Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups.
- Refraining from gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

#### 4.4. Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's teacher they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.
- Advising their child of their responsibilities within this policy, including walking away from dangerous situations.

#### 4.5. Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyber bullying.

### **5. Statutory implications**

#### 5.1. The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate 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.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

#### 5.2. The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

- 5.3. The headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.
- 5.4. Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:
- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
  - The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
  - Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
  - Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

## **6. Prevention**

- 6.1. The school clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying which is regularly promoted across the whole school.
- 6.2. All reported or investigated instances of bullying will be investigated by a member of staff.
- 6.3. Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work.
- 6.4. All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the curriculum.
- 6.5. Diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- 6.6. Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying.
- 6.7. Potential victims of bullying are placed in working groups with other pupils who do not abuse or take advantage of others.
- 6.8. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, intervention groups, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.
- 6.9. All members of the school are made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it.

- 6.10. All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.
- 6.11. A safe place, supervised by a teacher, is available for pupils to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone.
- 6.12. The teacher supervising the area will speak to pupils to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.
- 6.13. Pupils deemed vulnerable, as defined in [section two](#), will meet with their teacher regularly to ensure any problems can be actioned quickly.
- 6.14. Teachers will also offer an 'open door' policy allowing pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.
- 6.15. Before a vulnerable pupil joins the school, the pupil's teacher and the DSL will develop a strategy to prevent bullying from happening – this will include giving the pupil a buddy to help integrate them into the school.
- 6.16. The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour.
- 6.17. The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development isn't negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

This curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

## **7. Signs of bullying**

- 7.1. Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:
  - Being frightened to travel to or from school
  - Asking to be driven to school
  - Unwillingness to attend school
  - Truancy
  - Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
  - Saying that they feel ill in the morning
  - Decreased involvement in school work
  - Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
  - Missing possessions

- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

7.2. Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.

7.3. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

7.4. In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the pupil becoming aggravated
- They have been the victim of domestic abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed

7.5. If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's teacher who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

## **8. Staff principles**

8.1. The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.

8.2. Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and they will not ignore signs of suspected bullying.

8.3. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is always challenged and never ignored.

8.4. Staff act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.

8.5. Staff always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless it is in a setting that the victim has given consent to, or there is a safeguarding concern.

8.6. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

8.7. Follow-up support is given to both the victim and bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

## 9. Preventing Child-on-child sexual abuse

9.1. The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer sexual abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers. Staff will take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims, will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours. Staff will also be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing- or initiation-type violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the [Prevention](#) section of this policy.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS), where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

The school’s Child-on-Child Abuse Policy outlines the school’s stance on addressing peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances are uncovered or disclosed. More information on the school’s approach to preventing and managing instances of peer-on-peer abuse can be found within this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9.2. Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline.

9.3. Sexual harassment violates a child’s dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.

9.4. Sexual violence refers to the three following offences:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

- **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

9.5. The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines our stance on addressing peer-on-peer sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence be uncovered.

9.6. To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons.

9.7. The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions. Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

9.8. All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up", and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as "boys being boys", as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.

Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”.

9.9. All staff will be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting and gender issues, such as girls being sexually touched or assaulted, and boys being subjected to hazing/initiation type of violence which aims to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm.

9.10. All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are three times more likely to be abused than their peers.

9.11. Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil’s SEND and will always explore indicators further.

9.12. LGBT children can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, children who are perceived to be LGBT, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBT children.

9.13. The school’s response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children of the opposite sex.

9.14. Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

9.15. If a child has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children’s social care services via Nottinghamshire MASH.

] Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

The school’s Child-on-child Abuse Policy outlines the school’s stance on addressing child-on-child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any

instances are uncovered or disclosed. More information on the school's approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Managing disclosures**

- 9.16. Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe.
- 9.17. Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.
- 9.18. If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will act – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of Social Services where necessary. If staff are in any doubt, they will speak to the DSL.
- 9.19. The DSL will be informed of any allegations of abuse against pupils with SEND. They will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.

### **Confidentiality**

- 9.20. The school will only engage with staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation.
- 9.21. If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, the school will not make this promise.
- 9.22. Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm.
- 9.23. The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:
- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk.
  - If a child is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to Social Services.
  - Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assaults are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police.
- 9.24. More information regarding the school's stance on preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse is available in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## 10. Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

**NB.** The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

10.1. The school has an E-Safety policy in place, which outlines the school's zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying.

10.2. The school views cyber bullying in the same light as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in [section 12](#) this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

10.3. The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyber bullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with [section 13](#) and [section 14](#) of this policy.

10.4. In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

10.5. If an electronic device is seized by a member of staff, and there is reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, the device must be given to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

10.6. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, the headteacher will decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of the relevant policies.

10.7 Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the '[Signs of bullying](#)' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Parents will also be invited to attend training sessions in order to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyberbullying, and will be advised to report to the headteacher if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

All learning at home will follow procedures outlined in the Remote Education Policy. During times when remote education is being utilised, the school will frequently be in contact with parents to make them aware of their activities online, but also to reinforce the importance of pupils staying safe online, and explaining how filtering and monitoring procedures work.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online

- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to their line manager or the headteacher for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided. Pupils will report incidents to a trusted member of staff.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or pupil, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the school, the headteacher will request they remove it directly.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. In these cases, the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy will be followed.

## 11. Procedures

11.1. Minor incidents are reported to the victim's teacher, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and informs the headteacher of the incident and outcome.

11.2. When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:

- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to the first aider for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged bully, the victim and witnesses, are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture

- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
- The headteacher will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim

11.3. Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic, sexual, etc bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

## **12. Sanctions**

12.1. If the headteacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions, in line with the Behaviour Policy, and warned that there must be no further incidents.

12.2. The headteacher informs the pupil of the type of sanction to be used in this instance (loss of free time, etc) and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

12.3. If possible, the headteacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain a genuine apology from the bully. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here.

12.4. The perpetrator is encouraged to realise, by speaking regularly with their teacher, that some pupils do not appreciate the distress they are causing, and that they should change their behaviour.

12.5. Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

12.6. The teacher informally monitors the pupils involved over the next half-term.

12.7 All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising pupils for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. The school's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The school will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to school can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour, and will not exclude pupils unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will act in line with the Behaviour Policy.

### 13. Support

- 13.1. For a month after the initial complaint of bullying, the teacher holds an informal discussion, on a weekly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped.
- 13.2. The headteacher holds a formal meeting, on a monthly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped – these formal meetings will continue to take place once a month until the headteacher and victim are confident the bullying has stopped.
- 13.3. If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.
- 13.4. The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.
- 13.5. The victim is encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school club or activity.
- 13.6. The school, particularly the SENCO, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.
- 13.7. The school realises that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. Perpetrators will be required to speak to the SENCO who can assist with any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.
- 13.8. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the school counsellor
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)

The headteacher will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them sharing classes or spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary. Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.

Staff, particularly the DSL, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. Perpetrators will be required to attend a mandatory counselling session to assist with any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

#### **14. Follow-up support**

14.1. The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by their class teachers.

14.2. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and bully are progressing may be appropriate.

14.3. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents one month after the incident.

14.4. Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their teacher or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate

14.5. Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

14.6. Pupils who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

14.7. In cases where the effects of bullying are so severe that the pupil cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the headteacher and DSL will look to transfer the pupil to another mainstream school.

14.8. Where a child has developed such complex needs that alternative provision is required, the pupil who has been the victim of bullying, their parents, the headteacher and DSL will meet to discuss the use of alternative provision.

#### **15. Bullying outside of school**

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Child-on-child Abuse Policy.

- 15.1. The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.
- 15.2. Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.
- 15.3. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted on.
- 15.4. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.
- 15.5. The headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police, or the anti-social behaviour coordinator, of the action taken against a pupil.
- 15.6. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.

## **16. Record keeping**

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

## **16. Monitoring and review**

16.1. This policy is reviewed every year by the headteacher

16.2. The scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.