# Simon Balle All-through School

Creating tomorrow's citizens today





# **COUNTERING BULLYING POLICY**

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# Simon Balle All-through School Overarching Safeguarding Statement

Simon Balle All-through school believes that any child or young person should never experience abuse of any kind. We have a responsibility to promote the welfare of all young people and ensure that every one is kept safe, through effective practice.

The absolute need to keep children safe, in other words, safeguarding, drives all that we do, all of the time. This statement is the forward and context for all of our work and as such is the "umbrella" statement that wraps around all of our policies and indeed practice and states our values and ethos.

The purpose of this statement and subsequent policies is:

- To protect all young people who are at Simon Balle All-through School
- To ensure that every adult understands our overarching principles to safeguarding and how it is of the uttermost importance
- To inform all of expected practice
- To celebrate and promote the school's ethos, its commitment to inclusion and its values

Our policies apply to all staff, including senior leaders and governors, paid staff, volunteers, sessional workers, agency staff, visitors, students or anyone working on behalf of Simon Balle All-through School.

We at Simon Balle believe that:

- The welfare of all children is paramount
- That our school ethos and values support inclusion, kindness, dignity and respect
- All children regardless of age, disability, racial heritage, gender, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or identity have a right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse
- Some children are additionally vulnerable because of the impact of previous experiences, their level of dependency, communication needs or other significant issues
- Increased use of the internet and social networking has intensified the opportunity for young people to be vulnerable
- Working in partnership with young people and their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare

We will seek to keep all children and young people safe by:

- Valuing them for who they are, listening to them and respecting them
- Creating a "safe" space whereby our ethos and values are daily promoted

- Adopting child protection practices through policies, procedures and a code of conduct for all staff and volunteers
- Recruiting staff and volunteers safely, by adhering to the safer recruitment process
- Developing and implementing an effective e-safety policy and ensuring effective filters and monitoring of IT systems
- Keeping informed on the national and local dimension including the "Prevent" strategy
- Sharing information about child protection and good practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- Not being afraid to confront poor practice
- Educate all children on how to keep themselves safe with age- appropriate materials and resources
- Sharing any concerns with agencies, involving parents and children appropriately
- Train all staff regularly in safeguarding expectations and practices
- Actively promote the Simon Balle All-through School culture and ethos of inclusion, identity, democratic values, tolerance and a deep sense of community

Safeguarding is the responsibility of every single person at Simon Balle All-through School. All staff are highly accountable for keeping every child safe.

However, certain staff play a key role:

- Leading the Safeguarding Team- Leon Brown is the DSL
- Julia Creasey (Safer Recruitment Lead)
- Zoe Hussain Safeguarding Governor
- Paul Connolly Prevent Governor

This guidance is a forward to the following policies:

- Hertfordshire Child Protection Policy, with specific information on the "Prevent" strategy and "Keeping Children Safe" statutory guidance
- Prevent Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Simon Balle Behaviour policy

#### Rationale

Simon Balle All-through School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Simon Balle All-through School will be both proactive and reactive in its approach to tackling bullying within the school community and the wider community.

Here, all stakeholders are responsible for creating an environment which promotes positive attitudes towards tolerance, respect and learning at all times. Every member of the community has the right to feel safe and respected; we all share a collective responsibility in ensuring that the rights of no one member of our community are abused at any time and all stakeholders have a shared responsibility to report bullying.

We recognise the individual needs of our students and endeavour to employ a wide range of strategies to enable our students to behave in a way that allows them to foster positive relationships with each other and to learn as effectively as possible. As part of our wider curriculum, students will be taught that bullying is unacceptable in all its forms and students will be made aware of the impact bullying has on victims. Students have a voice at all times and should feel that they are able to speak out against bullying whether it affects them directly or when they are aware that bullying is affecting other members of the school community.

This Policy forms an integral part of a suite of policies including, Online Safety, PSHRE and Safeguarding. The beliefs and ethos of the school underpin this and the Counter-Bullying Policy is discussed and reviewed on a regular basis.

# Legal Frameworks and guidance

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (89)
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children's Act 1989
- The Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988/The Communications Act 2003
- The Public Order Act 1986
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in Schools 2010 DFE RR098
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying in Schools Keeping Children Safe In Education 2022

### **Policy Aims:**

- To provide a definition of bullying for all stakeholders.
- To increase awareness of the signs and impact of all types of bullying.
- To identify students who may be particularly vulnerable to bullying.
- To ensure all stakeholders are aware of their responsibilities for reporting bullying incidents
- To identify strategies employed by Simon Balle All-through School to prevent bullying.
- To identify the channels which exist for students to report bullying to trusted adults.
- To make clear the response to all forms of bullying, both on and off site.

#### Responsibilities

As a 'Living Policy' the whole school community understands that bullying will not be tolerated and is clear in the steps that are taken to prevent and respond to bullying.

#### It is the responsibility of:

All teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and students within the school community

- All teaching and non-teaching staff within the school community to be aware of the policy and implement it accordingly
- All teaching and non-teaching staff to communicate the policy to the school community
- The Safeguarding Team and Governors to take the lead in monitoring and reviewing the policy

# What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017)

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of peer- on peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional health

"bullying is the repetitive intentional hurting of one person or group by another person, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power"

It can be verbal, physical or psychological. It can happen online or face to face.

#### Different types of bullying behaviour include:

#### Physical

• e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching and any other forms of violence, and or threats

#### Verbal

- Hurtful remarks regarding a person's physical appearance
- Hurtful remarks regarding a person's intelligence/interests etc

#### Social/Emotional

- Emotional tormenting, ridicule, humiliation, exclusion from groups/friendships
- Non-physical look across a crowded classroom, gestures
- Literature and language notes, name calling, graffiti, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing

# Cyber

- Inappropriate text and electronic messaging (including through websites, social networking sites and email)
- Sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet (cyber bullying)
- Generative artificial intelligence (AI): Artificial Intelligence tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff,students and parents / carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGBT and Google Bard. Simon Balle All-through School recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. Simon Balle will treat any use of AI to bully students in line with our countering bullying / behaviour policy.

#### Sexual

- Sexual unwanted physical contact or abusive comments
- Sending pictures of "nudes" or images of a sexual nature

# Homophobic

• Homophobic remarks, directed towards a person's perceived sexuality.

# Prejudicial bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics):

- Bullying related to race/culture
- Religion
- Faith and belief and (for those without faith)
- Gender/sexual reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Disability
- Pregnancy and maternity

#### **Recognising Targets of Bullying**

Bullies can pick on vulnerable children. Some children are temporarily vulnerable because of a particular circumstance. Sometimes the target is simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some children need help to become more assertive and learn strategies to enable them to avoid or deal with difficult situations.

Vulnerability is not always visible to adults. The victim may seem exactly like any other child. He or she may also be anxious to cover up the fact that they are being bullied.

### Targets may be students who:

- are new to the class or school
- are considered to have SEN (SEN students are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may not be able to report it effectively staff should be particularly vigilant)

- are 'looked after'
- are 'previously looked after'
- Children for whom English is an additional language (EAL)
- are on the SEN register
- are eligible for or in receipt of Pupil Premium or Free School Meals
- are different in appearance, speech or background from other students
- suffer from low self-esteem (but this might be a cause or effect of bullying)
- are having difficulties with schoolwork
- have suffered from bereavement
- are suffering emotionally due to difficult family circumstances
- have been bullied before
- are pregnant

The following are typical signs or behavioural patterns which may indicate that a child is being bullied – they may also indicate other kinds of distress, even abuse.

# Children may:

- suffer depression
- have low self esteem
- be frightened of walking to or from school
- be unwilling to go to school and make continual excuses to avoid going
- change their route to school every day
- arrive late to school
- begin doing poorly in their school work
- truant
- regularly have clothes or books or schoolwork torn or destroyed
- come home hungry (avoids lunch queues, gives away or 'loses' dinner money)
- become withdrawn
- start hitting other children (as a reaction to being bullied)
- stop eating or become obsessively clean
- develop stomach aches or headaches due to stress
- cry themselves to sleep
- begin wetting the bed
- have nightmares
- have unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts
- have their possessions 'go missing' repeatedly
- ask for money or begin stealing (to pay the bully)
- continually 'lose' their pocket money
- refuse to say what's wrong
- give improbable excuses to explain any of the above
- threaten or attempt suicide
- be at increased risk of sexual and criminal exploitation
- be at increased risk of radicalisation

## Restrictions to prevent bullying behaviour:

- The Safeguarding Team and Safeguarding Governor will monitor data and reported incidents.
- Using opportunities within the curriculum, assemblies, student voice, and trained ambassadors (for example, the Princess Diana Anti bullying ambassadors and White Ribbon Ambassadors) to educate children and to create an inclusive ethos within the school.
- Celebrating Anti-Bullying week annually to promote our ethos of countering bullying.
- Ensuring that staff are vigilant and constantly look for signs of bullying.
- Ensuring that all staff take reports of bullying seriously by reporting them to the pastoral and safeguarding teams.
- Using our website, newsletter and social media platforms to effectively promote the Simon Balle ethos and values; reminding students of the channels for reporting bullying (including external agencies and helplines) and to celebrate achievements within school.
- Continuing to make good use of student ambassadors' to give students channels to report bullying to peers and the 'Tell us' email address. Parents are encouraged to contact the Pastoral or Safeguarding team to report any incidents of bullying.
- Use 'Restorative Practice' as one of a range of specific strategies designed to combat bullying.
- Run both Year Councils and a School Parliament to allow nominated students the opportunity to represent the views of others on issues including bullying and general behaviour around school
- Heads of Year/Phase Leaders will carry out student discussions on a regular basis to gain insights from a number of students across their year groups with regard to behaviour in and around school, and areas where they feel less safe.
- Ensuring that all duty staff, including Lunchtime Supervisors have annual reminders and or training on how to report bullying to the appropriate members of the Middle Leadership and Senior Leadership Team and how to ensure that unstructured time is safe for all students
- Running a variety of clubs and activities during unstructured time which offer students an alternative to the playground
- Having effective and organised duty teams to supervise the school during unstructured time such for example before and after school, during morning break. The Safeguarding Team will review current duty rota and establish protocols for those working at those times.
- Ensuring that staff are easily contactable to parents through email addresses available on the school's website. Ensure that parents receive a call back the same day to inform them of reported incidents.
- 'Tell us' email address on the website for students to report concerns
- Training all staff, including, teaching staff, support staff (including administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) to be aware of where children are and what might constitute unsafe behaviours
- Teaching through an induction programme the Year 7 students on how to self-regulate and show respect and consideration to others in the playgrounds

- Ensure that all staff identify the various forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents
- Students will be consulted about this policy and practices of the school through the School Parliament and through regular student discussions
- As per the school behaviour policy, we ban the use of phones during the school day.

# Responding to bullying

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

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be explored as soon as possible by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- 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 Head of Year/Phase Leader/ Safeguarding Team or another member of SLT will interview all parties involved and take statements.
- Through the recording on the bullying log, the Safeguarding Team and Head of Year will be made aware of any bullying issues. 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 and confidentiality policies.
- Outcomes, as identified within the school behaviour policy, and support will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned in proportion to the issue. Sanctions will take into account any special educational needs (SEN) that the student involved may have.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted, or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed. If a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm, other local services, including early help, or children's social care may be contacted.
- Where incidents of bullying take place off school site, or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is explored as fully as is possible. If required, the DSP/Deputy DSP will collaborate with other schools. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in accordance with our school policies. Parents may be advised to notify the police.
- Incidents of bullying will be recorded on the bullying log and specific actions and consequences added to the document.
- If online behaviour has been reported, the school retains the right to confiscate the electronic device which reports the conversations/ dialogue (please refer to the Behaviour Policy.)
- Bullying behaviour and abuse verbal, physical, sexist, homophobic or racist theft and bringing the school into disrepute are always serious and may lead to C4-C6 depending on the severity of the incident.

- As part of our safeguarding strategy staff and students are trained regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
  - o 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. To identify restorative alternatives that provide a positive learning experience and reduction in further issues or students remaining resentful in regard to outcomes.

## Supporting young people and students

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the student 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 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 to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help, MCR Pathways, Future Living, Specialist Children's Services, or support through CAMHS.
- Offer examples of "safe space" whilst issues are being dealt with, which might include the school library, Reset and reflection room or the CALM room (Centre for Alternative Learning).

# Young People and children 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 their child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service providers.

#### Restorative Approach

Bullying behaviours need to be addressed as the motives directing this unkindness are
not in line with the school's values of dignity, kindness and respect for all. Therefore
there will be consequences for such poor behaviours; the choice of consequence will be
partly determined by the details of the case (e.g. content, frequency, harm) and thus in
line with the sanctions outlined in the 'Behaviour Policy'. This may lead to C4-C6
depending on the severity of the incident.

• 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 CAMHS.

# Links with other school policies and practices

Our Countering Bullying Policy links with the following school policies and practices:

- Safer working practices
- Attendance Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Behaviour policy
- PSHRE Policy
- Sex and Relationships Policy
- Equality Policy
- Complaints policy (in the case of unresolved or disputed issues)

# **Monitoring and Review**

This policy is reviewed annually and monitored by the Safeguarding Team, HOY and the Governing Body. Data will be analysed by sex, race and vulnerable groups. Patterns and trends identified will inform next steps.

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