

Webheath Academy Primary School

Friendship & Anti-bullying Policy (2024 - 2025)



Approved, ratified and adopted by the local governing body on 30th September 2024

Chair: David Sullivan

This policy will be reviewed annually.

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1. Policy consultation process

This policy should be read and implemented alongside the Positive Behaviour Policy, Attendance Policy and Online Safety Policy.

Pupils will learn best in a safe and calm environment that is free from disruption and in which education is the primary focus.

Alongside this policy sits a pupil friendly policy to ensure all children understand that they have a voice, and that a culture of bullying will not be accepted.

This policy has been reviewed and updated in response to the following inputs:

- Staff meetings and discussions.
- Pupil and parent voice within school, feedback on case-by-case management.
- Governors during Governor body meetings.
- KSCIE compliance checks taken place September 2024.

2. Our aims

At Webheath Academy Primary we take all forms of conflict, friendship problems, and bullying behaviour seriously.

Our aims are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for all children in our care.
- To create a happy atmosphere in which both parents and staff work together for the welfare of the students.
- Everyone is mutually valued and respected regardless of gender, race, sexual orientation, beliefs, and ability.
- To encourage children to adopt agreed standards of behaviour and values in order to develop a sense of self-discipline and to take responsibility for their own actions.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The headteacher has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, the Multi-Academy Trust, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies.

3.2 Responsibilities of the Anti-bullying Coordinator

The Anti-bullying Coordinator in our school is the Deputy Head – they are also responsible for the Positive Behaviour Policy.

The Anti-bullying Coordinator will have general responsibility for handling the implementation of this policy.

Their responsibilities are:

- Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies.
- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice.
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review.
- Managing bullying incidents.
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents.
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate.
- Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour.

3.3 Responsibilities of pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.
- Not to suffer in silence but to speak out.

We endeavour to create a supportive ethos and seek to break down the culture of secrecy by encouraging pupils to speak out. We encourage discussion to open up at all levels and hence to break the silence in which aggressive behaviours thrive. A pupil who becomes the target of bullies should not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets. We all need to work together to combat bullying behaviour as we strive to eradicate bullying. A pupil may 'feel' bullied in their own way and this will always be listened to and worked with to support that child.

3.3 Responsibilities of parents/carers

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a member of staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Keeping a written record of any reported instances of bullying.
- Inform the school promptly of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operating with the school and being involved in meetings, if their children are accused of bullying, trying to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the person/s who are bullied and for the person bullying themselves.

Parents are encouraged to reassure their child that we will deal with all forms of bullying sensitively but firmly. If a child tells us, or we discover that they are being bullied, or they are bullying others, we will deal with the matter appropriately. All such disclosures will be acknowledged quickly and dealt with firmly but sensitively.

4. Definition of bullying behaviour

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant, but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour. It is not bullying when two children of approximately the same age and strength have an occasional dispute.

Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where both children disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, where both children make an effort to resolve the problem. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Bullying is a form of child-on child abuse. Bullying behaviour is defined as - **“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can happen face to face or online”** (Anti-bullying Alliance 2023).

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility must be considered, particularly in cases of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, sexist, racist, misogynistic/misandric, biphobic and homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger, then intervention is urgently required.

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical** (hitting, punching, finger jabbing, any inappropriate touching, pinching, jostling, breaking, or taking property).
- **Verbal** (name calling, spreading rumours, put downs, threats, teasing, ridiculing, belittling, excessive criticism, or sarcasm).
- **Emotional** – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- **Indirect** (rumours or stories, exclusion from a group, shunning, invading privacy, graffiti designed to embarrass, withholding friendship or affection), this can include the exploitation of individuals
- **Online/Cyber** bullying (posting on social media, sending nasty phone calls/text messages/e-mails, chat room and online messaging social exclusion). Linked to schools Acceptable Use Policy (ICT).

5. Who is bullied?

Anybody could be subject to bullying at any time in their life. It is not only something that affects children.

A person is bullied when, either as an individual or part of a group, she or he suffers in any way from the direct result of intentional and persistent harassment and/or victimisation by another individual or group.

A person who has been bullied may commonly find it difficult to combat victim behaviour or report their experiences to those who may be able to help them.

Children and young people who are at most increased risk of being the victims or perpetrators of bullying are those who:

- Are in foster care or residential homes (looked after children).
- Have an education, health and care plan (EHCP).
- Have specific special educational needs.
- Have a disability or impairment.
- Are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Are refugees or asylum seekers.
- Start a school or activity group mid-term.
- Are, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning of their sexuality or gender.
- Speak a first language other than English.
- Are young carers.
- Have suffered bereavement.
- Have suffered domestic violence.
- Have experienced physical or emotional trauma.
- Have a parent that was a victim of bullying.

Prejudice-based bullying and **Discriminatory bullying** is done because a child is deemed to belong to a certain group. This includes homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, racist, sexual or gender based bullying, and bullying of students with learning or other disabilities. (Linked to Equalities Policy).

6. Signs and symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school.
- Begs to be driven to school.
- Changes their usual routine.
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic).
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Starts stammering.
- Attempts or threatens self-harm.
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares/bedwetting.
- Regularly feels ill in the morning.
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork.
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- Has possessions go “missing”.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- Becomes unreasonable when dealing with school issues.
- Stops eating.
- Is frightened to say what’s wrong.
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

7. Strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

7.1 Whole school approach

- School Vision and Values focus specifically on how we treat ourselves and others in our community. This threads through all areas of the school community, teaching and learning, classroom, around the corridors, playground and into the wider community. This includes focus assemblies, lessons, and celebrations as well as the day-to-day positive language of ‘**Learning, Creating and Growing Together**’. We expect everyone in our community to show that they are **proud to be the very best that they can be** by showing that **we have kindness, zest, respect, nurture and integrity**. There is an expectation that we will learn, grow, and develop these skills so that we have thriving, trusting relationships which mean that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.

- Issues surrounding friendships and bullying behaviour are taught through the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education Curriculum, Citizenship Curriculum, and class time. Children are taught to explore some of the ups and downs of relationships, including the positive aspects and benefits of friendships and the negative aspects of relational conflict.
- Whole School Assemblies are also used to discuss bullying and raise children's awareness of what bullying looks like, and how they can respond.
- Whole class Circle Time provides opportunities for more detailed discussions and role play activities to explore the nature of bullying.
- Class and School Councils will provide a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the children to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- Positive OPAL play leaders help to reduce potential conflict during breaktime and lunchtime.
- The Playground Rules will be upheld at all times. All staff will monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes inappropriate in order to prevent bullying from developing. Staff on playground duty will inform class teachers of any incidents.
- School participated in Anti Bullying Week each year.
- Continuous staff CPD sessions on anti-bullying strategies and safeguarding procedures.

7.2 Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) Development

Pupil's SMSC development will be enhanced through learning about bullying by ensuring pupils:

- Respect each other including people from different religious, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- Recognise the difference between right and wrong.
- Understand the consequences of their actions.
- Understand the effects of their behaviour on others.

8. Strategies for responding to bullying behaviour

Where bullying does occur this will be followed, by an immediate and appropriate response, including the use of disciplinary sanctions where necessary.

Early identification is the most effective way in minimising bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the person doing the bullying needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop. They may also need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for bullying.

Children are encouraged to report any negative behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They can do this through:

- Speaking to their teacher/TA or any member of support staff.
- Speaking to a parent/other adult who then may contact the school in any of the ways listed.
- Speaking to their School Council rep or an OPAL play champion.

The school will use the positive behaviour policy and restorative practice wherever possible. [Restorative practice is an approach to conflict management](#) that has a proven positive impact on changing school cultures.

8.1 When bullying is known to have happened or be ongoing

The class teacher will discuss the incident(s) with the child being bullied. It is important that they are listened to and believed.

The incident will then be discussed with the child engaging in bullying.

Information will be gathered from witnesses to explain what they saw. The Phase Leader and Deputy Headteacher will be informed, and the information logged onto Arbor and CPOMs.

Outcomes may range from:

- No blame/ support group method.
- Circle time.
- Extra PSHE lessons in class/year group.
- Restorative meetings and outcomes from the children – use of School Signs of Safety Friendship and Anti-bullying plan (known as SOS FAB plans)
- Genuine apology.
- Assertive training.
- Work with a specialist TA/member of staff.
- Counselling within school.
- Use of communications with parents (phone calls, weekly meetings, home/school book).

- External agency use.
- Monitoring by class teacher/Phase Leader/Deputy Headteacher depending on the stage.
- Peer support.
- Formal recording (racism/homophobia/cyber).
- Use of a behaviour contract.
- Liaison with parent/carer/social worker.
- Reconciliation.
- In very serious cases, suspension or even permanent exclusion will be considered.

After each incident/incidents have been dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

8.2 Sanctions

Sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy will be used where appropriate. These might include:

- Official warnings to cease offending or withdrawal of certain school privileges.
- Involvement of the Neighbourhood Schools officer (the Police).
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises.
- Loss of privileges to regain trust
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion.

Parents of those involved will be informed of any action taken.

Where a child or group of children deny involvement in bullying behaviour, the children concerned will be observed and monitored. The child being bullied may be asked to record and report any incidents which cause them concern.

This policy will refer to 'the person bullying' and 'the person being bullied' rather than 'bully' and 'victim', both of which can be defined as negative labelling.

All records will be maintained on Arbor and/or CPOMS, our school databases for electronically keeping pupil files.

9. Support

9.1 Children being bullied

Support for the child being bullied is essential both immediately following the incident and during an agreed period of review. Peer support, staff support, parental support and outside agency support may all be essential to ensure that the child does not suffer any long-term effects. After an agreed period of time, staff will meet with the child being bullied to reassess the situation and the relationship between those involved.

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice.
- Reassuring the pupil.
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.

9.2 Children who are bullying

It is recognised that support must be given to the perpetrator. Disciplinary procedures against the perpetrator(s) are intended to change or modify behaviour rather than label anyone as a bully. Such procedures may include:

- Positive behaviour strategies.
- Withdrawal of activities.
- The establishment of mentoring or a buddy system.
- Discussion about the effects of bullying.
- Involvement of other agencies and services such as an Educational Psychologist and the Behaviour Support Team.

10. Monitoring and evaluation

All incidents of bullying (child-on-child abuse) are recorded on the school safeguarding system, CPOMS and discussed at DSL weekly meetings. Data is collected and analysed to identify achievements, areas for development and school needs. This is reported to governors where questions and challenges can provoke further change. This informs planning and staff are regularly updated through INSET, CPD and staff meetings.

This document will be monitored and evaluated regularly and updated to take account of new Government and local guidance, and the views of the whole school community.

11. Health and safety and safeguarding

11.1 Confidentiality

Pupils will be made aware that some information cannot be held confidential and that their best interests will be maintained.

11.2 Disclosure or suspicion of possible abuse

See School Safeguarding policy for the procedures for dealing with child sexual abuse (child on child sexual abuse) based on the DFE guidelines and recommendations. This policy is available on request.

11.3 Dissemination of the policy

All staff members and governors will receive a copy of this policy. Copies are available from the office on request.

11.4 Awareness creation

In addition to promoting anti-bullying policies during anti-bullying week, it is important to find as many other outlets as possible for promoting anti-bullying policies.

12. Complaints

The Governing Body has established a formal complaints procedure, and this may be used by a parent/carer if necessary.

Appendix 1 – Useful contacts

USEFUL CONTACTS

The following is a list of support for teachers, parents and pupils.

Childline (www.childline.org.uk/Bullying) 0800 1111 (helpline for children).

Anti-bullying Alliance (<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>) advice for all

Kidscape (www.kidscape.org.uk/) provides advice for teachers, parents and young people.
08451 205 204 (helpline for adults only)

Kidscape

152 Buckingham Palace Road LONDON, SW1 9TR

Helpline for Parents:

0171 730 3300 [10.00 am - 4.00 pm Monday-Friday]

They provide free leaflets and booklets for parents, children and teenagers about bullying.

NSPCC (www.nspcc.org.uk) Tel:0808 800 5000

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline (as above)

help@nspcc.org.uk

A free national 24-hour helpline service which provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Members of the public, including parents and other family members can call in to receive advice and guidance.

Centre for Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) (www.ceop.gov.uk) also provides a facility for reporting abuse on the Internet.

