

Sylvester Primary
Academy

ANTI-BULLYING
POLICY
2019/20



1. Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our children so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all children must **tell** and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, should have an understanding of what bullying is, know what the school's policy is and follow it when bullying is reported.

All children and parents should know what bullying is and what to do if bullying is suspected. We will work to achieve this through consultation, the sharing of information and a range of proactive preventative work detailed in this policy.

Under The Education Act 2002 we have a duty to "safeguard and promote the welfare" of all the children in our school and taking a strong stand against bullying is part of this duty.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Principal responsibility for "preventing all forms of bullying" and advice from the Department of Education states that this responsibility also applies to bullying behaviour outside of school. Reports of bullying outside of school will be investigated and acted upon.

2. A Telling School

We are a **TELLING** school. This means that **anyone** who knows that bullying is happening is expected to **tell** a member of staff.

We make it easy for children to **tell** by providing a 'Worry Box' in every classroom and also by the Learning Mentors room. Children can report that they are being bullied, or can report a concern about another child or simply write their name on a slip of paper, post it in the box and their teacher will make time for a private conversation. The Worry Boxes are used for a range of other issues or just to ask for private time to talk.

Children can ask to see the Learning Mentor who will arrange a time to speak confidentially to any child about any concern they have and runs a drop-in session every playtime.

3. Respect

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

This policy is closely linked to our School Behaviour Policy, which states that our golden rule is one of respect:

“Treat others how you would like to be treated yourself”.

We foster and expect good behaviour from all children. This means children are expected to treat each other and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave.

Our behaviour management system underpins this ethos and helps children develop an understanding of how their actions affect others. Children who bully others are in breach of our golden rule and are not treating their peers with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

4. What Is Bullying?

“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally”

(‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying’ May 2012 Department for Education)

The key elements of bullying are:

- intent
- repetition
- an imbalance of power

Bullying can take many forms and can be motivated by actual differences or perceived differences between children. Stopping violence and ensuring a child’s physical safety is our first priority but we also recognise that emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying.

5. Types of Bullying

- Emotional being repeatedly unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Extortion taking or demanding money or gifts, getting someone to do homework
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality, including the sexuality of parents
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Under the Equality Act 2010, schools are responsible for eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation and must advance the equality of opportunity of children and adults who have protected characteristics. This includes bullying behaviour on the basis of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity.

6. Cyber Bullying

The rapid development and widespread use of the internet and mobile phones means that a type of 'virtual' bullying can take place outside school.

Under no circumstances are children permitted to bring mobile phones to school.

Under the Education Act 2011, teachers have the power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Bullying can take place by the internet, email, social network sites, text messages and chat rooms as well as by the misuse of associated technology such as camera and video facilities.

If an incident of cyber-bullying is reported to school, even where it has taken place outside school, it will still be investigated and appropriate action taken.

7. Homophobic Bullying

The Sylvester School will take steps to advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations and eliminate discrimination or harassment across all the **protected characteristics** (age, race, gender reassignment, disability, marriage and civil partnership, religion and belief, pregnancy and maternity, gender, sexual orientation) within the school community.

Incidents of homophobic name calling are taken very seriously at Sylvester Primary Academy and responded to in a similar way to other incidents. We recognise both indirect homophobic abuse e.g. 'your bag's gay' and direct homophobic abuse e.g. a boy is called a 'poof'.

It is illegal to discriminate against those who as lesbian, homosexual, or bisexual (2007 Equality Act. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006), head teachers, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school staff, will identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others, self discipline among pupils and to prevent all forms of bullying. This includes the prevention of homophobic bullying.

Staff are also protected under the Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003.

What does it look like?

Homophobic bullying/name calling occurs when bullying motivated by a prejudice against lesbians, gay or bisexual people.

It can include spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are 'gay' – for example “you’re such a gay boy” or “that’s gay”.

Even when pupils may not know what the words mean, but use homophobic language against others, it is still a form of bullying/name calling.

We do not view homophobic name calling as “harmless banter”. We recognise that if it is not challenged at primary school it is harder to address at secondary school. If a pupil is not explicitly told that homophobic bullying is wrong they may think it is OK to do this.

Responding to an Incident

If we hear a child using homophobic language **we will address it**, using the school’s behaviour policy and guided by our knowledge of the individual pupil’s maturity and personal circumstances.

8. Possible Signs and Symptoms of bullying.

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

9. Prevention of bullying

The School has a toolkit of strategies which can be used to prevent and minimise incidents of bullying as well as to support those involved in bullying.

These strategies come within three categories:

- Whole School Strategies
- Classroom Strategies
- Playground Strategies

9.1 Whole School Strategies

At Sylvester there is a well-developed behaviour policy based on the principles of assertive discipline which is enforced across the school by all staff and which includes a range of positive and negative consequences of behaviour choices.

There is also a culture of support for the development of children's social and emotional skills, with five key skills being assessed annually and support offered where skills are below average.

Across the school a number of approaches are used to tackle and prevent bullying. These include:

- Being a "telling" school, encouraging reporting of bullying through easy to report and accessible methods
- Anti-bullying displays in prominent areas and toilets, including "What to do if you think someone is being bullied" leaflets.
- Always listening and taking reports seriously
- Always investigating suspected incidents of bullying
- Consistent application of the school's behaviour policy
- Encouraging parent/carer involvement with an open door policy
- Use of assemblies to underpin a clear anti-bullying message
- School Council bullying questionnaire to collect information on children's views about bullying, listen to and act upon the findings
- the use of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) in the curriculum
- Teaching of relaxation skills and peer massage through the Relax Kids and Chill Skills Programmes and the Massage in Schools Programme
- Provision of small group support using SEAL or other targeted resources
- Annual 'Friendship Week' to coincide with Anti-bullying week to bring the issue into sharp focus

- Signing of the Anti-Bullying charter by representatives of all classes, the Principal and the Chair of Governors
- Circle Time – a listening and problem solving system
- Annual refresher training for all staff on anti-bullying strategies and approaches
- The development of Peer Mediators to provide peer support
- Involving parents by providing information, inviting parents to Friendship Week assemblies, keeping parents informed if their child is involved in an incident of bullying

9.2 Classroom Strategies

Teachers must arrive at their classroom before the children and must not leave children alone. Children must not be left alone to clear up the hall or other specialist rooms.

Teachers must escort their class to the playground and supervise them when they come into school and take care when allowing more than one child to visit the toilets at the same time. Class teachers must escort their children to the playgrounds at the end of the day and monitor their behaviour as they leave school.

Teachers use curriculum work to embed anti-bullying work through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), the embedding of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and through the creative arts such as drama, film making and art displays.

9.3 Playtime and Lunchtime Strategies

The school keeps under review the indoor and outdoor school environment to minimise areas where bullying may go undetected. Staff on supervision duty must be on time and vigilant, especially of potential 'blind spots' around the school building.

Staff rotas and positioning of staff during breaks and lunchtimes are made with the safety of children as a priority, including the prevention of bullying.

The Anti-bullying Policy, including the procedures to be followed if bullying is suspected or reported, is shared with lunchtime staff and training is given, including refresher training on an annual basis.

Children acting as prefects are carefully chosen, trained and closely supervised. They can be in a prime position to notice bullying but as they are in a position of privilege, they may also be in a position to engage in bullying behaviour.

Playground buddies work alongside lunchtime staff and act as play-leaders and friends to other children, they are often the 'eyes and ears' of the lunchtime staff and report any concerns to adults.

The playground is zoned to allow for a mixture of quiet play and sports. A playground charter with clear playground rules is developed in consultation with the children, parents and School Council.

10. What to do if bullying happens

Children, parents or staff should report a suspected incident of bullying to the class teacher immediately. In addition, the Principal or any member of the school's leadership team is willing to discuss a bullying concern with a child, member of staff or parent.

10.1 What the school does

1. The school takes all reports of bullying seriously and all reports will be investigated thoroughly and the Principal informed.
2. Those engaging in bullying behaviour and those who are the target of that behaviour, are interviewed separately, **never together**.
3. During the investigation, information will be obtained from those directly involved in the incident as well as those who witnessed the incident.
4. The school will keep a written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes.
5. If the allegation is of bullying behaviour by a member of staff, the Principal must be informed.
6. The Principal will impose sanctions which will vary according to the seriousness of the incident. See below for details of possible sanctions
7. In serious cases, parents are informed and are asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the issue.
8. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted. Under the Children Act 1989 if there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, then the matter will be reported to the police.
9. If appropriate, the school can report its concerns to the Knowsley Social Care Team.

10.2 Reporting and Investigation Procedure

If a member of staff becomes aware of a potential bullying incident, either through observation or a report from a child then the following procedure should be followed:

1. Remain calm, separate the target and the suspected bully.

2. Offer reassurance and let the child know you are listening.
3. Confirm that something positive will happen and you will help to put a stop to the unacceptable behaviour.
4. Explain that the matter will be investigated by the Vice Principal, Principal or other senior leader within the school who will report back to the child.
5. Make a note of the incident and any interviews with children and pass to the Vice Principal, Principal or other senior member of staff who is investigating.
6. The person investigating will interview all children involved and may take immediate action as a precautionary measure whilst the investigation is taking place.
7. If it is determined that bullying has taken place, the Principal will take appropriate action as detailed below.
8. Records are kept of all incidents and outcomes.

11. Action in Response to bullying

Principals are able to discipline children for any poor behaviour, including bullying, whether that behaviour occurs in school or when the child is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff.

Where bullying has been found to have taken place, disciplinary action is taken and the action taken will vary according to the severity of the bullying. The sanctions applied also take into account any special educational needs or disabilities that a child may have as well as taking into account the needs of vulnerable children.

The Principal also considers the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether this reveals any concerns for the safety of the child engaging in bullying behaviour. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying behaviour may also need, and be offered, support.

11.1 Responses to the target of the bullying behaviour

Reassurance is offered to the child and a clear explanation of what is going to happen is given to the child and parents.

Support is offered to the target of the bullying behaviour which can include:

- the Learning Mentor or other member of staff will check how the target child is doing on a regular basis in the days and weeks following the incident. The child is also encouraged to seek help and support at any time s/he feels it is needed
- peer support
- the development of alternative friendship groups
- provision of assertiveness training (Kidscape's ZAP Programme)
- group support or individual support from the Learning Mentor or other support staff

- Circle of Friends group work to build relationships around a vulnerable child
- provision of a safe haven for a child through attendance at lunchtime clubs or giving lunchtime responsibilities, time in the Calm Room or Star Room, both of which are dedicated calm and relaxing areas.

The school understands the need to ensure the child feels safe, but, at the same time will ensure that the child develops a sense that s/he has power to help themselves through the support offered.

11.2 Response to the child engaging in bullying behaviour

A range of actions are available depending on the seriousness of the incident and the circumstances of the children involved.

Actions can include:

- application of any of the consequences under the Behaviour Policy including loss of privilege time, loss of play time and/or lunchtime
- informing parents and/or meeting with parents
- temporary removal from class and/or playground
- withdrawal of privileges, including attendance at clubs or on school trips
- the use of Individual Behaviour Plans, Pastoral Support Plans and referral to external agencies for support
- fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

It is also recognised that the child engaging in bullying behaviour may also need support to make improved behaviour choices. Support can be offered by way of group work, one to one mentor support, Circle of Friends or from external agencies.

Agreed by Governing Body - September 2019

To be reviewed – September 2020