

# Willingham Primary School



## Anti-Bullying Policy

May 2018

Date of Policy: May 2018

Date to be Reviewed: May 2020

# Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy

## Whole School Context

It is the primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels safe, or valued and respected and that each person is treated fairly and well. We aim to be a caring community whose values are based on mutual trust and respect for all. The school expects every member of the school community to behave in a considerate way towards others and for all staff to consistently follow the approach to behaviour management as laid out in the Behaviour Policy and the guidance within this policy.

Our school aims to work restoratively, wherever possible. Restorative Approaches are value-based and needs-led. They can be seen as part of a broader ethos that identifies strong, mutually respectful relationships and a cohesive community as the foundations on which good teaching and learning can flourish.

Restorative Approaches build upon the following basic principles and values, which, by their nature, will reduce the likelihood of bullying behaviour taking place.

- genuineness – honesty, openness, sincerity
- positive regard for all individuals – valuing the person for who they are and showing respect for them
- empathic understanding – being able to understand another person's experience
- individual responsibility and shared accountability
- self-actualisation – the human capacity for positive growth

Our school fundamentally believes that children can learn and change for the better. Throughout this policy, we will not refer to children as 'a bully', in recognition that behaviour at one point in a child's life does not define their identity and does not determine their future.

## What is bullying?

The formal definition of bullying is "behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", March 2014).

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a person or group of people through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

In our school, adults and children in the School Council have worked together to define bullying.

*Bullying is behaviour by anyone that...*

- *Hurts someone else physically, for example hitting or kicking, or emotionally, for example threatening someone, calling them bad names or leaving them out of a group (painful)*
- *Is done on purpose and not by accident (purposeful)*
- *Is aimed at a particular person (personal)*
- *Happens more than once though it doesn't have to happen every day (persistent)*
- *Where the person behaving like this is older, bigger or acting as part of a group (power imbalance)*

*Bullying can be direct but can also include talking about someone behind their back or organising other children against a particular child. It can be face to face or via mobile phone, computer or other digital devices.*

## Why do children bully others?

The school recognises that children may bully others for a variety of reasons. Recognising why children engage in bullying behaviour helps us identify children who are at risk of bullying others and this enables the school to intervene at an early stage to prevent the likelihood of bullying occurring and to respond promptly to incidents of bullying as they occur. Understanding the emotional health and wellbeing of children who bully is key to selecting the right responsive strategies and to engaging the right external support to ensure that this behaviour is stopped.

Although it is never acceptable for children to bully others, it is recognised that children may be more likely to engage in bullying if they:

- have been bullied themselves (within school, within their family, outside school)
- are struggling to cope with a difficult personal situation e.g. bereavement, changes in family circumstances
- like the feeling of power and use bullying behaviour to get their own way
- have a temperament that may be aggressive, quick tempered or jealous
- have been or are being physically or emotionally abused or neglected
- feel frustrated, insecure, inadequate, humiliated
- find it difficult to socialise and make friends
- are overly self-orientated (possibly displaying good self-esteem) and find it difficult to empathise with the needs of others
- are unable to resist negative peer pressure
- are under pressure to succeed, at all costs
- have Special Educational Needs

### **What are the different types of bullying?**

There are different forms of bullying behaviour, mainly categorised as follows. The list gives examples and is not intended to be exhaustive

- Physical – punching, pushing or hurting others; made to give up money or belongings; damaging property, clothes or belongings of others; forcing others to do something they don't want to do
- Verbal – teasing in a nasty way; insulting others about their race, religion or culture; calling others names in other ways or directing offensive comments at others
- Indirect – telling nasty stories about others (whether true or not); deliberately leaving others out, deliberately ignoring or excluding others from groups.
- Electronic /'cyberbullying' – sending unpleasant messages via texts, instant messenger, social network sites, emails, on-line games; via images or videos, posted on the internet or spread via mobile phones.
- Non Verbal – unpleasant looks, intentional staring, copying/mimicking, deliberately invading personal space

The school recognises that, although anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference, some children may be more vulnerable to specific types of bullying than others. This includes bullying related to:

- race, religion or culture
- special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- being gifted or talented
- being very hard-working
- appearance
- health conditions
- sexual orientation
- family or home circumstances (including being looked-after, being a young carer)

- sexist, sexual or transphobic bullying

### **What isn't bullying?**

It is important for school, children and families to recognise behaviour which, although unpleasant and hurtful, is **not** bullying. Furthermore, a single act or behaviour is not considered bullying. It is very important that parents and school help children to learn what is and isn't bullying and also to recognise the impact of their actions on others.

Appendix A gives more detail around the following behaviours which, although unpleasant and need to be dealt with, are not considered to be bullying.

- not liking others
- mutual dislike
- not always including others
- accidentally hurting someone
- being 'bossy'
- being overly dominant in games
- a single act of telling a joke about someone
- expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding
- one off acts of harassment, aggressive behaviour, intimidation or meanness

All the behaviours above are unpleasant and will be addressed, but they are not to be treated as bullying. It is really important that children, parents and school staff are clear what is and what is not bullying behaviour and that the terminology of bullying is used appropriately by all adults, as well as children.

### **How are children involved in bullying situations?**

Bullying is a complex type of behaviour occurring between individuals and groups. Different roles within bullying situations can be identified and include:

- ring-leaders, who might take the main role but, through their position of power, can also direct others in bullying activities
- assistants/associates, who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader)
- reinforcers, who give positive feedback to those who are bullying, perhaps by smiling or laughing
- outsiders/bystanders, who stay back, stay silent and do nothing and, thereby, appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour
- defenders, who try and intervene to stop the bullying or comfort pupils who experience bullying.

Sometimes, children adopt different roles simultaneously or at different times e.g. a bullied child might be bullying another child at the same time, or a 'reinforcer' might become a 'defender' when the ringleader is not around.

### **What do we do to prevent bullying?**

The school's Behaviour Policy is based on the Restorative Approach, which is an understanding that we work best as part of a community and that to do so, we need self-awareness, communication skills, empathy and an understanding of our responsibilities to others. These skills are taught throughout the school day, through the curriculum, in assemblies and in our approach to conflict resolution. All members of the school staff and governors are trained in the Restorative Approach, and are expected to use the principles of this system when engaging with children and each other, in order to model a mutually respectful way of treating others in the school community.

### **How do we monitor and record behaviour and relationship issues?**

The school follows a clear behaviour management system, which enables challenging behaviour and relationship problems to be identified, recorded and addressed. This process is part of the school's overall positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy. It supports the detection of bullying and allows for intervention at an early stage. This system involves using the class Behaviour Log to record pastoral issues, using the school's definition of bullying to assess situations as they arise and, working alongside all parties, to form a judgement as to where bullying has occurred. Restorative conversations are held when harm has occurred in order that the child who has caused harm understands the impact of their behaviour on others.

Members of the Senior Leadership Team regularly discuss the behaviour of children in school in order to identify patterns of behaviour, reasons for it and ways of supporting the child in improving their behaviour. As part of these discussions, the possibility of whether a child is bullying others is addressed. There are occasions when the ongoing behaviour of one child has a regular and negative impact on a number of other children but is not directed at any child in particular. Whilst this is not within the definition of bullying, we recognise that the perception of the child on the receiving end may be different and that this may still cause harm.

Recording incidents helps to build a picture of behaviour patterns in school e.g. who, when, how, what action taken. It enables the school to manage individual cases effectively and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies. The number of bullying incidents is recorded termly by the Headteacher to the Full Governing Body

In order to achieve and maintain a climate in which bullying is less likely to occur, we aim to provide:

- a healthy, safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff,
- an environment where the needs of those children who have a difficult family or home environment (including those who are looked after) those who have a Special Educational Need or Disability, those with involvement of additional service or those at risk of exclusion are actively considered and acted upon by staff
- a broad and balanced curriculum for all our pupils, having considered gender, ability, ethnicity, religion and culture
- opportunities to promote pupils' self-esteem and emotional wellbeing and help them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community
- help in preparing our pupils to confidently meet the challenges of adult life
- sufficient information and support to enable our pupils to make safe choices;
- an enriched curriculum, in order to provide pupils with opportunities to develop the necessary skills to manage their lives effectively
- help to our pupils so that they learn to respect themselves and others and move safely from childhood, through adolescence, into adulthood
- a wider awareness of religious, cultural and moral values and respect for different ethnic groups, religious beliefs and ways of life
- an inclusive ethos and a culture of mutual respect, where diversity and difference are recognised, appreciated and celebrated
- trained Peer Mediators, who are able to help children sort out lower level issues at an early stage

#### **How will we know if a child is being bullied?**

- A child might directly tell a member of staff, or another child may tell on their behalf.
- A child might write a note to say they are being bullied.
- A child might tell a member of their family who then informs school.
- A child or group of children who have witnessed bullying might inform a member of staff or parent.

- A parent may suspect that their child is being bullied, even if their child has not said so, and inform the school.

Children may not tell anyone about being bullied for many reasons. Bullying is often very underhand and difficult to spot, even within a classroom setting. It may take place in toilets and cloakrooms which are out of sight and earshot of adults. Unless a child, or someone acting on their behalf, actually tells someone, adults, including parents and school staff, may be unaware that bullying is taking place.

The school recognises the fact that some children are more vulnerable to bullying than others and is sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child or young person is being bullied. Children who are being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems. The following physical signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying will be considered as a possibility:

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Losing self confidence and self-esteem
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Developing unexplained cuts, bruises and other injuries
- Unwilling to go to school, development of school phobia and unusual patterns of non-attendance
- Failing to achieve potential in school work
- Less inclined to speak in front of peers, (e.g., to contribute in class discussions)
- Becoming withdrawn, nervous and losing concentration
- Becoming isolated and disengaged from other children
- Developing changes in physical behaviour such as stammering and nervous ticks
- Regularly having books or clothes destroyed
- Having possessions go 'missing' or 'lost', including packed lunch and money
- Starting to steal money (to pay the perpetrator)
- Becoming easily distressed, disruptive or aggressive
- Developing problems with eating and food
- Running away
- Developing sleep problems and having nightmares
- Developing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide.

Where children are exhibiting extreme signs of distress and changes in behaviour, the school will liaise with parents/carers and, where appropriate, relevant health professionals and agencies, such as the school nurse / G.P. and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service.

### **What do we do once bullying is suspected?**

It is important to note that there are a huge range of situations which lead to bullying being suspected. The following process outlines that which should generally be followed, but there will inevitably times when this may not be appropriate, in certain circumstances where an alternative course of action would be explored. It is important to note that this process should be completed as quickly as possible.

#### Initial notification

If parents suspect their child is being bullied, or is taking part in bullying, they should, as soon as possible, contact a member of the Senior Leadership Team (Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher) directly or they may inform their child's class teacher who will then report this to the Senior Leadership Team. This may be done through email, phone call or in person. The parents will be provided with a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy and will discuss the situation with parents.

If a member of staff is concerned that a child might be being bullied, or might be taking part in bullying, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed, as soon as possible.

If a child discloses to a member of staff that they are being bullied, or that they have witnessed bullying, or they have taken part in bullying, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be informed, as soon as possible. Whenever a child makes such a disclosure, the member of staff must listen carefully to what the child is saying. Questions asked should follow the Restorative Approach questions. Staff will need to make sure that the child being bullied is safe and secure, acknowledge their concerns and reassure the child that the incident/s will be taken seriously. Staff will explain to the child what will happen next.

#### Initial discussion

Depending on the route through which suspected bullying has been notified, and other relevant factors, the Senior Leadership Team will make a decision as to which member of staff will lead the investigation into suspected bullying and which member of staff will speak to the children involved.

Full details will be taken from the child who it is suspected is being bullied, using the questions from the Restorative Approach, prompting for further information as appropriate. Notes should be taken or made as soon as possible after the discussion. Staff will bear in mind the definition of bullying when listening to what the child is saying and will begin to make an initial assessment of whether the behaviour is bullying or other unpleasant behaviour. It may also become clear that additional children may be involved and will need to be part of the investigation. The staff member will explain to the child what will happen next.

A detailed conversation will also be held with the child who is suspected of bullying. Staff will need to keep an open mind because at this stage, it may not always be clear whether the behaviour being investigated is bullying or not. It is important to let the child give a full version of events, using the questions from the Restorative Approach. It may be appropriate at this stage to explain the impact of the child's behaviour on the other child.

Staff may need to speak to a number of other children. These may be witnesses/bystanders, children who have disclosed the bullying or other children named in the initial discussions.

It may be necessary to speak to the children involved more than once during the investigation process. The children may be asked if they would be happy to take part in a Restorative meeting with the other child/ren involved as part of a possible resolution.

#### Review

Members of the Senior Leadership Team will meet with the member/s of staff carrying out the initial investigations to review all information gathered. A discussion will take place in order to establish, as far as possible, what has happened and whether it is classed as bullying, or unpleasant behaviour. The details of the events and children involved will be logged on the 'Incident Report Form' Appendix B. The Senior Leadership Team, and other staff, as appropriate, will discuss an appropriate course of action, taking into account the wishes of the child who has been bullied/subjected to unpleasant behaviour.

All incidents of bullying will be responded to seriously and the behaviour of those who have been bullying will be challenged.

#### The Restorative Meeting

Where appropriate, and in most cases of bullying, the school will initially consider the use of a Restorative Approach to resolve the situation between the target and perpetrators of bullying. This takes the form of a structured conversation, led by a member of staff trained in the Restorative Approach, during which all children are listened to and encouraged to be as truthful as possible, feeling confident that their honesty will be valued.

The child who has been the target of bullying or unpleasant behaviour has the opportunity to explain to the perpetrator, in a safe and structured environment, what harm they have caused, how it has affected them and others and how they feel this could be put right.

This approach supports the person who is doing the bullying through a process of mediation in order to help them to understand the effect of their choices and to accept that it is wrong to bully, to take responsibility for their behaviour and make amends. Through this discussion, the perpetrator will be held to account for their unacceptable behaviour. The aim of the meeting is to enable them to:

- understand and accept responsibility for the harm caused to the child being bullied
- understand and accept responsibility for the harm caused to others (eg, friends, family, staff)
- recognise the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused
- agree, with the child who has been bullied, a range of helpful actions to repair the harm caused, which will be monitored over an agreed period of time.

There may be occasions and circumstances where it is felt by school and/or parents/carers that the Restorative Approach would not be appropriate. In such cases, other options may be considered, depending on the particular circumstances involved. A problem solving approach will be used in order to identify different approaches and this will be discussed with the parents/carers.

### Further Consequences and Sanctions

The children are encouraged to consider together which sanctions are appropriate. This discussion will be facilitated by the member of staff. Some sanctions agreed by the children will be very specific to the incident and situation. On many occasions, the victim of bullying, or unpleasant behaviour, is satisfied with an apology and a commitment that it will not happen again. However, depending upon the behaviour of the perpetrator, the member of staff leading the Restorative meeting may decide that further, more serious sanctions should also be applied and these will be discussed at the meeting. These sanctions are outlined in the Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy 2017 and include:

- loss of playtimes and/or lunchtime playtime for a specified number of days, depending on the circumstances and severity of the incident/s
- not being allowed to eat lunch in the dining hall
- being given tasks to undertake instead of playtime or lunch play, such as helping in the dinner hall, tidying the library, picking up litter etc (School based community service)
- being taught outside of the classroom for a specified number of sessions/days
- being placed 'on report' to the Headteacher or Deputy/Assistant Headteacher
- loss of privileges (temporarily or permanently)
- the agreed outcome and sanctions will be recorded on the Incident Report Form and a written record of the agreement reached between children will be made, if at least one child would like it.

In response to serious behaviour, fixed term exclusions (including lunchtime exclusions) and permanent exclusions may be applied, in discussion with the Headteacher, as outlined in the Behaviour Policy.

### Follow Up

Once staff are satisfied, following investigations, that bullying has taken place, the parents of children involved will be informed as soon as possible and invited to a meeting to discuss the behaviour, sanctions agreed and support to be provided (where necessary).

It is important that the outcome of the Restorative Meeting/bullying investigation is also shared with relevant staff and that the class teachers, teaching assistants and midday supervisors are aware of the situation in order to monitor on-going interactions and relationships between the children involved. Staff will continue to monitor the situation, particularly the class teacher/s of both the target and perpetrator, to minimise the risk of recurrence of the bullying behaviour. Records of discussions and meetings will be taken by the class teacher/other members of staff and should be filed in the class Behaviour Log, which will be passed on to subsequent teachers.

All incidents agreed to be bullying should be recorded on the records of both the target and the perpetrator held on the school's information system.

Where a Restorative Approach has failed to modify the behaviour of a perpetrator and the bullying is continuing the parent/s of the perpetrator will be invited to the school to further discuss their child's behaviour with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. The school will adopt a problem solving approach with parents in order to provide support for the child in changing their behaviour. This may involve ongoing sanctions and where appropriate referral to external agencies.

The school firmly believes that all bullying is unacceptable and that the perpetrators should be made to accept responsibility for their behaviour and make amends, the school also believes that a cooperative ethos is desirable when trying to reach a resolution that is effective and long-lasting. Parents/carers of those causing the bullying will also have support from the school to come to a balanced view of what is happening and to appreciate their role in helping their children to learn about the consequences of their actions and adopt alternative ways of behaving.

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### Examples of behaviour which is unpleasant but not bullying.

- Not being liked  
It is very natural that people do not like everyone around them and, although it is unpleasant to know someone does not like you, this in itself is not bullying.
- Not always being included  
Children often gather around a group of friends and are often not friends with everyone, so it is inevitable that there are times (such as when children play games in the playground, chat in a group, or have a party etc) they will include their friends and not include others. It is important to remind children that they, too, may do the same thing sometimes and, although not always being included is unpleasant, it is not bullying.
- Accidentally hurting someone  
When someone accidentally hurts someone, the reaction can depend on the injured person's mood, who hurt them and how much it hurt or embarrassed them. The same act can be interpreted in different ways, depending on all of these factors. This is also relevant in sport and games at playtime and it is very important for teachers and parents to explain that some accidents happen without any bad intention and although it is unpleasant, it is not bullying.
- Friends being 'bossy'  
One child making other children play a certain way or insisting on being in charge of a game is very natural behaviour but is not an act of bullying, even if it is repeated. This behaviour relates to a particular child not being able to adapt their play and think of others but is not in itself bullying. It is important for parents and school staff to teach resilience and assertiveness to ensure a child can stand up to this type of behaviour. It is also important that the child who plays in this way is given support to recognise that they cannot always be 'in charge'.
- A single act of telling a joke about someone  
Making fun of other people is not fun for them, and there is a fine line between being funny and making fun of someone. It is important to teach children that things they say as jokes should also be amusing for the subject of the joke. If not, they should stop. Unless it happens over and over again and is done deliberately to hurt someone, telling jokes about people is not bullying.
- Arguments  
Arguments are heated disagreements between two (or more) people (or groups). It is natural that people have different interests and opinions and disagree on many things. The argument itself is not a form of bullying, although some children can turn arguments into bullying, because they want to win the argument so much. It is very important for school staff and parents to distinguish between a normal disagreement and bullying during an argument. This will involve school staff in particular knowing the context of the argument, the relationship between the children and other wider factors.
- Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others  
Communication between children may be unpleasant and they may say unkind things, but this in itself is not bullying.
- One off acts of harassment, aggressive behaviour, intimidation or meanness  
Anything that happens once, whilst unpleasant and needs dealing with, is not an act of bullying.

## Incident Report Form

### Logging information

<b>SECTION A: ALLEGED BULLYING INCIDENT</b>			
Target Name(s)	Age	Year Group	Class
Ethnicity	Gender M / F	SEND Y/N	
Home language	Looked-after child Y / N	Young carer Y / N	
Member of staff to whom the incident was reported			
Date of incident			
Time of incident			
Location of incident			
Target's Account / Concern of parents/carers			
Alleged perpetrator(s):	Age	Year Group	Class
Name(s)			
Nature of incident including details of injury or damage to property, etc.			
Circle any elements that apply:			
Form:	Physical	Verbal	Indirect      Cyberbullying
Type:	Race/religion/culture	Sexual/sexist/transphobic	Homophobic
	SEND/disability	Home circumstances	Gifted/talented
	Health conditions	Other	
Parents/carers of alleged target(s) informed:			
Date:		Time:	

**SECTION B: ACCOUNTS OF THOSE INVOLVED**

Alleged perpetrator(s) account of the incident

Name(s)

Age

Year Group

Class

Bystanders' / witnesses' accounts of the incident

Name(s)

Age

Year Group

Class

Parents/carers of alleged perpetrators informed:

Date:

Time:

**SECTION C: ACTION TAKEN**

Details of immediate action taken, including restorative meeting

Monitoring of action taken, sanctions agreed and details of follow up and longer term action taken



