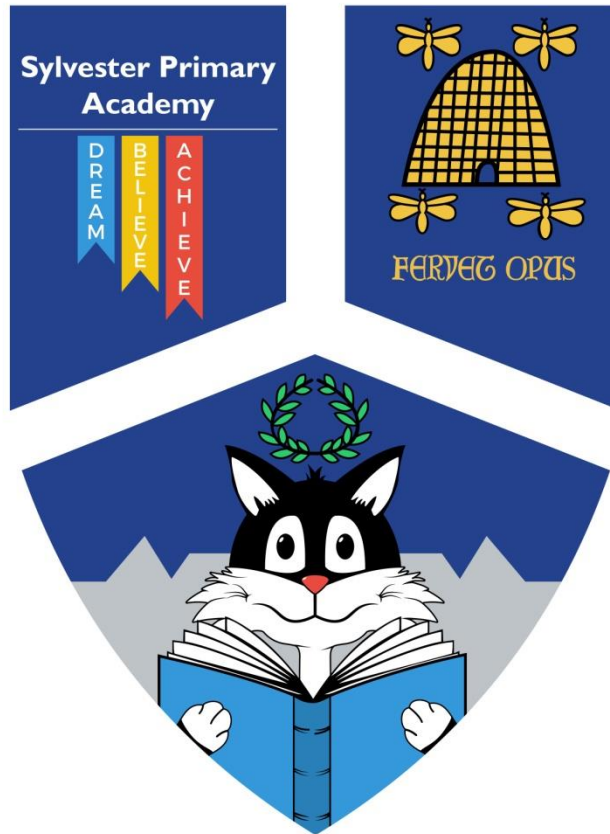


Anti-bullying Policy & Guidelines

Sylvester Primary Academy



Approved by: Local Governing Body

Date: 24th September 2024

Last reviewed on: September 2024

Next review due by: September 2025

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY & GUIDELINES

RATIONALE

We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in a safe, caring environment without the fear of being bullied. Whilst recognising that all institutions, whether large or small, have the potential for some bullying behaviour, we feel that a clearly laid down system for behaviour can minimise its occurrence. At Sylvester Primary Academy we endeavour to promote good citizenship and make it clear that bullying is anti-social and contrary to our ethos. It is **wrong** and **will not be tolerated**.

We feel that it is important for pupils and parents / carers to know that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

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.

OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY

- To ensure that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers have an understanding of what bullying is and how it should be reported
- To ensure that all pupils and their families know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying occurs
- To assure parents and carers, that as a school, we take bullying seriously and that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- To ensure that all stakeholders understand that bullying will not be tolerated

INTRODUCTION

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those children who watch and less aggressive pupils may be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that jokes, insults, written abuse, violence and threatening or intimidating behaviour are found in our society but we believe that no one person or group should have to accept this type of behaviour.

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 Mentor’s 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.

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 reinforces our school promises -

READY - We treat others how we want to be treated.
RESPECTFUL - We are respectful to everyone and to our environment.
SAFE - We act safely at all times.

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 school promises and are not treating their peers with respect. Children who are bullying need to be supported to learn different ways of behaving.

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 as damaging as physical bullying.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour:

Physical – a child may be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at etc.

Emotional – being repeatedly unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding books or threatening gestures).

Verbal – verbal abuse can take the form of name-calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical or social disability or personality.

Exclusion – a child may be bullied simply by being excluded from, or left out of discussions / activities by those they believe to be their friends.

Damage to property or theft – pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. The bully may use physical threats in order that property is handed over to him or her.

Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality, including the sexuality of parents.

Cyber bullying - All areas of internet and social media. The rapid development and widespread use of the internet and mobile phones means that a type of 'virtual' bullying can take place outside school. **We encourage pupils not to bring mobile phones into school, but any mobile phones brought to school must be left in the school office and collected at the end of the day.**

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, audio 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.

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.

POSSIBLE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

Bullying is not the same as falling out with your friend or friends.

Rather than telling an adult, children may indicate by signs and symptoms that they are the victims of bullying. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Is unwilling to come to school
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do less well in school work
- Comes home with clothes or possessions damaged
- Starts stealing money
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Comes home hungry [more so than is usual]
- Becomes aggressive or unreasonable
- Is bullying siblings or other children
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Is afraid to use the mobile phone, internet or online games

Child on Child Abuse

Child on child abuse can take various forms including:

- Serious bullying (including cyber bullying)
- Relationship abuse
- Domestic violence
- Child sexual exploitation
- Youth and serious youth violence (including gangs)
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Gender/Race violence

These types of abuse rarely take place in isolation and often indicate wider safeguarding concerns.

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

PREVENTION OF BULLYING

We have 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

Whole School Strategies

At Sylvester our behaviour policy is 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.

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.
- Building good relationships with children which facilitate communication.
- 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 and the curriculum to underpin a clear anti-bullying message
- Teaching of relaxation skills and mindfulness
- Provision of small group support
- Annual Anti-bullying week to bring the issue into sharp focus

Classroom Strategies

Adults 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.

Adults must escort their class to the playground and supervise them when they come in to 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 the PSHE curriculum to embed anti-bullying work throughout the year.

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.

Children acting as buddies are carefully chosen, trained and closely supervised. They can be in a prime position to notice bullying. 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.

WHAT TO DO IF BULLYING OCCURS

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.

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.
7. In serious cases, parents are informed and are asked to attend 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.

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 child experiencing the bullying behaviour 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.

ACTION IN RESONSE TO BULLYING

Head teachers 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.

Responses to the child experiencing 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 child experiencing the bullying behaviour which can include:

- 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
- 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 or time in the Calm Room

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.

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
- 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
- suspension from school
- 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.