

Anti-Bullying Policy

Aims

To promote a culture that rejects bullying and cruelty and provides pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will all pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools.

Objectives

- Pupils will know that bullying issues are dealt with efficiently and effectively
- Staff will be responsive to bullying behaviour
- No bullying will take place in the school
- Pupils will be empowered

Definition

Bullying is a repeated aggressive behavior where one person (or group of people) in a position of power deliberately intimidates, abuses, or coerces an individual with the intention to hurt that person physically or emotionally. Acts of bullying can be physical or verbal.

Many young people can be unkind to each other and 'fall out' as they refine social skills and grow into adults. While these interactions are unpleasant, there is a clear line between conflict and bullying. Incidents of bullying must include all 3 of these characteristics:

- **Intentional**- the behavior was aggressive and a deliberate attempt to hurt another person
- **Repeated**- these aggressive actions occur repeatedly over time to the same person or group of people
- **Power imbalance**- the person bullying has more physical or social power than the child or children being bullied

A child friendly definition of bullying

"When someone continually behaves nastily to someone else."

Agreements

We agree that bullying behaviour should be challenged in our school to ensure that:

- Children are safe and happy whilst they are at school
- Academic achievement is not affected by behaviour

Bullying has three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated, often over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves as there is an imbalance of power.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying behaviour can be:

Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.

Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.

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, sextortion (sexually coerced extortion) etc.

Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion
Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

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

The ringleader – Starting and leading the bullying but not always the person 'doing' the bullying.

The target - The person who is being bullied.

Assistant(s) - Actively involved in 'doing' the bullying.

Reinforcer(s) - Supports the bullying, might laugh or encourage other people to carry on what is going on.

Defender(s) - Stands up for someone being bullied. Knows that bullying is wrong and feels confident enough to do something about it. This might involve talking to an adult in school.

Outsider(s) - Ignores any bullying and doesn't want to get involved.

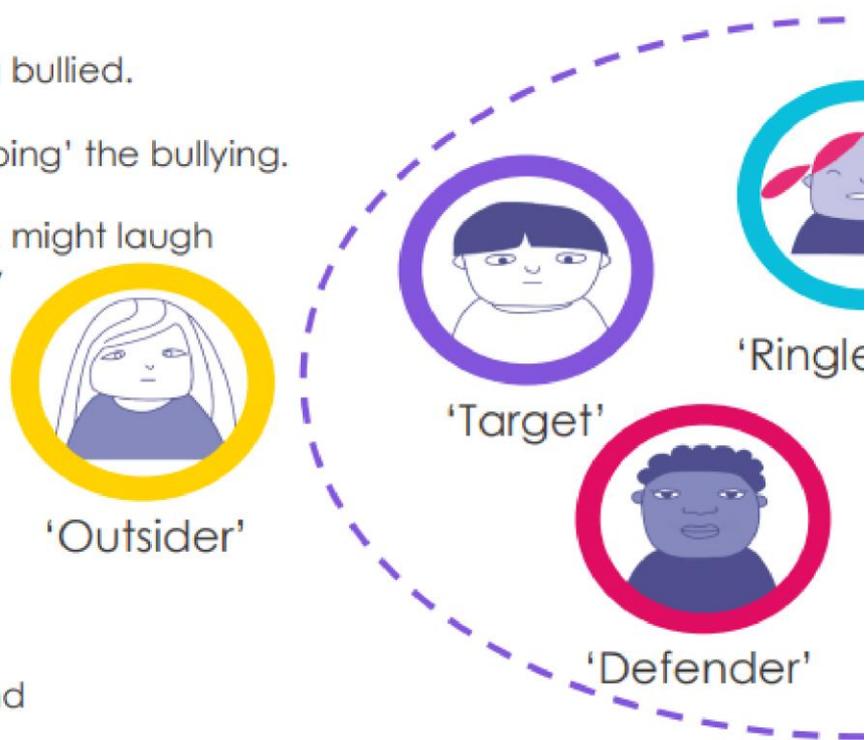


Diagram from the Anti-Bullying Alliance

Different roles can be adopted 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.

Vulnerable Groups

Staff have a duty to adhere to the Equality Act 2010 and must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school. This policy shows commitment to preventing and responding effectively to the bullying of protected and vulnerable groups of children. At The Laurels we know that these children are statistically more likely to experience bullying. These groups include:

- disabled children / children with SEN
- those who are or are perceived to be, LGBT,
- ethnic minority groups including traveller children
- children belonging to a faith group
- young carers
- Children we care for (children in foster care)

- appearance targeted children,
- sexist and sexual bullying

Children are also protected from discrimination if they: 1) Are associated with someone who has a protected characteristic (e.g. a sibling or friend) or 2) Have complained about discrimination, or supported someone else's claim.

When Bullying is a Criminal Activity

Bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, however it is important for staff working with children to be aware that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence. These are addressed under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. Hate crimes are also illegal and should be reported.

Preventative Strategies

The main ways to prevent bullying are to create an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat each other and school staff with respect, and to teach children about the importance of understanding and tolerating differences between people. This may be done in discrete PSHE lessons and school assemblies or in class in order to respond to specific situations. We also believe it necessary to regularly teach about the dangers of cyber-bullying.

Other strategies to prevent bullying are:

- During the Autumn term "Say No to Bullying" is taught in each class. During Anti-Bullying Week the whole school spends time on considering the current theme. This is delivered through assemblies, displays and classroom-based activities using age-appropriate activities.
- During anti-bullying week we collect sociometric data for each class and use this to explore the dynamics of relationships. This can help us to identify children who are rejected by peers as well as those children displaying prosocial behaviours as these children can support the behaviour of others.
- The class charter is displayed in each classroom and around the school and ensures that all children are aware of the acceptable levels of behaviour and the parameters in which they must work.
- All year groups have an elected School Council member who can convey pupil ideas and suggestions for creating a caring and stimulating learning environment. The School Council to offer up pupil suggestions.
- A child-friendly confidential worry-box is provided for pupils to share concerns with trusted adults.
- The school recognises the need for quality supervision on the playground at break times and so behaviour is handled by members of the teaching and support staff.
- Staff are given training on identifying bullying and how to deal with it.
- Staff encourage children to report bullying and create a positive and safe environment where pupils' concerns can be expressed and problems solved without fear of victimisation.
- Children with SEND receive the Speak Out, Stay Safe bespoke programme which supports them with identifying bullying behaviour as well as providing them with strategies to deal with it should it they experience bullying or witness someone else experiencing it.

Anti-bullying procedures

Procedure – When Bullying is Suspected

The victim, alleged aggressor and any witnesses should be interviewed separately and notes taken as evidence of what has occurred.

Use the Incident Record form attached.

Support the victim by:

- ensuring that the pupil feels that he or she is listened to
- assuring the pupil that all incidents of bullying are taken seriously
- reassuring the pupil by explaining how
- he or she will be supported
- the incident will be dealt with

The victim should ideally also be supported by the member of staff he or she has confided in. The disclosure will usually have occurred as a result of the pupil identifying someone who cares or can help.

Ensure the bully is dealt with fairly by:

- describing the reasons for your meeting with him or her (at the same time, do protect the victim and the identity of any witnesses)
- remaining calm and non-judgemental in order to ensure that the pupil
- feels that he or she is listened to
- assuring the pupil that all incidents of bullying are taken seriously and that, regardless of the reasons, you disapprove of all acts of bullying
- explaining how:
 - he or she will be supported
 - the incident will be dealt with

Attempt to help both the bully and the victim to:

- see the situation from another perspective
- explore the causes and effects of the incident
- identify how the situation could have been avoided or resolved (i.e. how to be assertive rather than aggressive or submissive)
- how they can resolve the present conflict

See both the pupils together for a mediation session if appropriate. At this meeting do the following:

- Remain calm and non-judgemental when the pupils talk through their understanding of the problem.
- Listen more than you speak. Do not assume that you know how the pupils feel or anticipate what they want to say. Pupils are more likely to reflect on their behaviour if they feel they are being listened to rather than spoken at.
- Paraphrase what you are told to show that you understand what the pupils have said. It is how the pupils perceive the situation which is important, not how you perceive it.
- Encourage the pupils through your questions, to reflect on their behaviour and the factors which may have influenced the behaviour of others. When appropriate, encourage empathy.
- Encourage the pupils to identify how they can resolve current difficulties and avoid the problems from recurring.
- Explain that the Incident Record form will record:
 - the details of the incident
 - the future conduct of the pupils, as identified and agreed by all parties in the meeting
 - the actions either pupil should take if there is further bullying or provocation (e.g. to report it to their teacher immediately)
 - the monitoring arrangements for ensuring that the problems do not happen again
 - the further action the school will take if the problems do happen again
 - the date when these arrangements will be reviewed (usually after two weeks)

The advantage of the Incident Record form is that it helps the school to:

- set clear and consistent procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying
- monitor the progress of individual pupils
- monitor and review its Anti-Bullying policy

Do not collude with the secrecy which surrounds bullying. Make sure that everyone directly concerned with the pupils' welfare is made aware of what has happened and how it is to be addressed. You can decide at this stage what the consequences will be for the bully.

Hold a review meeting after about two weeks. Repeat the initial procedures (i.e. interview the pupils individually before you all meet up). This is less threatening for both parties and is more likely to result in a frank and open discussion.

If no further incidents are reported and the matter is successfully resolved by the time the review occurs, put copies of the Incident Record form in the files of both the bully and the victim. Make sure SLT have a copy too.

For repetitive bullying incidents, the headteacher or a member of SLT must always be involved and a behaviour modification scheme may be implemented. Outside agencies may be involved e.g. Educational Psychologist, Early Help. A Senior Leader will arrange a meeting with the children and their parents to discuss the problems explaining strategies implemented so far.

Once the incident has been successfully resolved, unless there is a further occurrence of bullying, do not refer back to it.

Victim Blaming Language

The following information is based on the following guidance document:

<https://shorturl.at/oXstl>



What is victim blaming?

Victim blaming is any language or action that implies (whether intentionally or unintentionally) that a person is partially or wholly responsible for abuse that has happened to them. It is harmful and can wrongfully place responsibility, shame or blame onto a victim, making them feel that they are complicit or responsible for the harm they have experienced. People of all ages can display victim blaming attitudes and it can happen both online and offline. Education professionals are encouraged to think critically about the language they use and the impact that it has, both in the moment and more widely across society.

What is the impact of Victim Blaming?

Victim blaming can have the following consequences:

- Responsibility is wrongfully shifted from the perpetrator to the victim;
- It may suggest an explanation for the abuse which implies there is no role for safeguarding, leaving children at further risk;
- It strengthens the emotional bond between the exploiter and the exploited by implying they are both blameworthy and therefore united.

There are a number of ways Victim Blaming can present:

- Questioning the victim's actions
- Implying the victim provoked the abuse
- Suggesting the victim is exaggerating or lying
- Downplaying the abuse
- Focussing on the victim's past behaviour
- Shifting responsibility
- Gaslighting

All staff have a duty to reflect on their own language and to challenge any victim blaming language they become aware of.

Reporting Bullying

Children can talk to any adult in the school. All our staff understand their duty to safeguard all children. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns about bullying directly with the school so that a swift resolution can be found and children can be supported. Below are some useful contacts:

Miss A Elsdon - Assistant Head for Inclusion, Behaviour Lead, Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss C Bull - Head Teacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Alderton - Assistant Head Teacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

Mr Benham – Assistant Head Teacher and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead

All classrooms have a confidential worry box and there is also a worry box outside the inclusion room.
Senior Leaders have an open door policy which means children can approach them as and when they need to.

School Office: 01903 830 901

Safeguarding

In some instances, bullying puts children at risk of significant harm and therefore constitutes a safeguarding risk.

Significant harm is defined by the Childrens' Act as:

- physical, mental or sexual ill treatment
- physical or mental impairment of health

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01.01.2026 - Amendment to contact details

Bullying incident form - digital version on CPOMS

Date :			Time:		
Perpetrator :			Victim:		
Age:	Sex:	Class :	Age :	Sex:	Class:
Reported by :					
Details When? Why? How? Where?					
Further measures taken/ other remarks					
How will this be monitored and who by?					
All parents informed?					
Signed :					
Uploaded to CPOMS (date)					