Valley Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Updated: March 2025

Review Date: March 2027

SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Date	Change
March 2025	New policy

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1. Aims

This policy outlines the measures Valley Primary School will take to prevent and address all forms of bullying. We are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where bullying—whether of adults or children—is not tolerated in any form. We understand that bullying can occur in any school or setting, and we recognise that prevention, raising awareness, and consistently responding to incidents should be a priority ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

Our goals are:

- To ensure all children are safe and feel safe.
- To establish that bullying of any kind is not tolerated within the school.

2. Legislation

This policy is informed by the Department for Education (DfE) guidance, *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (July 2017), and takes into account the DfE's statutory guidance on *Keeping Children Safe in Education* and *Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges*. Additionally, the policy is informed by, Childnet's guidance, *Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent, and Respond: Guidance for Schools*.

Several pieces of legislation outline the measures and actions schools must take in response to bullying, as well as relevant criminal and civil laws. These may include, but are not limited to:

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Cyberbullying: Advice for Head Teachers 2014

3. Responsibilities

Head Teacher

It is the responsibility of The Head Teacher to communicate this policy to the school community and to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.

Governing Body

Local Governing Body take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.

Staff and Volunteers

All staff and volunteers, including governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff and staff who run extra- curricular activities, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.

Parents /Carers and Children

Parents and carers have a responsibility to support their children and work in partnership with the school, agreeing in the Home School Agreement to adhere to the schools' values, policies and procedures. Pupils must follow the policy under the guidance of all staff

4. Definitions:

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”, July 2017). This can happen both on-line and offline.

Bullying can be:

- Verbal bullying behaviour- this is the repeated, negative use of speech, sign language or verbal gestures to intentionally hurt others e.g. using hurtful words, name calling, mocking, discriminatory or offensive language or swear words
- Indirect bullying behaviour- this is the repeated, negative use of actions which are neither physical nor verbal to intentionally hurt others e.g. spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours, gossiping, purposefully excluding another person, damaging or stealing someone’s property, producing offensive graffiti, writing or passing unkind notes, or cyberbullying. This can also occur through a third person.
- Physical bullying behaviour – this is the repeated, negative use of body contact to intentionally hurt others e.g. kicking, punching, slapping, and inappropriate touching or spitting.
- Cyber or Online Bullying behaviour – these are unacceptable behaviours expressed online or via chat groups. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Prejudice based bullying behaviour – is unacceptable and rude comments or actions directed towards peers or their family members, gender, sexual orientation, age, adoptive status disability, gender reassignment, race or religion or belief. Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- A form of child-on-child abuse and can be emotionally abusive; it can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

Incidents that are connected to bullying may occur on the school premises; during off- site educational visits or sporting events or on the way to and from school. The school will act upon incidents of cyber bullying, regardless of whether messages have been sent on or off the school premises.

For the pupils, we use the Anti-Bullying Association definition. ‘Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or a group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.’

5. Forms of bullying covered by this policy

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion, nationality or culture (including those focused on social groups or family status, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and children with English as an Additional Language)
- Bullying related to SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disability) including those focused on physical conditions at birth or by illness, injury or treatment.
- Bullying related to appearance , clothing, belongings
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Bullying related to financial situation of families
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic bullying)

- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Emotional bullying (e.g. exclusion or tormenting)
- Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying
- Imposing extremist views on others
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Bullying related to child-on-child sexual abuse

6.Preventing, Identifying and Responding to Bullying

Valley Primary School recognises that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, our schools can help to create safe, disciplined environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

To do this effectively, we will:

- Monitor and review our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Support staff to promote positive relationship including restorative justice approach, to help prevent bullying.
- Recognise that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly, including the signs that indicate a child might be being bullied, for example, aggressive, extrovert, confident behaviour as well as submissive, introvert, anxious behaviour.
- Ensure our pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure PSHE curriculum is taught comprehensively
- Ensure the SCARF PSHE curriculum is taught comprehensively, covering 'Me and My Relationships', 'Valuing Difference' and 'Keeping Myself Safe'
- Use outcomes from wellbeing surveys to identify pupils or staff who may feel unsafe or bullied and investigate further
- Take part in the annual anti-bullying week
- Use pupil voice, such as school council meetings, to review the effectiveness of our policy and procedures
- Use safeguarding walks and pupil conferencing to identify if any parts of our school environment, feel less safe for pupils
- Require all members of the community to work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Report back to parents/carers of victims and perpetrators regarding concerns on bullying, dealing promptly with complaints
- Teach children the different roles and dynamics that may exist in a bullying situation, in order to empower them to notice if bullying behaviours occur within a group and take appropriate action. We use the ABA's definitions of roles, as illustrated below:

What roles can we play?

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

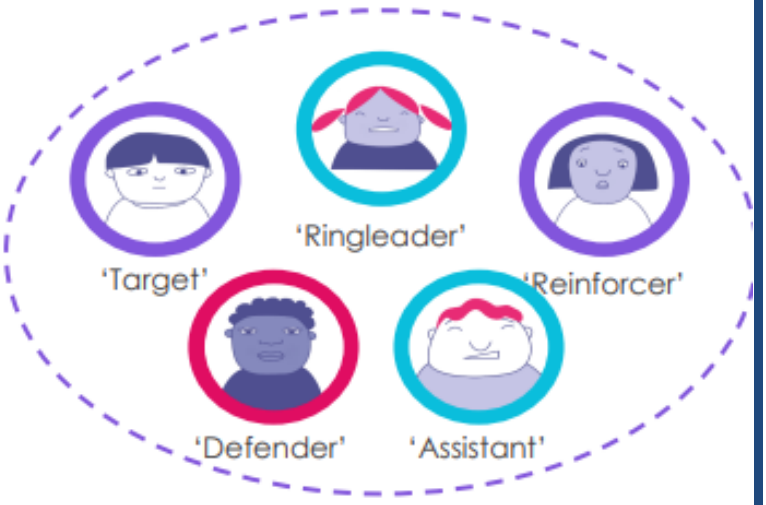
The target - The person who is being bullied.

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.



Staff take bullying very seriously and thoroughly investigates all reported incidents. We continually promote our expectation of high standards of behaviour by:

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- being good role models and not using bullying methods of teaching
- positive class teaching, providing opportunities within the curriculum to discuss bullying issues
- using assemblies to promote and foster a positive school ethos, including regular assemblies that promote our school values
- giving children the opportunity to talk about incidents of bullying, aggressive behaviour or ostracism during circle time and PSHE lessons
- commanding appropriate behaviour and showing disapproval of unacceptable behaviour
- teaching pupils how to talk through their disputes, rather than using aggression or bullying, including the restorative justice approach
- teaching children about bullying, why it is damaging and where children can get help
- supporting people who do bully to change their behaviour patterns through assemblies, class teaching and pastoral support
- helping people to build positive self- images
- providing a range of avenues for communication; recognizing that not all pupils will feel confident to speak out. These include Worry Boxes / Worry Monsters in classrooms, and pupil and staff wellbeing surveys
- Educating pupils about the role of a reinforcer within bullying incidents and encouraging pupils to support each other and speak out.
- Promoting diversity and inclusion; encouraging pupils to value and respect differences and to understand that differences should never be a reason to bully
- Exploring, in an age-appropriate way, why some children carry out bullying behaviours and how understanding this can help prevent it

What we do to try to prevent bullying

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse).
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Also, children with different family situations, such as children looked after or those with caring responsibilities.
- Challenge practice and language which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies, including the police, to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Utilise a system of peer supporters to support those of bullying and cyber-bullying
- Ensure that every child has an adult and peer they can go to if they experience bullying
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- Continually promote the school's Core Values of Care, Learn Together, Aim High, Be Honest and Look After What We have along with the school's behaviour mantra of Are we Ready, Kind and Considerate, Safe?
- Provide avenues for pupils to speak to other pupils about differences and inclusion: for example pupils presenting in assemblies

How the school supports victims in reporting bullying

The school puts systems in place for pupils to confidently report incidences of bullying. We ensure that our reporting systems are well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children. Children are clear that concerns can be reported directly to any adult in school, either by means of conversation or through class systems such as worry monsters. Through assemblies, the SRE and PSHE curriculums and circle times, pupils are aware of the systems for reporting bullying . We will:

- Listen carefully to, and believe the recipient's perception of what has happened, to reassure them that they have acted correctly by telling an adult. Give the recipient the chance to explain fully what has happened so they are not made to feel that they are responsible for the behaviour, or that their complaint is trivial or time wasting.
- Question and listened to the alleged perpetrators along with any reliable witnesses
- Contact parents of both children
- If the recipient is happy to do so, a restorative conference will be held. Through this process the recipient can express what they want to happen to help put things right and express what changes they need to happen. The perpetrator is held to account for their actions and required to acknowledge the impact of their behaviour. The participants agree to a contract, where the boundaries of future behaviour are made clear. Agreements are monitored. If the recipient does not wish to attend a restorative conference; they are given the opportunity to express their ideas for the contract to a member of staff, who can then represent them in a meeting with the perpetrator.
- Asking them what they would like from the perpetrator in order to he**l**p put things right, which will often take the form of an apology
- by letting them know that the school fully supports them
- by reassuring them that the behaviour will be dealt with
- by giving them support to re-build their confidence and be more assertive

- by providing children with a 'safe haven' during break times where they can feel secure and comfortable
- by ensuring that all children, including vulnerable children and their families have a nominated adult to discuss incidents with, to help them build the skills and resilience to manage and address incidents.

How the school deals with perpetrators of bullying

We believe that education and awareness raising is the most effective way of dealing with children who have bullied. Our aim is to support the person who has been using bullying behaviour to feel concern for the victim. The parents of children who have been accused of bullying will be contacted and made fully aware of the allegations. Perpetrators of bullying will have to account for their actions and apologise, if this is agreeable with the victim A restorative approach will be used to try to resolve any conflict and repair relationships. We focus on the behaviour and actions from the perpetrator that have caused harm; teaching them that it is within their power to change these.
The school may impose sanctions, proportionate and reasonable actions, as set out in the Behaviour Policy for any incident of bullying that is confirmed. Clear targets for the preparator's conduct will set using the Red Stage Intervention process and this will be monitored. Consequences will be tailored to the age of the pupil and the nature of the incident, but may include a fixed period off the playground; withdrawal of privileges such as membership of a school team; missed Golden Time and playtimes, with the time used to do community pay-back task such as tidying the playground. In serious cases proportionate and reasonable action could include suspension or in repeated cases, permanent exclusion. This policy is an extension of the Behaviour Policy.

What we will do to involve Parents and Carers

- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

7. Cyber-Bullying including Generative Artificial Intelligence

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
    - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
    - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary,
    - Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
    - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
    - Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and also searching and confiscation guidelines -outlined in the Behaviour Policy.

- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:
    - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
    - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
    - helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Valley Primary School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deep fakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. Valley Primary School will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our Anti-Bullying and Behaviour policies.

8. Monitoring and review:

- The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The Head Teacher will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate.
- The Head Teacher will report on a regular basis to the governing body on incidents of bullying.

9. Links with other school policies and practices

This policy links with

- Home School Agreements
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND policy
- Complaints Handling policy
- Safeguarding policy
- Confidentiality Policy
- E-safety and Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)
- RSE policy