Anti-Bullying Policy

Review Date:	September 2025	**Review Period:**	Annually
Next Review Date:	September 2026		

Contents

1. Policy Statement

Victory Park Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, and respectful environment, free from all forms of bullying. We believe every child, staff member, and visitor has the right to feel secure and valued. Bullying, in any form, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We are dedicated to preventing bullying and to responding quickly and effectively to any incidents.

2. Purpose and Objectives

- **Safeguard all pupils and staff** by preventing and addressing bullying.

- **Promote positive relationships** built on mutual respect, equality, and understanding.

- **Empower the school community** to report and challenge bullying.

- **Support those affected** by bullying, including both victims and perpetrators.

- **Comply with statutory guidance** including Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the Equality Act 2010, and Ofsted expectations.

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. This can occur in person or online (cyberbullying).

3.1 Types of Bullying

- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, theft, damage to belongings.

- **Verbal:** Name-calling, insults, racist, sexist, or homophobic remarks, threats.

- **Social/Relational:** Spreading rumours, deliberate exclusion, manipulating friendships.

- **Cyberbullying:** Abusive texts/emails, sharing inappropriate images, social media abuse, impersonation online including the use of AI (artificial intelligence)

- **Prejudiced-based:** Targeting someone because of protected characteristics (race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, etc.).

4. Legal and Statutory Framework

4.1 Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 pertains to the determination of behaviour policies in schools, specifically focusing on the head teacher's role and the measures to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying. It mandates that maintained schools have a behaviour policy that includes measures to encourage good behaviour, self-discipline, respect, and prevent bullying. The head teacher, in accordance with the governing body's statement and guidance, must determine the standard of acceptable behaviour and the disciplinary measures.

4.2   Equality Act 2010

It's illegal to discriminate against anyone because of 9 protected characteristics:

age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex, or sexual orientation.

Protection applies in education, work, and other public settings.

You're also protected if you're connected to someone with a protected characteristic, or if you've complained about discrimination.

Schools must:

- Prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation.
- Take action if a child is being harassed.
- All schools have a duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality, and foster good relations between different groups.

4.3   Children Act 1989

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

4.4   KCSIE

KCSIE 2025 is the latest version.

4.5   Ofsted Inspection Framework

4.6   DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying Guidance

Create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1   Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is regularly reviewed, remains effective, and complies with relevant legislation. Governors must monitor the frequency and nature of bullying incidents across the school, evaluating the effectiveness of the school's response. By maintaining oversight, the governing body ensures that safeguarding standards are upheld and that the school's approach to bullying is robust and consistent.

5.2   Head Teacher

The headteacher is tasked with the implementation of the anti-bullying policy and ensuring that its principles are applied consistently across the school. This includes making sure all staff understand and follow the agreed procedures. The headteacher must also report regularly to the governing body, providing updates on bullying data and identifying trends, so that strategic decisions can be made to further improve school culture and pupil safety.

5.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

As the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Charlotte leads the school's anti-bullying strategy. This includes maintaining a log of all reported bullying incidents, ensuring that the data is analysed for patterns or recurring issues. Charlotte is also responsible for providing ongoing support and training for all staff to help them recognise and respond to bullying effectively. Where necessary, Charlotte liaises with external agencies to secure additional support for pupils or to address more serious cases.

5.4 All Staff

All staff members play a critical role in challenging inappropriate behaviour and upholding a respectful, inclusive environment. Staff are expected to model positive relationships at all times and to intervene promptly when they witness or are informed of bullying. Every incident must be recorded and reported using the agreed school procedures, so that cases are addressed systematically and consistently.

5.5 Pupils

Pupils are expected to treat each other with respect and kindness, and to foster an environment where everyone feels safe. If they witness or experience bullying, they should report it to a trusted adult as soon as possible. Pupils are also encouraged to support peers who may be experiencing bullying, helping to promote a culture of empathy and inclusion.

5.6 Parents/Carers

Parents and carers have an important role in supporting the school's efforts to prevent and address bullying. They should encourage their children to report any incidents and work collaboratively with the school to resolve issues that arise. By fostering open communication, parents and carers help ensure that concerns are addressed early and effectively.

6. Preventative Strategies

6.1 Curriculum

Bullying prevention is embedded across the curriculum, particularly through PSHE lessons, which teach pupils about respect, diversity, and online safety. Regular assemblies focus on anti-bullying themes and the importance of inclusion. Activities such as role play and circle time are used to develop pupils' empathy, resilience, and problem-solving skills, empowering them to respond positively to challenges.

- **PSHE lessons:** Teach about bullying, respect, and online safety.

- **Assemblies:** Regular themes on anti-bullying and inclusion.

- **Role play and circle time:** Develop empathy and resilience.

6.2 Environment

The school environment is designed to promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying. This includes the use of visible posters and displays that reinforce anti-bullying messages and expectations. Staff actively supervise known "hot spots" such as corridors and playgrounds, ensuring that pupils feel safe in all areas of the school. Safe spaces are provided for vulnerable pupils who may need additional support.

6.3 Staff Training

Staff receive annual training on how to identify and respond to all forms of bullying, including newer forms such as cyberbullying. Training is refreshed following any serious incidents to ensure

that staff remain vigilant and confident in their ability to safeguard pupils. This ongoing professional development is crucial to maintaining a proactive and effective approach.

6.4 Pupil Involvement

Pupil voice is central to the school's anti-bullying work. Pupils may act as anti-bullying ambassadors or participate in the school pupil voice sessions, helping to shape policy and practice. Peer mentoring or team building enrichment sessions are also used to foster supportive relationships and offer additional help to those who need it.

6.5 Parental Engagement

Parents and carers are kept informed through workshops and information evenings on topics such as bullying and online safety. The anti-bullying policy is made readily available on the school website and shared via newsletters, ensuring that the whole school community is aware of how to recognise and report bullying.

7. Recognising Bullying

Staff are trained to recognise the signs that may indicate a pupil is experiencing bullying. These can include a reluctance to attend school, unexplained injuries or lost property, changes in mood such as withdrawal or anxiety, and declining academic achievement. Staff are also attentive to reports or concerns raised by other pupils, as peer observations can be an important early indicator that someone is at risk.

8. Reporting and Recording Procedures

8.1 Reporting

Pupils at Victory Park Academy are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying to any member of staff they feel comfortable approaching. This open-door policy ensures that pupils always have someone to turn to, whether it's their class teacher, teaching assistant, or another trusted adult within the school. Additionally, pupils can specifically request to meet with the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Charlotte, if they would prefer to discuss their concerns with her directly. This approach helps pupils feel supported and reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Staff are required to document all reported or witnessed bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Record log, which is managed on the school's SLEUTH system. This centralised digital platform ensures that all incidents are recorded consistently and securely, making it easier to monitor patterns or recurring issues. Accurate and timely logging also allows the Designated Safeguarding Lead to analyse data effectively and implement targeted interventions when necessary.

Parents and carers play a vital role in the school's approach to tackling bullying. They are encouraged to contact the school at any time if they have concerns about bullying, whether their child is directly involved or they have become aware of an issue affecting another pupil. Parents can reach out via phone, email, or by arranging a face-to-face meeting, ensuring communication is accessible and convenient. This collaborative approach between school and home supports early identification and resolution of bullying incidents, contributing to a safer and more supportive environment for all pupils.

8.2 Recording

All incidents are recorded using the Sleuth system and followed up with letters and calls to parents.

9. Responding to Bullying Incidents

9.1 Responding Procedure
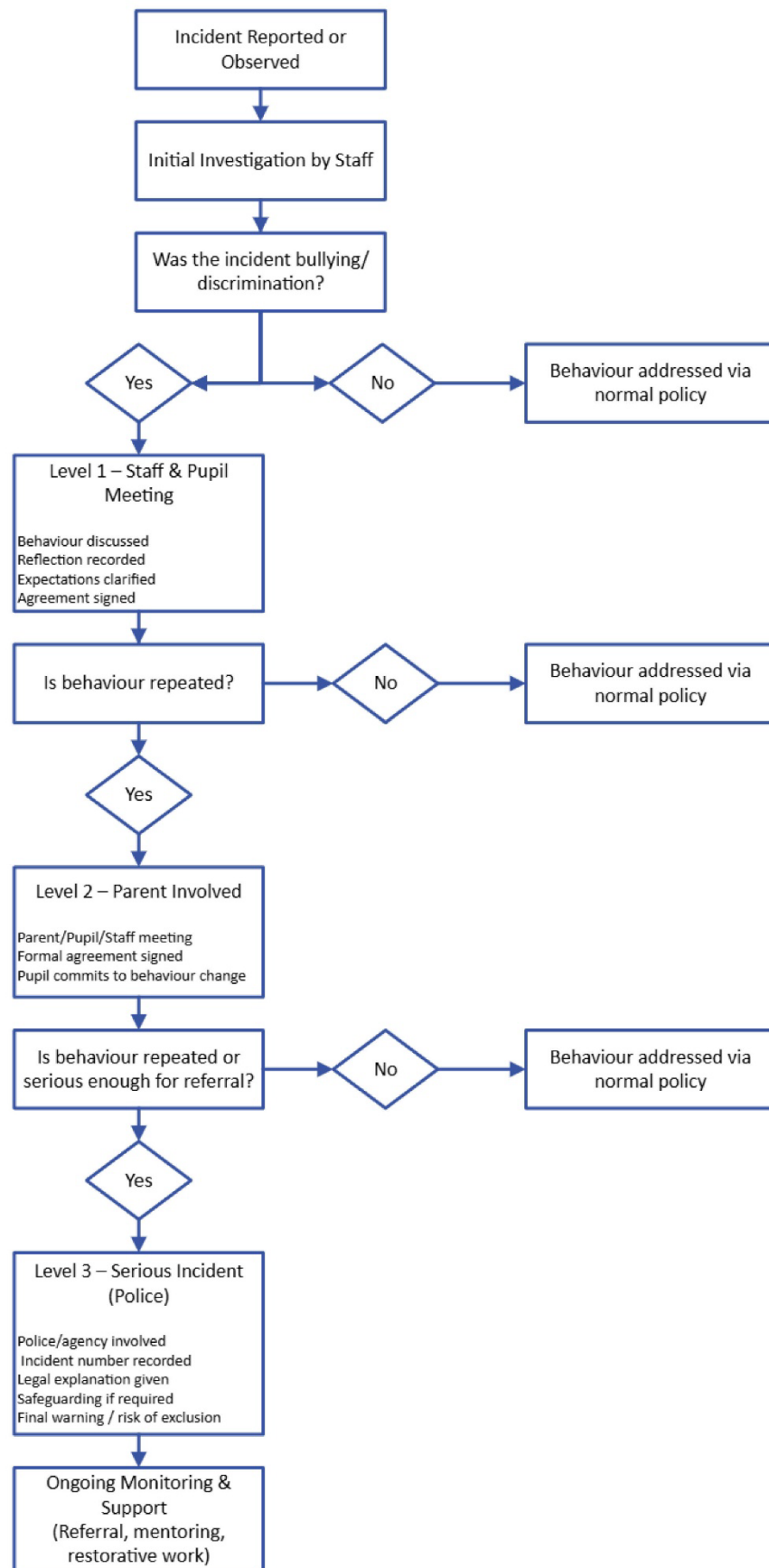
9.2   Investigation

At Victory Park Academy, all reported incidents of bullying are treated with the utmost seriousness and are investigated without delay. When an incident is reported, both the victim and the alleged perpetrator are interviewed separately to ensure that each pupil feels safe and able to speak openly about their experience. Where relevant, statements are also collected from any witnesses to build a clear and comprehensive understanding of what has occurred. This thorough approach ensures that all perspectives are considered and that any findings are based on accurate and reliable information.

9.3   Support for Victims

Following the investigation, immediate support is put in place for the victim. The school provides reassurance and, if necessary, implements a safety plan to help the pupil feel secure at school. Victims are offered access to pastoral support, which may include counselling or mentoring, depending on their individual needs. Regular check-ins are arranged to monitor their wellbeing and to ensure that the support provided remains effective over time. This ongoing care helps the victim regain their confidence and reintegrate positively into school life.

9.4   Support for Perpetrators

Support is also provided for the pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviour. Staff hold discussions to understand the reasons behind the behaviour and to help the pupil reflect on the impact of their actions. Where appropriate, restorative conversations are facilitated between the involved parties to encourage empathy and accountability. In addition, the perpetrator may be offered targeted behaviour interventions or referred to external support services if needed, helping them to address underlying issues and make positive changes.

9.5   Sanctions

Sanctions for bullying align with the school's behaviour policy and are proportionate to the severity and persistence of the incident. These may include a formal warning, parental contact, or the loss of privileges within school. In cases of severe or repeated bullying, more significant consequences such as reflection or a fixed-term or exclusion may be applied. This clear structure of sanctions reinforces the message that bullying is not tolerated and ensures consistency across the school.

9.6   Communication

Communication with parents and carers is a vital part of the process. The school ensures that the families of both the victim and the perpetrator are kept informed throughout the investigation. Updates are provided regarding the outcome of the investigation and any steps taken, fostering a transparent and collaborative approach to resolving the situation.

9.7   Monitoring

After the incident, ongoing monitoring is carried out to prevent recurrence. Staff continue to check in with all parties involved and hold follow-up meetings to review their wellbeing. This ensures that any further concerns are identified early and that both the victim and the perpetrator continue to receive the support they need.

10.   Bullying Incident Record Form

Is located on SLEUTH system and bullying log folder which is stored with the DSL.

11.   Supporting Pupils with SEND or Vulnerabilities

Victory Park Academy recognises that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or those with other vulnerabilities, may be at greater risk of experiencing bullying. To

address this, the school develops tailored support plans for these pupils, ensuring their individual needs are identified and met. This might include providing additional adult support during unstructured times, such as break and lunch, or offering access to safe spaces within the school where pupils can go if they feel anxious or unsafe. The school works closely with pupils, families, and relevant professionals to adapt support as needs change, ensuring every pupil feels protected and included.

12. Monitoring and Review

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Behaviour Lead take joint responsibility for the regular monitoring of bullying incidents. They review the incident logs on a termly basis to identify any emerging patterns or trends, and to highlight areas where the school's preventative or responsive strategies may need strengthening. The anti-bullying policy itself is reviewed annually, drawing on feedback and input from staff, pupils, parents, and governors to ensure it remains relevant and effective. The outcomes of this monitoring process are used to inform future staff training and make necessary adjustments to curriculum planning, helping to continuously improve the school's approach to bullying prevention and response.

13. Links to Other Policies

This anti-bullying policy should be read alongside other key school policies, including the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, Equality and Diversity Policy, and the Complaints Policy. Together, these policies form a comprehensive framework to ensure the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of all pupils at Victory Park Academy

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body annually or after any serious incident.