

## **Anti-bullying Policy**

Bullying is any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for the victims to defend themselves (remember STOP – it happens Several Times On Purpose). Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victim/s.

### **Statement of Intent**

At The Free School Norwich we are committed to providing a warm, caring and safe environment for all our children so that they can learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously and understand the effect it can have on victims and perpetrators. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.

At The Free School Norwich, we acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time – indeed, it would be unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy.

We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

### **Aims and Objectives of this Policy**

The aim of this policy is to try and prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying. The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy. This will happen in the following ways:

- The school will meet the legal requirement for all schools to have an antibullying policy in place.
- The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in The Children Act 1989, The SEN and Disability Act 2001, The Government Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' 2003 (outcome 2), The Children Act 2004 and the Equality Act 2010.
- The school also acknowledges updated guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) which states that schools should 'include procedures to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse and set out how allegations of peer-on-peer abuse will be investigated and dealt with.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.

- All pupils and parents/guardians will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- Pupils and parents/guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Whole school initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies, etc) and proactive teaching strategies (PHSE [Personal, Health & Social Education] lessons, circle time, THRIVE etc) will be used throughout the school to reduce the opportunities for bullying to occur.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the school environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

### **What is Bullying?**

The Free School Norwich has adopted the following definition of bullying which is our shared understanding of what bullying is.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation, whispering.
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, using weapons, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture and religion
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Homophobic: because of/or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Online/cyber setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive text messages, emails and abusing the victims via their mobile phones
- Any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational needs.

### **Bullying is not**

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose (STOP). Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships. Where does bullying happen? It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the dining hall, in the playground etc. Bullying may also happen on the way to and from school. In such cases, the Principal is

empowered by law to deal with such incidents but must do so in accordance with the school's policy. (See also Behaviour Policy).

At The Free School Norwich, we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside as well as inside school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises. The following steps may be taken:

- Talk to the children about how to handle or avoid bullying outside the school premises
- Discuss coping strategies with parents
- Talk to the Head Teachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the premises
- Talk to the local Community Police Officer about problems on the streets

### **Symptoms**

A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:

- is frightened when walking to or from school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to underperform in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money eg. (to pay the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

### **What can children do if they are being bullied?**

- Tell someone that they can trust – it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a member of the lunchtime team, a parent, a friend, or a relative. Generally it is best to tell an adult they trust straight away. They will get immediate support.
- Tell themselves that they do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.
- Try not to show the bully that they are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. Bullies usually pick on individuals.
- Write down the problem and put it in the class worry box.

### **What can children do if they know someone is being bullied?**

- Take action! Watching and doing nothing looks as if they are on the side of the bully.
- If they feel they cannot get involved, they should tell an adult immediately. Teachers will deal with the bully without getting them into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully. Strategies for dealing with bullying

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. If bullying is suspected/reported:

- The Principal will be informed and make a record of it on the monitoring spreadsheet.
- A member of staff will be nominated to carry out an initial investigation, usually the pastoral teacher.
- The member of staff will talk to and listen to the suspected victim, and any witnesses, making sure that the children feel safe to talk. Where children may lack the vocabulary to explain the situation, this may be done through drawing, play or sand tray work.
- The member of staff will talk to the bully about what has happened, to discover why they became involved. They will make it clear that bullying is not tolerated at The Free School Norwich.
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions agreed.
- Sanctions from the behaviour policy will be applied.

Parents will be informed on all matters identified as bullying. If the situation is not resolved, then the Principal, working with the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)/ Pastoral care teacher or THRIVE practitioners where relevant, will intervene.

All incidents of bullying will be recorded as such in the School Incident Log.

**Action to be taken to support the victim:**

- Environmental changes will be made if necessary – classroom, playground to ensure that the child feels more secure.
- Staff must communicate with other staff and record, where relevant, any incidents or concerns in a playground log.
- The situation will continue to be monitored by all staff to ensure no repetition.
- Children will be observed at break times, lunchtimes and in the classroom.
- Key friends identified by the child will be asked for extra support.
- The child will nominate an adult in school whom they trust and feel they can talk to.
- The child will be made aware of the importance of immediate reporting of any further incidents.
- Parents will be invited into school so that action taken can be shared.
- All adults in school will work together to assess whether the child needs support in the development of social skills – assertiveness, language skills.

Any follow-up findings will be recorded in the monitoring section of the School Incident Log.

**Action to be taken to support the bully:**

- The type and method of support will depend on individual needs, age and maturity of the child.
- It may be suggested that the children involved meet with the support of a trusted adult in school.
- It will be made clear to the child that their behaviour is unacceptable because of the effect that it is having on the other child.
- The child may be asked what they hoped to gain by their behaviour – if their answer indicates that a need is not being met, then this will be addressed through discussion with parents and possible 1:1 or small group THRIVE work.
- The child will be reminded that they are responsible for their behaviour and there are consequences for poor behaviour.
- Sanctions for behaviour may include the removal of breaks, lunchtimes – parents will be informed which sanctions will be used.
- Following the implementation of a behaviour plan, if the behaviour persists, then outside agency support may be requested to address the needs of the child, with the permission of parents.

## **Role of Parents**

Parents have an important part to play in our anti-bullying policy. We ask parents to:

- Look out for unusual behaviour in their children – for example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their usual standard.
- Always take an active role in their child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, etc. We have made this easier for parents by introducing the use of the 'Hear Me' books to provide a link between home and school.

If they feel their child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, they should inform school. Their complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow. They should not approach the child they believe is bullying their child, nor should they engage in dialogue with the child's parent. It is important that they advise their child not to fight back. It can make matters worse! They should tell their child that it is not their fault that they are being bullied and reinforce the school's policy concerning bullying and make sure their child is not afraid to ask for help.

## **Anti Bullying Code**

A school Anti-Bullying Code is in use, giving clear advice to children on what to do if they are a witness or a victim of bullying. A copy of this code can be found in Appendix 1

## **Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents**

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying at The Free School Norwich. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

1. Report all bullying allegations and incidents to staff.
2. Staff will make sure the victim(s) is and feels safe.
3. Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
4. Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately.
5. The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
6. Staff will attempt to adopt a problem-solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour.
7. Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
8. Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
9. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied (see next section).
10. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

11. An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour.
12. The incident will be logged on the monitoring spreadsheet by the Principal, including any action taken.
12. In serious cases parents will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.
13. After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
15. Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.
16. The safeguarding Governor will present termly reports on serious bullying incidents to the Governors.
17. If necessary and appropriate, the DSL in school, Social Services or police will be consulted.

The following sanctions may be used:

- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing
- Lose privileges
- Parents will be invited in to school to discuss the situation together with an adult in school
- Be removed from class and work in isolation
- Be withdrawn from participation in school visit, clubs and events not essential to the curriculum.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

### **Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying**

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. These can include:

- Undertaking regular Pupil Voice questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Promotion of the Anti-bullying Code throughout school
- Each class agreeing on their own set of class rules including a discussion about bullying
- Making national anti-bullying week a high profile event each year
- Awareness raising through regular anti-bullying assemblies
- The use of class THRIVE targets to encourage emotional awareness and resilience for all children

- The use of individual THRIVE targets to develop the emotional and skills of children who may have a delay when compared to their peers
- PHSE (Personal, Health & Social Education) scheme of work from Reception to Year 6 used to support this policy
- Circle time on bullying issues
- Children writing stories and poems and drawing pictures about bullying
- Children being read stories about bullying
- Using drama activities and role-plays to help children be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Prominently displaying Anti-Bullying Code and anti-bullying posters – commercial and produced by the children around the school
- Introducing playground improvements and initiatives including positive play

### **Monitoring and evaluation of the policy**

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be reviewed annually or sooner if required. Following review, any amendments will be made to the policy and everyone informed. An annual report will then be issued to governors and parents and the policy will be distributed to all parents.

**Principal:** Mrs Tania Sidney-Roberts

**Chair of Trustees:** Mr Andy Skeggs

**Approved:** December 2020

**Policy Review Date:** December 2021

### **Appendix 1**

#### **The Anti-bullying Code**

If you see someone being bullied:

DO NOT rush over and take the bully on;

DO let a teacher or other staff member know;

DO try to be a friend to the person being bullied;

DO NOT be made to join in;

DO try to help the bully stop bullying.

If you are a victim of bullying:

TELL a teacher or another adult in school;

TELL your family;

TELL a friend if you are scared to tell someone by yourself;

TELL people until someone listens;

DON'T blame yourself for what has happened.

Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Sources of further information, support and help**

There is a vast amount of information and guidance available about bullying that can provide a wide range of support and help. The following list is just a small selection of the support available that teachers, parents and children have found useful.

Act Against Bullying 0845 230 2560

[www.actagainstbullying.com](http://www.actagainstbullying.com)

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0207 704 3370

[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

Anti-bully [www.antibully.org.uk](http://www.antibully.org.uk)

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) 0207 843 1901

[www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)

Anti-bullying Network 0131 651 6103

[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)

Beatbullying 0845 338 5060

[www.beatbullying.org.uk](http://www.beatbullying.org.uk)

Bully Free Zone 01204 454 958

[www.bullyfreezone.co.uk](http://www.bullyfreezone.co.uk)

Bullying Online 020 7378 1446

[www.bullying.co.uk](http://www.bullying.co.uk)

BBC [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

Childline 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Kidscape 020 7730 3300 (general enquiry number) 08451 205 204 (helpline for adults only)

[www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

NSPCC 0207 825 2500

[www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

The Children's Legal Centre 0800 783 2187

[www.childrenslegalcentre.com](http://www.childrenslegalcentre.com)

The Office of the Children's Commissioner 0844 800 9113

[www.childrenscommissioner.org.uk](http://www.childrenscommissioner.org.uk)