Anti-bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

At The Free School Norwich we are committed to providing a warm, caring and safe environment where our children can confidently learn and play. 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 (September 2024) 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 Trustees, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All Trustees, 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 (PSHE - Personal, Social & Health 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.

Child on child Abuse

Child on child abuse can be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences. It can result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim. Children or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g. significant disruption in their own lives, exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing or suffering abuse, educational under-achievement, being involved in crime. It should be recognised that peer abuse is harmful to both the perpetrator (who is a child) and the victim.

This form of abuse occurs when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children both on and offline. All staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children/young people. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys"; or not recognising that emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical harm and should be taken equally seriously, can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children/young people accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it. At The Free School Norwich, stopping harm and ensuring immediate safety is the first priority.

What is Bullying?

The school is aware that there is no legal definition of bullying. However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

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 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).

If a child has put other children at risk of physical harm or physically assault or threatened another child, this will be dealt with in accordance with our Behaviour Policy and may result in a fixed term exclusion.

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. 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 e.g. (to pay the child exhibiting bullying behaviours)
- 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

Child Involvement

The policy of the school involves educating all pupils in the codes of different religious, moral and ethical behaviour with a focus on the principles of CUTHRIVE:

- Communication to solve a problem.
- Understanding that we are different
- Trust in those that support us

The Right conditions for:

- Hard work
- Respect at the heart of all we do
- a growing Independence
- Vitality as the key energy flowing through our community and
- high and understood Expectations

Understanding this is being achieved through our Themed Units, Assemblies, Class Time, the PSHE curriculum, other occasional talks and lectures, based on the experiences of older members of the community or our local police liaison officer also serve this purpose. Within the context of this education, children are made aware that such anti-social behaviour cannot be tolerated and is not normal in a happy, well-balanced community. Good behaviour is rewarded and celebrated in a number of ways through the school's reward system and Assemblies and children and staff are encouraged to be actively involved in this process in helping to promote positive behaviour. When children encounter behaviour which they find uncomfortable, either involving themselves, their friends or others, they are encouraged think about the acronym STOP to understand that bullying is often, but not always Several Times On Purpose and they should Start Telling Other People to take the following action rather than feeling unhappy or frightened. This applies to bullying both at school and bullying which may have occurred away from school. They are reassured that the taking of such action will result in a swift improvement and eventual solution to their situation, not in a worsening of the bullying as is so often feared.

What can children do if they are being bullied?

- Tell someone that they can trust – it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, 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 person exhibiting bullying behaviours that they are upset. It is hard, but perpetrators thrive on other's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. Perpetrators usually pick on individuals.

- Write down the problem and put it either in their 'Hear Me' diary or 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 person exhibiting bullying behaviours.
- If they feel they cannot get involved, they should tell an adult immediately. Teachers will deal with the person exhibiting bullying behaviours without getting them into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a person exhibiting bullying behaviours. If they want to talk about the problem to someone outside the school they can contact Childline (0800 1111)

Strategies for discouraging bullying

Pupils are also encouraged to do the following things to help foster a culture that discourages bullying:

- Celebrate the efforts and achievements of others.
- Hold and promote positive attitudes.
- Share problems and air complaints.
- Understand it is a shared responsibility to make playtimes, meals and shared spaces pleasant and sociable.
- Stand up for each other and report situations or behaviours that they feel are hurtful or negative.

EYFS Children

Even the youngest children are encouraged to behave towards each other with kindness and consideration. They have to learn to look after their own possessions and to respect each other's possessions. We expect them to be honest, helpful and polite, and to work hard and to listen to others. They should respect everyone and learn to value differences and diversity. The lead EYFS practitioner for managing children's behaviour is Jemila Elahcene.

We explain to children why some forms of behaviour are unacceptable and hurtful of others. We follow the Behaviour Policy when addressing bullying behaviour, and on occasion is it helpful for the child who has exhibited unkind behaviour have a quiet few minutes to consider their actions and calm down. Occasionally a child may talk to the EYFS lead, who will explain the inappropriateness of a particular action but such instances are rare. Parents are always informed verbally in these instances, as well as the incident being logged in the Behaviour Log. In cases of repeated instances of hurtful or inappropriate behaviour, they will be invited into the school to discuss the situation with their child's teacher and to agree a joint way of handling the difficulty.

A copy of our Behaviour Policy is on our website for parents and their children to read together.

Protected and Vulnerable Groups, Children with SEND

Staff should be familiar with those children who have special educational needs or disabilities within the school and understand that some children with SEND may not recognise that they are being bullied or that their own behaviour may be seen by someone else as bullying. As such they can be considered vulnerable. The Equalities Act 2010 identifies nine groups of protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Race, Sex, Religion or belief, Pregnancy and maternity, Sexual orientation and Gender reassignment. The act protects children and young people in these groups from discrimination, harassment and

victimisation as well as give extra protection from discrimination to disabled children and young people.

Parental Involvement

It is the School's wish to work closely with parents to ensure the happiness and development of all our children. Should a parent feel anxiety concerning the happiness or well-being of their child or other children either at school or through the actions of pupils away from school, we suggest that they:

- Notify the Class Teacher
- Encourage their child to talk to someone they trust in school.
- Reassure their child that talking about the problem and working with the School will improve the situation. We encourage parents to make their contact with the school at an early stage, as this is so much better for both the victim and the aggressor, thus often preventing a more serious situation

Staff Involvement

Intrinsic in the life of the Free School Norwich is the assumption that staff should by their example of care and concern for others provide a positive role model to pupils and colleagues. Staff are encouraged never to trivialise or overlook possible bullying incidents. Staff at The Free School Norwich should aim to apply the 5 Rs below in the case of any bullying incident:

REASSURE: Any incident of bullying should be acted upon immediately in the first instance to protect the victim from any repetition. Pupils should feel supported and reassured that their problem is being dealt with.

REPORT: Incidents should then be recorded on the concern form or via email and handed to the Key Stage Leader who will then notify the Principal and other appropriate members of staff who are pastorally involved with aggressor or victim.

RECORD: Records of all incidents should be kept by first by the Class Teacher and if necessary by the Key Stage Leader/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead for that Key Stage so that patterns can be established. Any more serious incidents, especially those with disciplinary implications, will be kept on the bullying log.

REACT: All problems should be addressed at the earliest possible opportunity. Therefore every effort is made to supervise areas where bullying could take place and at times when it is most likely to occur.

REVIEW: It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher, Key Stage Leaders and Principal to ensure that all cases are followed up and that progress is monitored. Ongoing situations should be discussed at staff and pastoral meetings or referred to the Key Stage Leaders for discussion at SLT meetings. Staff also have a responsibility to be a part of the ongoing development of a whole school response to bullying. Staff are encouraged to read the Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy every September. Every effort should be made to ensure supervision in vulnerable areas where bullying may be more likely to occur:

- Playground duties should be proactive rather than reactive
- Changing rooms should never be unsupervised
- Meals should be well supervised
- Vigilance should be shown while pupils are using school transport

- Behaviour in corridors and queues should be closely monitored

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.
- 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 child exhibiting bullying behaviours 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) or THRIVE practitioners where relevant, will intervene. All incidents of bullying will be recorded as such on the CPOMS, the school's safeguarding system .

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 child exhibiting bullying behaviours:

- 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.

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 and is also visible in several communal areas for children to read.

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 child exhibiting bullying behaviours that their behaviour is unacceptable.

9. The child (children) 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 child (children) understand and change his/her/their behaviour.

12. The incident will be logged on the monitoring spreadsheet by the Principal, including any action taken.

13. In serious cases parents will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.

14. 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 Trustee will present termly reports on serious bullying incidents to the Trustees.

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 into 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
- 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
- PSHE (Personal, Social & Health 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

All strategies must include provision for long-term monitoring of the situation to ensure that the underlying matter is permanently resolved, must include parental involvement and must involve working with both the victim(s) and the aggressor(s) who needs our support and care, as much as the victim. We would wish to involve parents at an early stage, thus enabling some counselling to be provided. This can be undertaken within the school or, with the parents' approval, it is sometimes necessary to involve further professional specialist help.

Involving External Agencies

A bullying incident will be treated as a Safeguarding concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. The Principal and Key Stage Leaders make up the Safeguarding Team. At this stage the Safeguarding Policy will be adhered to and the team will make an evaluation of the situation to judge if an External Agency should be contacted. Individual staff may also make direct referrals to external agencies as outlined in the Safeguarding policy.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies. It can take the following forms:

- Text messaging, or 'Sexting'
- Mobile phone pictures/video clips
- Mobile phone calls
  Emails Chat rooms
  Instant messaging
  Websites (blogs, personal websites, social networking sites etc)

If any member of staff becomes aware of what they suspect to be a case of cyberbullying either in school or outside, it should be treated just as seriously as any of the other more established forms of bullying. Victims should be encouraged to save messages that they are concerned about and to show them to a member of staff. Parents of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) may well need to be notified. If such bullying has been carried out by one or more pupils on a persistent basis, it needs to be dealt with very firmly. Further details on how children can be kept safe online can be found in the schools e-Safety Policy. Pupils are asked to sign the 'Pupil Acceptable Use of ICT' document to confirm that they will adhere to the schools guidelines on using ICT, namely that:

Students MUST NOT

- Tell anyone their password, log on as anyone else or leave a workstation logged in.
- Bring any electronic devices (phones, smart watches, tablets, laptops, cameras etc.) into school without permission
- Use the computer to upset or bully other students
- Post personal contact information about themselves or others

Students SHOULD

- Tell a member of staff if they have accessed or received inappropriate information
- Use appropriate language at all times e.g. for file names

For further information regarding e-safety, see also the school E-safety policy

Conclusion

It is expected that children, parents and staff will combine to make this policy work. Its successful implementation will ensure a happy and productive environment in which to work and play and the school will be recognised as a caring community where everybody strives to give positive esteem to all.

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 e informed. An annual report will then be issued to Trustees and parents and the policy will be distributed to all parents.

Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils should approach the Principal and use our complaints procedure if they feel their concerns about bullying (or indeed anything else) are not being addressed properly. Parents of EYFS children should be aware that they have the right to refer a complaint directly to Ofsted if they are unhappy with the way in which their complaint has been handled.

Approval level: Trust Board
Policy Approved: March 2026
Policy Review Date: March 2027

Appendix 1 The Anti-bullying Code

If you see someone exhibiting bullying behaviours:

DO NOT rush over and take them 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. 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;

DO NOT 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

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0207 704 3370

www.ace-ed.org.uk

Anti-bully

www.antibully.org.uk

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) 0207 843 1901

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Anti-bullying Network 0131 651 6103

www.antibullying.net

Beatbullying 0845 338 5060

www.beatbullying.org.uk

Bully Free Zone 01204 454 958

www.bullyfreezone.co.uk

Bullying Online 020 7378 1446

www.bullying.co.uk

Childline 0800 1111

www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape 020 7730 3300 (general enquiry number) 08451 205 204 (helpline for adults only) www.kidscape.org.uk

NSPCC 0207 825 2500

www.nspcc.org.uk

Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

www.parentlineplus.org.uk

The Children's Legal Centre 0800 783 2187

www.childrenslegalcentre.com

The Office of the Children's Commissioner 0844 800 9113

www.childrenscommissioner.org.uk