



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

*Article 3 - The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.*

### **Principles and values**

Poplar Farm School takes the issue of bullying and its impact seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that all known incidents of bullying will be responded to.

### **Bullying will not be tolerated**

The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or in the local community.

The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

### **Objectives of this policy**

- All governing body members, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should understand what bullying is.
- All governing body members and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on anti-bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that our school is a safe place for children and adults to be; whether the school community is directly or indirectly affected by bullying or not.

### **What is bullying?**

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as 'the **repetitive, intentional hurting** of one person or group by another person or group, **where the relationship involves an imbalance of power**. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace'.

In other words, bullying at Poplar Farm School is hurtful behaviour that occurs on purpose over and over again, where the person or group displaying the hurtful behaviour targets another person or group.

### **Bullying can be:**

Physical	Pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Verbal (direct or indirect)	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, use of disablist language

Psychological	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Cyber bullying	All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat on Social Media forums Threats by text messaging and calls on mobile phones Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera and video facilities, iPad, games consoles

**Bullying may be related to (but not restricted to):**

- Race
- Gender
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances, including Young carers and poverty
- Sexual orientation, sexism, sexual bullying, homophobia

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another.

This may be achieved by:

- The size of the individual
- The strength of the individual
- Exploiting the vulnerability of an individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity - through the use of cyberspace

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs or Disability, which could mean that they are unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

**Signs and symptoms for parents and staff**

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

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine

- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- 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 do make less effort with school work than previously
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is displaying bullying behaviour towards other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in attitude to people at home

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

- Bullying hurts.
- Bullying has the potential to damage the physical and mental health of a victim.
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

Pupils who are displaying bullying behaviour need to learn different ways of behaving.

### **What will Poplar Farm School do if we suspect bullying or bullying is reported?**

All suspected / reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by either the class teacher or by a senior member of staff.

The investigation may include:

- Talking with the children involved which includes talking to the individual/ group displaying the bullying behaviour, the individual/ group who have been the target of the bullying behaviour and children who have witnessed an incident.
- Talking with members of school staff.

- Talking with the parents of the children involved.
- Searching property for prohibited items.

The staff member/s conducting the investigation will make a written record of the information gathered in the anti-bullying log. The information gathered will be considered by a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will decide as to whether the incident/s should be recorded as 'bullying' as defined by the Anti-Bullying Alliance or dealt with following the school Behaviour Policy. The recorded information will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

If the incident of bullying is related to race then it will also be recorded as a Racial Incident.

The actions taken by the school following a bullying incident may include:

- Offering support to the individual/ group who have been the target of bullying behaviour.
- Educating the individual/ group who have displayed bullying behaviours.
- Working in partnership with parents of the children involved in the incident/s.
- Sanction for the individual/s who have displayed bullying behaviour in line with the school Behaviour Policy.
- Reporting the information to the Police or other relevant outside agencies.

The Safeguarding Governor will be informed of any incidents recorded in the Anti-Bullying log, the action taken by the school and sanction imposed.

### **What is Poplar Farm School doing to prevent bullying?**

At Poplar Farm School we use a variety of ways to support staff, children and their parents to understand what bullying is and to understand the impact it has on others.

The methods used are: whole school and class assemblies; PSHE lessons; Respect for Diversity Week; use of a class Worry Monster; worry post-box outside The Nest; E-Safety awareness; Anti-Bullying policy readily available on the school website.

The ethos and working philosophy of Poplar Farm School means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for everyone and everything at school. Staff members reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme through our Class Dojo system, which acknowledges and rewards good, kind, polite behaviours.

Staff members regularly discuss the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour with pupils, which leads to open conversations and encourages children to be confident to discuss bullying issues. By listening to our pupils and acting to resolve issues, our children will be informed that we are serious about dealing with bullying and they will have an increased confidence in reporting any incidents and concerns about other children's behaviour to school staff, their parents or their friends.

Staff follow the Equality statement; supporting every child in our school.

Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.

Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

If a child feels they are being bullied or concerned that another pupil is, they are encouraged to:

- Tell a friend
- Tell a member of the School Council
- Tell an adult - a member of school staff, a parent or an adult whom they trust
- Write a 'worry' and feed it in the Worry Monster
- Leave a worry in the worry box outside The Nest
- Discuss the concern during PSHE time or class assembly
- Ring Childline (0800 1111) and follow the advice given

### **Advice to Parents**

As a parent, if you suspect your child is being bullied you will want something to be done by the school straight away. You may even want the 'bully' to be excluded automatically, as you want your child to be safe and feel happy at school.

We also want your child to be safe and feel happy at school however we must follow policies and guidance when dealing with the issue of bullying and we need some time to investigate suspected/ reported incidents.

We want to work in partnership with parents and the whole school community to effectively address bullying behaviour, prevent bullying behaviour and support those pupils who have been the target of bullying behaviour.

### **Parents can support their children and the school by:**

- Reporting bullying incidents to the class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team and giving specific information about incidents that have happened.
- Encouraging your child to report bullying incidents to a member of school staff as soon as the incident happens or immediately after.
- Talk openly to your child about what bullying is, the different sorts of bullying and its impact on others.
- Make it safe for your child to talk to you about bullying - let them know that you are listening to them, take them seriously and that you won't make them feel silly whatever their worries. Praise your child for telling you and reassure them they have done the right thing in letting you know what has happened. Listen to their ideas on what might help them.
- Look out for the signs and symptoms (see checklist above) as your child may not tell you they are being bullied.

- Remain calm if your child tells you they are being bullied - getting angry and threatening to visit the school, the parent of the child or the child displaying the bullying behaviour may terrify your child further.
- Be a good role-model in the way you talk about and treat others - your child will learn that everybody deserves respect.
- Model empathy for others - talk about how other people might feel in different situations: in real-life, TV programmes, books, films and plays.
- Support your child to manage their feelings through talking, relaxing, exercising, distracting themselves and work hard to make them feel valued as important as bullying can destroy a child's confidence.

**Parents must not:**

- Attempt to sort the problem out themselves by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
- Encourage your child to fight back as they may get hurt or into trouble.

**Help Organisations & Legal Reference**

Children's Legal Centre

0345 345 4345

Anti-Bullying Alliance

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

Childline

0800 1111

The Education Act 2002 (section 175)

Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Section 89; Section 89 - Clause 5)

The Education Act 2011 (Section 85 - Clause 3A)

The Equality Act 2010

The Safe to Learn Department for Children's Schools and Families (DCSF) guidance

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