



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

*In conjunction with our Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and Behaviour Principles (and individual school procedures to tackle bullying aligned to this policy)*

**Approved by:** Executive Team

**Date:** February 2023

**Last reviewed on:** Spring 2023

**Next review due by:** Spring 2026 → Extended review date Aut 2026

## **ANTI - BULLYING POLICY**

### **Rationale**

This policy follows the advice in Preventing and Tackling Bullying – DfE (October 2017) and complies with the Equality Duty as set out in The Equality Act 2010. The focus is on children/pupils.

Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, we can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

This policy has been produced to help us take action to prevent and respond to bullying as part of our overall behaviour principles and school's own behaviour policies.

All types of bullying are unacceptable in our schools and will not be tolerated. Everyone should feel able to report incidents of bullying and when these are brought to our attention we are efficient in addressing the problem, effective in dealing with the perpetrator and sensitive in our support of the victim.

### **Dignity and Respect**

Eko Trust is a community that celebrates diversity and respects individuality. As such any abuse, offensive language, bullying behaviours or violence towards any member of the Trust community especially involving protected characteristics (race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or disability) will be treated very seriously and may lead to exclusion or police involvement. With this in mind it is essential that all members of the community express any views, beliefs or convictions they may have in a way that does not cause offence to others or could be interpreted as 'hate speech'.

### **Scope and publication**

This Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all pupils and staff (including volunteers, sessional and agency staff) at our school irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the school when or if bullying occurs. This policy is available on the school website. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required.

### **Aims of the policy**

It is recognised that all schools are likely to encounter problems with bullying at some point. The purpose of this policy statement is:

- to prevent bullying from happening between children and young people who are a part of our organisation or take part in our activities
- to make sure bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need and respond appropriately on a case by case basis which may lead to disciplinary sanctions/consequences and if necessary, suspension/exclusion.
- to provide information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.
- comply with the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

\*School's may have additional aims

### **Responsibility**

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that no-one becomes a victim of bullying and to swiftly

report any suspected incidences of bullying behaviour. We expect all members of the school community to comply with this policy and work towards an inclusive, kind school culture with positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the school. Discriminatory words and behaviour should always be treated as unacceptable.

### **Definition of Bullying Behaviour**

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where both children disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, where both children make an effort to resolve the problem. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is defined 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 happen face to face or through cyber space”** (Anti-bullying Alliance 2014).

### **Bullying is:**

***“Unwanted, aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time”***

(Stopbullying.gov definition)

Bullying often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

**Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist or homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.**

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical** bullying (hitting, punching, finger jabbing, any inappropriate touching, pinching, jostling, breaking or taking property)
- **Verbal** bullying (name calling, put downs, threats, teasing, ridiculing, belittling, name calling, excessive criticism or sarcasm.)
- **Indirect** bullying (rumours or stories, exclusion from a group, shunning, invading privacy, graffiti designed to embarrass, withholding friendship or affection.)
- **Cyber** bullying sending nasty phone calls, text messages or e-mails/chat rooms. Linked to schools Acceptable Use Policy (ICT)

There may be occasions when bullying is done because a child is deemed to belong to a certain group. This has been labelled ‘prejudice based bullying’, and includes homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sexual or gender bullying, and bullying of students with learning or other disabilities.

(Linked to Equalities Policy).

## **Cyber bullying**

### **Definition:**

“Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else” (Safe to Learn, Cyberbullying 2007). The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

### **Examples of cyber bullying include:**

- Via social networking sites e.g. posting a malicious message on somebody’s profile, or the creation of a fake profile, or conversations on a public page
- Filming, texting or sharing inappropriate materials and comments on mobile phones and passing on inappropriate material or joining in with these behaviours.
- If a pupil is involved in cyber bullying of a fellow pupil or staff member, the Trust will exercise its power in order to safeguard the well-being of the pupil or staff member. The Education Act 2011 gives teachers powers to tackle cyber bullying by searching for, and if necessary deleting, inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices.
- When an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. There is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person’s mobile phone.
- If the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable [Helping Children Deal with Bullying & Cyberbullying | NSPCC](#)

## **Sexual Bullying**

### **Definition:**

We adopted the NSPCC definition of sexual bullying:

“Any bullying behaviour, whether physical or non-physical, that is based on a person’s sexuality or gender. It is when sexuality or gender is used as a weapon by boys or girls. It can be carried out to a person’s face, behind their back, or by use of technology”.

### **Examples of sexual bullying:**

- Touching someone without permission
- Making jokes about sex at someone’s expense
- Making remarks about someone’s body or appearance
- Making remarks about someone’s sexual behaviour
- Interfering with clothing
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting including innuendo
- Sexual name-calling
- Sexual gestures
- Online sexual harassment

Our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy provides more information about Child on Child Abuse and Sexual Harassment and the Trust’s approach to this type of bullying.

### **Bullying outside school premises:**

In line with our Behaviour Principles, schools will follow up on incidents from outside school premises and this relates to bullying which may occur on the way to or from school, on public transport or outside local shops and businesses. It also relates specifically to cyber bullying which by its very nature can occur in a whole range of beyond-school environments.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

### **Who is bullied?**

Anybody could be subject to bullying at any time in their life. It is not only something that affects children. A person is bullied when, either as an individual or part of a group, she or he suffers in any way from the direct result of intentional and persistent harassment and/or victimisation by another individual or group. A person who has been bullied may commonly find it difficult to combat victim behaviour or report their experiences to those who may be able to help them. Research shows children and young people who are at most increased risk of being the victims or perpetrators of bullying are those who:

- are in foster care or residential homes (looked after children)
- have an Education , health and care plan
- have specific special educational needs
- have a disability or impairment
- are from minority ethnic backgrounds
- are refugees or asylum seekers
- start a school or activity group mid term
- are, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning of their sexuality or gender
- speak a first language other than English
- are young carers
- have suffered bereavement
- have suffered domestic violence
- have experienced physical or emotional trauma
- have a parent that was a victim of bullying.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

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)
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens self-harm
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares/bedwetting
- Regularly feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions go “missing”
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes unreasonable when dealing with school issues

- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

Bullying incidents are recorded in the school system that records all behavioural issues and this is reviewed by the school's SLT and with the Trust Leader of Education as a regular monitoring item and also regularly reported to the Full Governing Board.

**We record incidents of bullying under the following criteria:**

Bullying disability

Appearance

Gender SEND Homophobic Transgender Racist / culture Cyberbullying

Religion / belief Sexual bullying Religion / culture Bullying to humiliate

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Calling people names
- Spreading lies about people
- Teasing
- Hitting or kicking
- Mocking
- Taking someone's money or things
- Deliberately excluding someone
- Threatening or intimidating behaviour
- Sending horrible emails, texts or messages
- Posting nasty messages or videos on Facebook, WhatsApp and other

social media **Prevention and Handling of Bullying at Eko Trust Schools**

**Whole School Strategies which promote Anti Bullying**

**Within the curriculum**

Pupils are given information about bullying through the PSHE programme:

- Healthy relationships
- What is bullying?
- How do I deal with bullying?
- What happens when I report bullying? Will things stop instantly?

Pupils discuss issues associated with bullying during PSHE lessons.

- Bullying behaviour is unacceptable not the person perpetrating it.
- Pupils are encouraged to support victims of bullying.
- Circle time and drama scenarios raise awareness and possible action.
- Pupils are encouraged to 'call out' inappropriate behaviour and support each other to do so.
- Restorative justice is utilised in many contexts

Pupils are given information about the school's bullying policy, which is reinforced in assemblies and at other times by class teachers:

- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- Pupils must tell someone about incidents of bullying (ideally straight after the incident – as addressing incidents that are weeks and months old is very difficult)
- Action which will be taken in cases of bullying.

#### School-wide

- Pupils are encouraged to confide in someone they trust.
- Teachers and lunchtime supervisors are trained to help pupils who feel they are being bullied.
- Parents are given information regarding the school anti-bullying policy.
- Pupils are listened to.
- Outdoor play areas provide opportunities for play and quieter activities.
- Key areas of the school are well-supervised.
- Links with outside agencies e.g. community police
- Raising staff awareness through training and taking action based upon reported incidents to reduce future difficulties.

#### Our school aims

- Ensuring that the whole school understands what bullying actually means, including what a perpetrator is, what a victim is and what a bystander is.
- Encouraging children to report incidents as part of school culture (the importance of speaking up).
- Ensuring that parents/carers who are reporting bullying feel the concerns they raise are being treated seriously and the school recognising the impact it is having on the victim.
- Incidents are taken seriously, investigated and if necessary (and with evidence), acted upon, with clearly defined procedures.
- Staff are proactive in communicating what they are doing, why they are doing it and what the outcomes are to the actions taken (regular follow up given)
- Making sure the term bullying is understood

### **Reporting bullying complaints**

#### **Pupils:**

A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied should inform a suitable person straight away and can do so in several ways. He/she can tell his/her teacher, other member of staff or his/her parents/carers.

#### **Parents/Carers:**

Parents/Carers are asked to let the school (normally the class teacher) know directly if they have any cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others.

#### **Staff:**

Any member of staff who becomes aware of any bullying behaviour should inform the Headteacher without delay, in accordance with the procedures set out below.

### **Procedures, assessment and investigation**

In the event of an instance of bullying being observed or reported, the member of school staff must respond quickly and sensitively and ascertain the facts from the victim whilst offering support, reassurance and advice. All information gathered, or observed, will be logged on BromCom (the system we use to record incidents in school).

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher will be alerted to this before the end of the school day where possible. A senior teacher/leader, will investigate the incidents described alongside other relevant staff, recording the findings.

#### **The investigation will consider:**

- The nature of the incident
- Whether the incident is a 'one off'

- If injury has been caused
- Who needs to be informed (including the parents/carers, designated member of staff for child protection etc.)
- Whether there have been any misunderstandings
- Whether the complaint is justified in whole or in part
- Whether any further action needs to be taken, and if so what action is appropriate

### **Resolving the incident after an investigation**

Once investigated, and if a complaint is upheld, the school will make every effort to resolve the problem and

prevent any further occurrences. The range of responses will include one or more of the following:

· advice and support for the victim and, establishing a course of action to help the target /victim including support from the school counsellor or external sources where appropriate advice and support for the perpetrator in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning.

### **Key steps:**

- consideration of the background behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to help the school to tackle any underlying issues
- a supervised meeting between the perpetrator and the target to discuss their differences and ways in which they can avoid any future conflict (restorative justice/mediation)
- a formal meeting with parents/carers
- a disciplinary consequence for the perpetrator(s), in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may be suspended/excluded.

### **Action to break up a group of bullies could include:**

- Moving either the perpetrator or target to a different class after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents/carers and relevant staff
- Involving external agencies including social services
- Notifying the parents/carers of one or both of the pupils about the case and the action which has been taken
- Taking anti-bullying measures within the school community, for example an assembly on action on anti-bullying
- Noting the action taken and the outcome in the incident log
- Noting the action taken and the outcome in the personalised strategy

### **Liaising with parents/carers**

The school will keep parents/carers informed if and when it is dealing with a bullying situation relating to their child.

### **Expectations**

#### **Staff**

All staff are aware of the procedure to take should a pupil come to them for help and this is a regular feature for discussion at team meetings. Each school (and the Trust) commits to dealing with bullying incidents quickly and with care. School specific procedures are identified by each school.

A programme of continuous professional development of staff is in place that includes training on how to prevent and respond to bullying. Staff are also aware of procedures in place for them

if they are bullied. [Free CPD online training](#)

### **Pupils**

Pupils are aware of the support available to them should they find themselves subject to bullying. Pupils' class teachers and tutors explain this regularly and there are support posters displayed within school. In addition, the issue of bullying is addressed as part of our schools PSHE curriculum, in assemblies, at tutor/circle time and during our anti-bullying week.

### **Parents and Carers**

If parents or carers are concerned that their child is being bullied they should contact their child's class teacher/tutor in the first instance or their Year Leader or Assistant Head Teacher.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Pupils should:**

- Understand that everyone has the right to learn in a safe environment free from bullying.
- Report any incident of bullying to an adult; this could be their class teacher/tutor, year leader or deputy, subject teacher, teaching assistant or support staff, school nurse, school counsellor, parent or a member of the wider team

#### **School Leaders should:**

- Develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.
- Proactively develop approaches which monitor issues between pupils.
- Integrate anti-bullying education carefully within the school curriculum.
- Continue to strive to create an ethos where all members of our community treat one another with respect and accept differences.
- Ensure that parents and carers are informed that the school/Trust does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe their child is being bullied.
- Implement appropriate consequences and support where bullying has occurred.
- Seek input from wider anti-bullying organisations as appropriate (including in the development of anti-bullying resources).
- Provide effective, regular and up-to-date CPD for all staff which focuses on:
  - a. Understanding the principles and purpose of the Trust's policy.
  - b. Approaches to resolve problems, including restorative justice.
- Work with other agencies (including the police and children's services) especially where bullying is particularly serious or persistent.
- Make it easy for pupils to report bullying.
- Carry out regular pupil questionnaires on bullying to gather feedback to reflect and act upon.

#### **School staff should:**

Be alert and vigilant to all aspects of bullying.

Follow the Behaviour and Safeguarding Policy including the parts which specifically relate to bullying.

When dealing with a specific report of bullying school staff should:

- Provide the space and time to listen carefully
- Write down the details of the incident including date, time, place, description of the physical or online event, and any witnesses
- Be sensitive to the 'informant'
- Take statements from the accused and any witnesses (pupils should be in the same room as a member of staff at this time)

- Copies of all the statements should be passed to the relevant teacher/year leader/member of staff who is leading the investigation.

### **Parents/carers of all involved should:**

Take the time to understand the Anti-Bullying Policy and (as appropriate) discuss this with their child/children.

When dealing with a specific case of bullying relating to their own child, children's parents or carers should:

- Provide the space and time to listen carefully

- Write down the details of the incident
- Contact the relevant teacher/tutor or year leader at the earliest opportunity
- Reassure their child that reporting a bully is not wrong and that when they do speak out, action will be taken.

We recognise that bullies often bully because they have self esteem, anger or confidence issues and so support is offered through the schools wider support to deal with these issues. We also recognise that consequences need to be applied fairly, taking account of any special educational needs which may apply to pupils who appear to be bullying.

We will consider whether the bullying behaviour of the perpetrator reveals any wider concerns about the pupil's safety and apply our safeguarding protocols as appropriate. We believe the restorative work is important to move things forward and this will be done sensitively and in a supportive manner.

**All incidents of bullying should be recorded in the file of all pupils involved.**

### **Support for staff who are bullied**

It is important that schools take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils but it is equally important that schools make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. The department for education have published a separate advice note which provides advice for Headteachers and all school staff on how to protect themselves from cyber bullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

[DfE Cyberbullying Advice for HTs & school staff](#)

### **Other Related Policies:**

Eko Behaviour Principles

BehaviourPolicy

Child Protection and Safeguarding (including KCSIE)

Code of Conduct