

Nishkam School Trust



Anti-Bullying Policy

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Anti -Bullying Policy

Rationale

Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.

Every child should be able to learn in a school environment free from bullying of any kind and in which they feel safe and supported. There is no place for bullying in our schools and communities and each of us involved in education has a role in creating a culture in schools where bullying is not tolerated. No child deserves to suffer the pain and indignity that bullying can cause. We recognise the negative impact it has on the educational experiences and wider development of so many of our children and young people.

Bullying has no place anywhere in the school community, and this applies both to the bullying of pupils and teachers. Nishkam School Trust (NST) will take an active approach to promoting good behaviour, respect for others and to tackling all forms of bullying, including prejudice-driven bullying and cyber-bullying. Schools, with the support of parents, the wider community, the local authority and young people themselves, need to take effective action to prevent bullying happening in the first place.

A preventative approach helps schools to safeguard the well-being of their pupils and staff, as well as playing their part in creating a society in which we all treat each other with dignity and respect.

Aims

The aim of the NST anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This policy will:

- Raise awareness across the Trust that bullying in any form is unacceptable and that everyone has a shared responsibility in promoting a safe and secure environment.
- Promote a positive ethos where respect, relationships and responsibilities are key to:
 - Developing social and emotional well-being.
 - Ensure a consistent response to bullying, with effective support in place for both the person being bullied and the person doing the bullying.

Definitions and Signs

Definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and our schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying 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.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Cyber bullying

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.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that 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. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground 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. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

At Nishkam School Trust, all staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy.

Statutory duty of schools

There are various legal requirements on and powers for schools that relate to bullying (including homophobic, racist and cyber bullying). In particular:

Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governors 2017

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

The Equality Act 2010

The policy determined by the head teacher must include measures to be taken with a view to 'encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils'.

The law empowers head teachers, to such extent as is reasonable, to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off school site and empowers members of school staff to impose disciplinary penalties for inappropriate behaviour.

Implementing the policy

For the successful implementation of the policy, our school will ensure that the following statements are true for pupils who experience bullying:

- they are heard.
- they know how to report bullying and get help.
- they are confident in the school's ability to deal with the bullying.
- steps are taken to help them feel safe again.
- they are helped to rebuild confidence and resilience.
- they know how they can get support from others.

For pupils who engage in bullying behaviour:

- sanctions and learning programmes hold them to account for their behaviour and help them to face up to the harm they have caused.
- they learn to behave in ways which do not cause harm in future because they have developed their emotional skills and knowledge
- they learn how they can take steps to repair the harm they have caused.

For schools:

- the whole school community is clear about the anti-bullying stance the school takes. pupils, as well as staff and other members of the school, are fully engaged in developing and reviewing anti-bullying work in the school.
- every opportunity is taken to celebrate the success of anti-bullying work.
- all pupils are clear about the roles they can take in preventing bullying, including the role of bystanders.

For head teacher, governors and other school staff:

- to develop whole-school policies which meet the law and school-inspection requirements.
- to promote a school climate where bullying and violence are not tolerated and cannot flourish.
- to continually develop best-practice based on knowledge of what works.
- curriculum opportunities are used to address bullying.
- pupil support systems are in place to prevent and respond to bullying.
- all staff take part in relevant professional development, and are clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying.
- all staff are aware of the importance of modelling positive relationships.
- data systems gather useful information about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying work, and this data is used for monitoring and evaluation, and is shared with the school community.
- to work in partnership with parents, other schools and with Children's Services and community partners to promote safe communities.

- there is a review of the school anti-bullying policy every two years and, as a result, the policy and procedures are updated as necessary.

For parents:

- they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying.
- they are aware of procedures to use if they are concerned their child is being bullied or does not feel safe to learn, including the school's complaints procedure.
- they have confidence that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and investigate/resolve as necessary, and that the school systems will deal with the bullying in a way which protects their child.
- they are clear about ways in which they can complement the school on the anti-bullying policy or procedures.

Preventing and reacting to bullying

Our school will adopt a range of strategies to reduce bullying and to tackle it effectively when it does occur.

Our school will take a preventative approach to bullying in a range of ways:

Leadership:

- Promote an open and honest anti-bullying ethos which secures whole-school community support for the anti-bullying policy.
- Staff will actively demonstrate positive behaviour and set a positive context for anti-bullying work in the school.
- Link with other schools within the Trust.

Use of curriculum opportunities:

- Values, Faith, Personal Development (VFPD) lessons can be used to discuss issues around diversity and draw out anti-bullying messages.
- The VFPD programme is a whole-school and whole-curriculum approach to developing social and emotional skills in areas such as empathy and the management of feelings, which are highly relevant to reducing Utilising our shared values and our 'language of values' regularly.

Use of other opportunities to raise awareness:

- Anti-Bullying Week (ABW) events in each year.
- Targeted small group or individual learning to be used for those who display concerns.
- Whole-school and year group assemblies will be used to raise awareness of the school's anti-bullying policy and develop pupils' emotional literacy.
- Events which can prompt further understanding of bullying, such as theatre groups, exhibitions and current news stories.

Pupil voice:

- Engage pupils in developing/promoting anti-bullying policy and practice is an effective form of prevention.

pupil questionnaires such as the 'safe and well' questionnaire in the High School(s).

Structured data gathering:

- Gathering information and data on the views and experiences of pupils, staff and parents in relation to bullying will enable the school to monitor and evaluate its anti-bullying work better.

Improving the school environment:

- Use available data to identify how the school environment can be made safer and can help to reduce incidents of bullying.
- Listen to pupils and develop a positive relationship which encourages confidence in pupils to share concerns.
- To be continually vigilant and detect changes in patterns of behaviour of pupils.

Working with Children's Services:

To ensure that partner agencies such as the Behaviour Support Service, Education Psychology Service, Education Welfare Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and are engaged with anti-bullying work and pupil safeguarding has a high priority.

Our school will react to bullying in a range of ways:

- Our whole school reporting systems include confidential and varied routes to report bullying:-
- effective and fair investigation.
- listening strategies.
- follow-up systems to ensure that agreements are sustained.
- support to pupils who are bullied. They will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and this is not their fault. We will assure them that it was right to report the incident.

For those pupils who have bullied we will:

- Use effective and fair investigation by speaking to the pupil/s involved in bullying separately.
- We will reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop.
- follow-up systems to ensure that agreements are with both victim and aggressor.

Use of sanctions and learning programmes:

At our school sanctions will be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any SEN or disabilities that pupils may have, and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other children and it should be made clear that their actions are wrong and appropriate sanctions imposed.

Sanctions have a number of purposes:

- to impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable.
- to deter him/her from repeating that behaviour.
- to signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Our sanctions will ensure that they address bullying behaviours in a way which does not lead to escalation but resolution and which gives the best chance that bullying will not be repeated. We will consider sanctions under our school's Behaviour/Discipline Policy, including:

- Removal from the group
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in school events that are not an essential part of the curriculum.

It may also include fixed term and permanent exclusion from school. When other strategies and sanctions do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

Strategies will also be in place to provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused.

Use of reward and celebration strategies:

Our school will use a range of rewards and celebration strategies to encourage pupils to behave well and take care of each other, including:

- Rewards for individual pupils who take a specific role in anti-bullying work, e.g. as peer mentors or 'listeners'.
- Use of national campaigns for Anti-Bullying.
- Developing the roles pupils can play.

Our school will involve pupils in promoting a positive whole school ethos (including the prevention of bullying) in a number of ways:

- Through class, circle or tutorial time in understanding the needs of their peers.
- As trained peer mentors or trained mediators.
- Through assertiveness training which can help rebuild confidence and resilience for a child who has been bullied.
- Through being encouraged to have a say about the reward and sanction policy of the school to ensure they view sanctions as fair and make them feel they have an influence over tackling the issue.

Adult mediation:

Mediation usually focuses on pupils who have been bullying others regularly for some time, as well as those being bullied. The aim is to establish ground rules that will enable the pupils to co-exist at the school. Mediation can be very effective, but used on its own it may not have long-term success. It should be backed up by other procedures, both disciplinary and pupil-centred.

Engaging parents/carers:

We believe it is important for our school to work with parents/carers to help them to understand our approach with regards to bullying and to engage promptly with them when an issue of bullying comes to light, whether their child is the pupil being bullied or the one doing the bullying. We will ensure parents/carers are made aware of how to work with us on bullying and how they can seek help if a problem is not resolved.

We are legally required to have a complaints procedure and to make parents aware of this.

Parenting contracts

Some parents may need specific support to help deal with their child's behaviour. Where our school identifies that this is the case, we will initially provide support ourselves or signpost the parents to appropriate channels of help.

When parents refuse to engage voluntarily and where their child's behaviour has led to, or has the potential to lead to, exclusion, then a court-imposed parenting order may be sought.

Reporting and recording incidents of bullying

We encourage pupils to report bullying in confidence using a variety of methods. However, if pupil safety is at risk then school staff cannot keep the information confidential. Staff will use their judgement as to how to speak to the pupils about this.

A range of strategies will be used in school to encourage reporting:

- Peer mentors.
- Suggestions box
- Talking to teachers, or any other staff with whom the child feels comfortable.

These systems work well because:

- Pupils have confidence that their concerns will be treated promptly and seriously, and that action will be taken which will not make their situation worse.
- Pupils can access reporting routes easily.
- Pupils know who will deal with their concerns, and have trust both in them and the systems which the school uses.
- Pupils are aware that malicious reporting relating to pupils or staff will be taken seriously and could incur a disciplinary sanction.

Reporting arrangements for parents

- To ensure reception staff and other staff taking phone messages, notes or receiving visitors have been trained in school systems and procedures, and are clear about steps to be taken.
- Reception and other staff are sensitive to the emotional needs of parents making contact with a school about incidents of bullying.
- Parents should have confidence that staff will act promptly, take the concern seriously and not take action which makes the situation worse for their child.
- Staff will take actions to agreed timescales and report progress to parents.
- Parents are clear about how to take further action if they do not feel that their concern has been properly addressed.
- We recognise that there may be times when parents feel that we have not dealt well with an incident of bullying and we would ask that this be brought to the Headteachers notice.

If the Headteacher cannot resolve these concerns informally, parents can raise their concerns more formally through the school's Complaints Procedure.

Data-collection management

The school will record all incidents of bullying. The purpose of gathering information on the number and nature of bullying incidents is to identify any developing trends. The Trust can analyse the information gathered from schools to identify any issues of particular concern. The data will also enable support and challenge the school in its duties to promote the welfare of pupils.

Schools have a specific legal duty to have a race equality policy and monitor its impact on pupils, staff and parents. Schools also have a specific duty to eliminate disability-related harassment under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Keeping records of bullying incidents enable us to:

- Manage individual cases effectively.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.
- Celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school.
- Engage and inform multi-agency teams as necessary.

We will use bullying data to:

- provide monitoring reports to pupils (e.g. through the school council) and staff.
- create evaluation reports for:
 - pupils, parents and staff in order to demonstrate openness and to celebrate progress.
 - governors in order for them to monitor the anti-bullying work of the school.
 - work towards meeting National Healthy Schools criteria and achieving National Healthy Schools Status.
 - inform the evidence presented in the School Improvement Plan which forms a key part of the evidence for Ofsted's inspection of schools.

What sort of data can be collected and used?

We will keep information on the date and type of incident as standard but also record data on:

- information on what action the school took and the impact this had on the bullying.
- a range of data from pupil surveys including quantitative data and perception data.
- records of peer-mentoring initiatives.
- parental complaints to the school or Governors regarding bullying.
- records of the Educational Welfare Service identifying where bullying is a factor in non-attendance at school.
- exclusions data related to bullying.
- transfer and admissions data, specific requests for transfer due to bullying or harassment.
- information and evidence collected under the National Healthy Schools theme of 'emotional health and well-being' (including bullying).
- data from Ofsted reports.
- information contained in school-improvement plans.

Communicating the policy

As a school, we summarise the behaviour and anti-bullying policies within staff handbooks, and include them within induction programmes for all staff (including voluntary, temporary and supply staff).

The policy is always accessible to parents/carers and can be found on the Nishkam School website or from contact with the School Office.

Pupils are made aware of the policy through a range of means including assemblies, tutor times, lessons, school council meetings etc.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Links to whole school policies

This policy links to other whole school policies and practices on:

- Curriculum policies, in particular Values, Faith, Personal Development (VFPD) Pupil support and safeguarding policies.
- School-improvement plan.
- Behaviour policy.
- Staffing policies.
- Site policies including those for before/after school clubs, break-times, lunchtimes and travel-management supervision routines.
- Equality and diversity policies (e.g. disability-equality scheme, gender-equality scheme and race-equality policy).
- School celebration of achievement practices.
- The School Code of Conduct.
- Home School Agreement.
- Complaints Policy.

Additional Information

Establishing Safer School Partnerships

Establishing a Safer School Partnership with the local police can be an effective prevention strategy and effective reaction tool. The aims are to:

- Reduce the prevalence of crime, anti-social behaviour and victimisation amongst children and young people, and to reduce the number of incidents in schools and their wider communities.
- Provide a safe and secure school community which enhances the learning environment.
- Engage children and young people, challenge unacceptable behaviour, and help them develop respect for themselves and their community.
- Ensure that children and young people remain in education, are actively learning, healthy and achieving their full potential.

In terms of dealing with incidents of bullying at the time they occur the vast majority can be handled by the school. However, if a serious assault or injury occurs as a result of bullying the police should be involved.

Restorative justice

The use of restorative approaches in schools developed from the principle that the pupil causing harm is held to account for his/her behaviour.

This means:

- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied.
- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to others (e.g. staff, friends or family).
- recognising the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused.
- agreeing a range of actions in conjunction with all those involved which will be monitored over an agreed period of time.

There is a range of restorative approaches, from informal meetings with pupils where they can talk through their issues in a structured way, to, at the most formal end, a restorative conference with an independent facilitator. Restorative approaches can be effective when the requisite time and resources are invested, but it is important that they are used in conjunction with, not in place of, sanctions.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Governing Body will review this policy at least every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

For further information refer to DfE guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf