

Nishkam School Trust



Anti-Bullying Policy

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Our Vision and Ethos

Nishkam schools are Sikh ethos multi faith schools that take a distinctive approach to many traditional faith schools. The Nishkam School Trust education model is led by virtues such as, compassion, humility, service, contentment, optimism, trust and forgiveness. Virtues are prevalent throughout our teaching and learning model and are modelled by our pupils, staff and teachers. Our pupils explore the divine context of humanity and wonder of all creation and also learn from the wisdom of all religions and in doing so explore the infinite human potential to do good unconditionally. We support all pupils and staff to develop aspects of their own religious, spiritual or human identities. In service of God, we pray for guidance in this endeavour and forgiveness for the errors we may make.

1. Introduction

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.

2. 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 Nishkam Schools 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.

3. Legislation

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](#)

[Behaviour in Schools - Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governors 2022](#)

[The Education and Inspections Act 2006, 2011](#)

[The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations 2014](#)

[The Equality Act 2010](#)

[The Public Order Act 1986](#)

This policy includes 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 Headteachers, 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.

4. Definitions and Signs

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.

Bullying often involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim of bullying. 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.

Bullying can be:

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Racial• Faith-based• Gendered (sexist)• Homophobic/biphobic• Transphobic• Disability-based	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

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 contain 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.

Pupils are also more likely to tell a family member that they are being bullied than tell their teacher. At Nishkam School Trust, we encourage parents to report incidents of bullying immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

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.

5. 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 may have caused through the process of restorative justice and virtues-based discipline as outlined in the Nishkam Behaviour Policy

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 Headteacher/ Principal, Governors and all 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
- 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 and the language of virtues as a framework for shaping character.
- 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 appropriately
- 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, 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

6. Preventing and addressing bullying

We recognise our moral and statutory responsibility and make every effort to provide a safe environment underpinned by a culture of openness where both children and adults feel secure, able to talk, and believe that they are being listened to. We maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'. This extends to incidents of 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:

- PSHCE lessons can be used to discuss issues around diversity and draw out anti-bullying messages
- The PSHCE 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 utilising our shared virtues and our 'language of virtues' regularly

Use of other opportunities to raise awareness:

- Anti-Bullying Week (ABW) events every 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
- Gathering information and data on the views and experiences of pupils in relation to bullying will enable the school to monitor and evaluate its anti-bullying work

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) are engaged with anti-bullying work and pupil safeguarding has a high priority

Where bullying does occur, we address this in the following ways:

- Our whole school reporting systems include confidential and varied routes to report bullying
- Effective and fair investigation
- Establish restorative justice by listening. Restorative justice can be in the form of a brief intervention
- 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 perpetrator

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 the child 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 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
- Virtues led conversations
- Meeting to discuss restorative justice
- Detention
- Pupil placed on report to Head of Year/ SLT
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in school events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- Opportunities for reflection on virtues

It may also include suspensions 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. The school will implement a systematic and staged response to bullying.

The bullying referral system is outlined below:

Pastoral Staff intervention		
Stage 1	Bullying behaviour that does not stop after initial warning and action from class teacher	Behaviour/Pastoral Leader will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take statements and investigate the alleged incident.• Give the victim a book to record incidents (if appropriate)• Set up meeting between perpetrator and victim (if appropriate)• Sanction the perpetrator appropriately
Stage 2	Bullying that is persistent, and continues after initial intervention by Behaviour/Pastoral Leads	Behaviour/Pastoral Leader will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take statements and investigate the alleged incident.• Sanction the perpetrator (appropriate to phase)• Contact parents of the perpetrator and victim.• Arrange a meeting with the parents of the perpetrator (and, where appropriate, the victim)• Perpetrator to sign the stage 2 antibullying contract (secondary phase only).• Pastoral Leader will update the central log and inform the appropriate SLT member about the incident.

Stage 3	Bullying that is very serious, or that continues after Stage 2 interventions	Behaviour/Pastoral Leader will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take statements and investigate the alleged incident. • Escalate to senior pastoral staff/SLT, who will work with both students. • Set up a meeting in school with parents of the perpetrator (and, where appropriate, the victim). Meeting to be conducted by SLT member responsible for behaviour and inclusion. • perpetrator to sign the stage 3 anti-bullying contract (secondary phase only). • Sanction the perpetrator. This may include a period of suspension from the school.
Stage 4	Bullying which occurs after the Stage 3 intervention	SLT/Head of Inclusion will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in place an extensive Pastoral Support Plan for the perpetrator. • Fortnightly mentoring sessions/counselling put in place for the perpetrator. • Set up a meeting in school with parents of the perpetrator (and, where appropriate, the victim) Meeting to be conducted by the Headteacher. • Risk of permanent exclusion from the school.

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/buddies/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
- Where appropriate, 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, suspension/permanent 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 all staff responsible for taking phone messages, notes or receiving visitors have been trained in school systems and procedures and are clear about steps to be taken
- All staff are sensitive to the emotional needs of parents making contact with a school about incidents of bullying
- Parents should have confidence that all staff will act promptly, take the concern seriously and not take action which makes the situation worse for their child
- Staff will take actions in line with 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/ Principal cannot resolve these concerns informally, parents can raise their concerns more formally through the school's Concerns and 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 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 Equality Act 2010.

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 and staff
- Create evaluation reports for pupils, parents and staff in order to demonstrate openness and to celebrate progress
- Inform governors in order for them to monitor the anti-bullying work of the school

7. Communicating the policy

As a school, we include them within induction programmes for all staff. This policy is always accessible to parents/carers and can be found on the Nishkam School website.

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

8. Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy every two years. This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

9. Links to whole school policies and practices

- Curriculum Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy
- Concerns and Complaints Policy

10. 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, staying 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.