

Abingdon Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed May 24
Next review May 25

Aims and purpose of the policy:

At Abingdon Primary School we are committed to working with children, staff, governors and parents/carers to create a school community where bullying is not accepted and a community which aspires to fulfil our aims of 'Respect, Responsibility, Resilience'.

At our school the safety, welfare and well-being of all pupils and staff is a key priority. Our school is a safe place where we actively encourage people to exercise their rights to be themselves, to be included and to learn in a safe and happy environment.

Everyone at our school is equally special and treats each other with respect and kindness. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will be identified and thoughtfully dealt with at our school. We take all incidences of bullying seriously and it is our duty as a whole school community to take measures to prevent and challenge any bullying, harassment or discrimination. Bullying is never tolerated.

Abingdon is a truly holistic primary school and we actively celebrate our similarities and differences and see this as strength of the school. We all recognise that that our strength is in our excellent pastoral teaching and care for our children.

Ofsted commented in October 2023:

"Pupils learn how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy, and they learn how to stay safe online. They told inspectors that everybody is treated with kindness in their school, regardless of the differences between people, such as race, religion or family structure."

and:

"The school's values of 'respect, responsibility and resilience' underpin pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Disruption to pupils' learning and misbehaviour at social times are rare. Pupils trust adults to deal with any incidents of misbehaviour quickly."

The personal development of our children and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are given the highest priority.

We actively promote values of tolerance, respect and equality and work to ensure that difference and diversity is celebrated across the whole school community. We want to enable our pupils to become responsible citizens and to prepare them for life in modern Britain. These values reflect those that will be expected of our pupils by society, when they enter secondary school and beyond in the world of work or further study.

When any form of bullying does occur we will deal with it quickly, consistently and fairly.

We are committed to improving our school's approach to tackling bullying and regularly monitor, review and assess the impact of our consistently applied policies and preventative measures so that we maintain a safe, calm and orderly school environment.

Our children were asked how they see our school. Pupils responded that Abingdon is:

- ✓ A family

- ✓ A home away from home
- ✓ Somewhere we can enjoy our lessons
- ✓ Safe, friendly, caring
- ✓ A place where you can tell the adults your worries or if you are upset
- ✓ Somewhere bullying is NOT allowed

We define bullying as:

Bullying is the purposeful choosing of behaviours that threaten, intimidate or hurt someone, which is often, but not always, repeated overtime, which involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

Identifying and supporting vulnerable children:

We work closely in school to identify particularly vulnerable groups, including minority ethnic groups, travellers, refugees or pupils who have been displaced, pupils who identify as LGBTQ, midterm arrivals, pupils who transfer late into the school, children or young people in care, young carers and those with other special needs who may find it more difficult to build and maintain friendships. Staff have received training on the 9 protected characteristics, and understand the role that stereotyping has in developing prejudice which can impact on behaviours. Where we are working with children with particular needs we will ensure that there is a consistent and fair implementation of the policy and that a child's behaviour should still reflect our high expectations and show demonstrable improvement.

As a school we plan positive action to support these pupils with all relevant staff members and provide additional support where necessary, for example peer support through buddy schemes and help them to access clubs and out of school provision.

As a school we have a clear commitment to the use of restorative approaches, but we are clear that for specific incidents involving prejudicial behaviour in relation to the 9 protected characteristics e.g. racism or homophobia, using restorative conversations as an initial response may result in a victim of bullying feeling incorrectly, that they should have some responsibility. As such, such rare and serious incidents would follow the process set out in the behaviour policy where there will be direct involvement from a member of the senior leadership team, and if necessary parents / carers will be involved. Sanctions are identified to play a role in making it clear that such behaviours are unacceptable and have an impact on others. Where appropriate once such an issue has been dealt with through the behaviour policy, staff (if necessary in discussion with parents / carers) will make a professional judgement as to whether a wider restorative approach may help repair or build more positive relationships between those who have been involved.

Who is bullied?

Anybody could be subject to bullying at any time in their life. It is not only something that affects children and young people.

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.

Below are some factors that can make people vulnerable:

The Equality Act 2010 identifies the 9 protected characteristics which can be identified when dealing with bullying related incidents.

Children and young people who are at most increased risk of causing harm (the harmer/perpetrator) or being harmed (the harmed/victim) through bullying are those who:

- are in foster care or residential homes (looked after children)
- are understood to be at risk from a range of safeguarding or child protection issues i.e.
- safeguarding / organised crime groups
- have specific special educational needs (especially on the autistic spectrum)
- 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
- experienced poverty or deprivation

Methods of bullying:

There are a number of bullying behaviours that can be summarised as:

- Physical aggression – hitting, kicking, tripping up, spitting, taking or damaging property, use of threat or force in any way, intimidation or demands for money or goods
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, teasing, ‘jokes’, mocking, taunting, gossiping, secrets, threats, reference to upsetting events e.g. bereavement, divorce, being in care
- Non-verbal – staring, body language, gestures
- Indirect – excluding, ostracising, rumours and stories, emails, chat rooms, messaging phones, notes, inappropriate gestures
- Cyber – text messaging, internet chat rooms, the use of social media applications such as Snapchat, Instagram or WhatsApp, the misuse of camera or video facilities (including youth produced sexual imagery), offensive questions and unkind inbox messages
- Parental/Relative incitement – where parents/relatives become involved in disputes between children

We acknowledge that some acts of bullying will constitute a criminal offence and, in these cases, other organisations will need to be contacted e.g. the Police or Social Care.

Peer Abuse - Children and young people who harm others (also referred to as peer on peer abuse):

Peer-on-peer abuse can take various forms, including: serious bullying (including cyber-bullying), relationship abuse, domestic violence, child sexual exploitation, youth and serious youth violence, harmful sexual behaviour, and/or gender-based violence.

There is no clear boundary between incidents that should be regarded as peer on peer abuse and incidents that would be considered as bullying, sexual experimentation, etc.

Assessments must be made on a case by case basis. (Firmin, C. 2017. Abuse Between Young People). In these instances, the pathways described in the Safeguarding policy would be followed with incidents being reported to the Designated Safeguarding Leads **Samantha Spendlow (Headteacher), Claire Flanders (Deputy Headteacher), Amanda Lamb (SENDCO) and Sylvan Cumberbatch (Pastoral Lead.)**

Types of Bullying:

Bullying can be based on any of the following:

- Race (racist bullying)
- Religion or belief
- Culture or class
- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic, or biphobic bullying)
- Gender identity (transphobic bullying)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disability
- Appearance or health conditions
- Related to home or other personal situation
- Related to another vulnerable group of people

No form of bullying will be accepted and all incidents will be taken seriously.

Derogatory language:

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be permitted. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be all challenged by staff and recorded and monitored using CPOMs and follow up actions and consequences, if appropriate, will be taken for pupils and staff found using any such language.

Prejudice-based incidents:

A prejudice-based incident is often a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted.

All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored in school, with the head teacher regularly reporting incidents to the governing board. Hate incidents are logged and anonymised data reported to the local authority. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly, but also helps to prevent bullying as it enables targeted anti-bullying intervention.

Possible indicators of bullying include:

We recognise that the following behaviours may suggest someone is being bullied or is bullying. However, we also recognise that the list is not exhaustive and are always vigilant to the causes of changes to behaviour:

- disturbed sleep
- bed-wetting
- head and stomach aches
- problems with concentration
- changes in behaviour and attitude
- truanting
- bullying other children
- damaged or missing clothes / money / property,
- asking for more money than usual or stealing money
- withdrawn or changes in their usual behaviour patterns or attitude
- distressed or emotional and finds it hard to articulate their feelings
- changes in their eating patterns
- changes in their online activity
- shows evidence of self-harming or even for extreme cases potential suicide
- is unusually tired without a reasonable explanation
- has unexplained bruises or marks on their body, (some may refuse to change for PE)
- repeatedly comes to school without dinner money or a packed lunch
- afraid to be alone and requires more adult interaction

School initiatives to prevent and tackle bullying:

Anti-bullying is addressed throughout the year as part of the schools curriculum and PSHE programme, and through a range of discrete activities such as:

- PSHE week - 1st week in September
- Anti-bullying week
- PSHE week - Safer Internet Day in February
- Keeping Ourselves Safe Week – June
- School assemblies
- Child produced anti-bullying leaflets/posters
- Promotion of trusted adults
- Worry Box
- Circle Time
- Peer support initiatives
- Stories read to the class

We use a range of measures to prevent and tackle bullying including:

- Proactive teaching and learning around how to build and maintain healthy relationships, including explicit work on how to appropriately manage conflict within relationships
- Educating children on the differences between people in modern society today and the need to embrace all in their role as a responsible citizen
- A child-friendly anti-bullying policy leaflet ensures all pupils understand and support the anti-bullying policy
- The PSHE programme of study includes opportunities for pupils to understand about different types of bullying and what they can do to respond and prevent bullying

- School assemblies help raise pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying and derogatory language
- Diversity is celebrated across the school through diverse displays, books and images. The whole school participates in events including Anti-Bullying Week, festival celebrations, etc.
- The school aims and values, including those of equality and respect, are embedded across the curriculum and are articulated through the Abingdon Code / Non-Negotiables, to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and pupils across the school
- Peer supporters and play leaders offer support to all pupils, including those who may have been the target of bullying
- Our restorative approach provides support for the harmed and harmer plus any other affected parties involved in any bullying incident – children are encouraged to use our question prompts to resolve lower level issues without an adult, reducing the chance of escalation to repetitive and sustained targeted bullying (detailed in the Restorative Approach policy)
- Pupils are continually involved in developing school-wide anti-bullying initiatives through consultation with groups such as the school council and through the annual anti-bullying survey

Reporting – roles and responsibilities:

SENIOR LEADERS:

The Head teacher and senior leaders have overall responsibility for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is followed by all members of staff and that the school upholds its duty to promote the safety and well-being of all young people. Senior Leaders are aware of the threat of prejudice against those belonging to or perceived to belong to one of the 9 protected characteristics. As such they are identified to have a key role in ensuring clear use of sanctions to make clear that discrimination is not acceptable. In addition to the designated safeguarding leads, Amanda Lamb (SENDCo), Sylvan Cumberbatch (Pastoral Lead) and Clare Bertrand (Learning Mentor) have responsibilities within the anti-bullying work we do.

STAFF:

All school staff, both teaching and non-teaching (for example midday supervisors, caretakers, sports coaches, breakfast and after school club staff and volunteers) have a duty to report bullying, to be vigilant to the signs of bullying and to play an active role in the school's measures to prevent bullying. If staff are aware of bullying, they should reassure the pupils involved and inform relevant staff in line with school guidance.

PARENTS AND CARERS:

Parents and Carers should look out for potential signs of bullying such as distress, lack of concentration, feigning illness or other unusual behaviour.

Parents and carers should encourage their child not to retaliate, support their child and encourage them to report the bullying when it occurs.

When parents/carers have concerns, we would encourage them to speak with us at the earliest opportunity. We find that it is much more effective to speak to the school when an

incident occurs and not to post it on social media as this may affect and delay any investigations and outcomes.

Parents and carers can report an incident of bullying to the school either in person, or by phoning or emailing the school office.

Children should not take part in any kind of bullying and should watch out for signs of bullying among their peers. When finding themselves alongside an incident of bullying, they should attempt to offer support to the victim and, if possible, help them to tell a trusted adult.

Parents and carers must also give due regard to and follow the principles of our *Respect Charter* on school premises towards pupils, staff and other parents.

Non-school staff, volunteers and outside organisation (sports coaches, music teachers, support services etc.) also need to be made aware of the school's policy and the reporting of incidents.

Dealing with an incident:

When bullying has been reported, the following actions will be taken:

- Staff will investigate and record the bullying on the school's incident reporting form and also record the incident centrally on CPOMs
- Staff will offer support to all involved within a bullying incident. Individual meetings will be held with harmer and the harmed to devise a plan of action that ensures all feel listened to and supported, and feel safe and reassured that with support there can be a resolution. This may involve a restorative meeting to build or repair relationships after staff are confident that there is clarity about bullying behaviour is always unacceptable. Action plans will make use of peer supporters
- Staff will pro-actively respond to these plans, with the harmer and harmed parties possibly requiring support and work with other colleagues as appropriate
- Staff will decide whether to inform parents or carers and where necessary involve them in any plan of action
- Staff will assess whether any other services (such as Police or the Local Authority) need to be involved, particularly when actions take place outside of school
- Designated school staff will monitor incident reporting forms and information recorded on CPOMs, analysing and evaluating the results
- Designated school staff will produce termly reports summarising the information, which the Headteacher will report to the governing board
- Restorative meetings should be offered for incidents (including race or hate, homophobic and transphobic incidents) – it is vital that any harmed child understands that participation in any restorative repair meeting is voluntary and that there is no expectation for them to take responsibility for the bullying incident. Experience shows us that many children are keen to move on from incidents and begin to build more positive relationships, once they have received a clear and consistent message that bullying behaviour is not acceptable and will be taken seriously at Abingdon.

Safeguarding procedures must be followed when child protection concerns arise.

Bullying outside of school:

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be permitted. Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, before or after school hours, at the weekends or during the holidays, or in the wider community. The nature of cyber bullying in particular means that it can impact on pupils' well-being beyond the school day.

The school will conduct an annual audit of the children's experience of bullying – including in the local area / community and we will use our support systems when it becomes apparent that any incident of bullying is having an impact on an individual and / or the school community.

Training and awareness:

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that all school staff, both teaching and non-teaching (including midday supervisors, caretakers, outside agencies and volunteers, parents and governors) receive regular training on all aspects of the anti-bullying policy, including proactive healthy relationship work and restorative approaches.

Recording and reporting:

We maintain a system of data collection and analysis in relation to any reported incidents of bullying in school. Termly feedback is made available for governors via the Headteacher report.

All staff will use the agreed reporting format to alert the HT/designated SLT member of any bullying related incidents. Hate incidents are reported anonymously to the local authority e.g. racist incidents.

Monitoring and evaluation:

The Headteacher is responsible for reporting to the governing board (and the Local Authority where applicable) on how the policy is being enforced and upheld, via the termly report. The governors are in turn responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of the policy via the termly report, by in school monitoring such as learning walks, and focus groups with pupils.

The policy is reviewed annually by the designated safeguarding leads:

Samantha Spendlow / Claire Flanders / Sylvan Cumberbatch/Amanda Lamb

Links to other school policies:

This anti-bullying policy links to a range of policies/strategies, including:

Equality and Diversity policy

Restorative Approach guide

Behaviour policy

Care and Control guidance

PSHE policy

Respect policy and charter

Safeguarding children policy – including peer on peer abuse

Acceptable Use policy

School Development plan

Inclusion Policy and SEND policy