



THE  
GORDON  
CHILDREN'S  
ACADEMY

**PART OF THE THINKING SCHOOLS ACADEMY TRUST**



**Children first – Challenge – Aspire - Achieve**

## **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**Inception date:** February 2020

**Review Date:** February 2022

## **Introduction**

At The Gordon Children's Academy we offer all pupils, parents/carers and staff equal opportunities regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability or background. To achieve this, we provide support for individual learning needs to ensure that all pupils meet their potential. We recognise the range of needs and value the wide diversity of cultures of each child. We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind against our pupils, parents/carers or staff.

## **Vision**

Our vision is that through education at this school, children will grow and develop as learners. Children will be encouraged and taught skills that enable them to become independent in their learning. We want them to learn to persevere, solve problems and to think creatively. Our wider aim is that our pupils will develop as effective communicators, able to express themselves. Through varied learning experiences and opportunities our aim is to equip and prepare our children for their lives.

## **Equality Impact Assessment**

An adverse impact is unlikely, and on the contrary the policy has the clear potential to have a positive impact by reducing and removing barriers and inequalities that currently exist.

## **Policy Statement**

Our whole school policy for managing behaviour enables us to foster an environment in which we aim, "to develop a growing awareness of the responsibilities that are a part of living and working in a community and to ensure that children have the opportunity to thrive regardless of race, gender, aptitude or physical attributes". We aim to prevent bullying through a consistent approach to behaviour management. We believe that the vast majority of children enjoy school and have good relationships with other children. However we recognise that sometimes children can feel threatened and this can lead to bullying.

## **Aim**

It is important that all adults in this school combat bullying because;

- it makes children unhappy
- it affects school achievement
- it creates copy cats
- it upsets pupils, parents/carers and teachers
- it tarnishes the school's reputation

## **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

We believe that bullying is:

- a deliberate attempt to hurt someone

- a pattern of hurtful behaviour over a period of time
- when the victim is unable to defend themselves

The agreed Medway definition of bullying is:

**“Persistent, deliberate, unprovoked, psychological harm by a more powerful child or young person or group, against a weaker child or group.”**

Bullying can be:

- Verbal harassment – name calling, insults, taunts, offensive language, constant criticism;
- Written harassment – insults, taunts, letters,
- Cyber-bullying – through social networking sites, text messages, e-mails;
- Graffiti on walls, books, desks, school bags, obscene gestures;
- Vandalism of property;
- Repeated unfounded complaints, distorting and misrepresenting actions;
- Literature being brought into school which contains defamatory material;
- Refusal to co-operate or work with particular pupils; excluding pupils from the social group;
- Unprovoked physical assault or the threat of it;
- Causing physical or psychological distress individually or with a group of others.

Bullying is usually directed at someone perceived to be “different”. This may be because of:

- Racial origin
- Ethnic group
- Gender based or homophobic abuse
- Physical difference e.g. wearing of glasses
- Special Educational Need or Disability

**Bullying is not a ‘one off’ incident in which two children quarrel or fight on equal terms.**

### **Bullying outside of school**

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, whether it takes place inside or outside of school. 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. Staff, parents and carers, and pupils must be vigilant to bullying outside of school and report and respond according to their responsibilities as outlined in this policy.

### **Actions all adults should take**

- Do not allow bullying anywhere
- Encourage children to tell and back them up

- Use peer pressure against bullying behaviour
- Help children to think about strategies to use
- Find out the facts when told about an incident
- Use circle time and PSHE lessons to talk about bullying
- Support the victim by allowing the chance to talk
- Support the bully by helping him/her to change the behaviour
- Tell the class teacher or Headteacher of any concerns
- Understand school procedures and keep informed of any action taken
- Be aware that incidents occur between pupils and some of them are not bullying

### **What children can do**

Children will be advised to:

- Tell an adult they trust
- Tell themselves that they do not deserve to be bullied
- Ask their friends to help say no to bullies
- Stay with groups of children at playtime
- Try to not show that they are upset – just go and tell an adult instead
- Avoid fighting back

### **Procedures for staff for dealing with bullying**

Sadly, as in any other school, despite our consistent approach to behaviour management, bullying does occasionally occur. All reported cases are taken seriously and are dealt with swiftly and sympathetically. The following procedures are in place for dealing with any such cases:

1. Good levels of observation of behaviour both in and out of the classroom.
2. Complaints from children listened to and dealt with promptly and fairly, usually by involving all parties to discuss acceptable behaviour and to apologise for inappropriate behaviour.
3. Repeated complaints from the same child noted. Class teacher involved and observations taken throughout the school day to measure the extent of the problem.
4. Complaints from parents/carers recorded on parent/carer conversation forms, including the action to be taken. Parents/carers informed of action taken and kept informed of steps taken.
5. Teachers inform parents/carers of both victims and aggressors of any daily incidents which could develop into a pattern of bullying.
6. In serious cases of bullying all Teachers, TAs and MMSs in the school are informed of the nature of the problem so that levels of observation are heightened.

7. Serious complaints from parents/carers to be taken to a member of SLT and the Headteacher will be informed, the complaint will be recorded and action taken. Parents/carers of all involved parties will be kept informed of steps taken.

8. Where cases are not speedily resolved, parents/carers will be notified verbally or by letter of their child's continuing bullying behaviour and will be invited into school to discuss the complaints against their child and the school's intended course of action.

9. Should bullying persist then further sanctions are outlined in our Behaviour for Learning Policy. These can lead to fixed term or permanent exclusion from school.

**Clearly bullying, or any other unacceptable behaviour, play no part in our school environment and will be dealt with firmly and fairly. All our children understand the School Rules and the reasons for them, as well as the sanctions that will be imposed if they are not followed.**

Parents/carers are also informed of the schools expectations of its pupils through the Home School Agreement, Prospectus and Parent Partnership documents.

The attached appendices give further guidelines for specific groups within the school community along with the Medway Anti-Bullying Strategy.

**Appendices:**

1. Summary for Parents/Carers
2. Summary for Pupils
3. Summary for Teachers
4. Summary for Support Staff
5. Medway Anti-Bullying Strategy

## Appendix 1 Summary for parents/carers

Parents and carers have a very important role in supporting the school to implement its anti-bullying and Behaviour for Learning Policy effectively. Here are some ways in which you can be helpful.

### Responsibilities

- To ask for information on the school's anti-bullying and behaviour policy and any approach used to respond to incidents of bullying or harassment.
- To sign the home/school agreement; to abide by that contract.
- To work in partnership with the school on encouraging positive behaviour, valuing and respecting difference.
- To understand that children need to learn to deal with disagreements and conflict in an assertive but non-violent manner.
- To be alert to and inform the school about significant behaviour changes and signs of distress in their children.
- To inform staff of any significant change in circumstances which may affect the way in which pupils respond in school.
- Alert staff to information reported by pupils on incidents or any concerns arising about other pupils' behaviour and attitude.
- To communicate to children that you trust the school and staff to deal appropriately with incidents that arise and which school are aware of.

### Strategies

- To clarify with staff the school's approach to working with parents/carers.
- To be aware of opportunities offered for formal and informal consultation with parents/carers.
- To discuss school incidents at home and to encourage children to share feelings and anxieties. Promote the development of important interpersonal skills such as listening to others, negotiation and communication.
- To provide opportunities to discuss with your child issues relevant to friendships and relationships both in and out of school.
- To tell the class teacher of any concerns about bullying or harassment. Check out school procedures asking to be kept informed of any action taken.
- Be aware that many incidents will occur which are disagreements between pupils and where there is no clear bully or victim. Both parties will need to accept the consequences of their behaviour in line with the school behaviour policy.

## Appendix 2 Summary for pupils

**This policy is for you. However it is you and the other pupils who have the greatest responsibility in ensuring that the policy in school is effective in preventing and responding to bullying or harassment incidents.**

### Responsibilities

- To not become involved in bullying incidents.
- To be aware of the school's way of dealing with incidents and of the kinds of support available.
- Always tell a member of staff if you think bullying is happening.
- Talk to your parents/carers about any worries you may have.
- Support pupils who may be subjected to bullying.
- Be prepared to speak up if you see or hear something you think is unfair.

### Strategies

- Value pupil differences and treat other people with respect.
- Use the school's procedures if you suspect incidents are taking place.
- Be alert in those places around the school where there is less adult supervision e.g. the playground, the toilets, corridors and stairs.
- Get involved in writing and of following rules guiding work and behaviour in the classroom and the school.
- Co-operate with other pupils to help the school as a whole deal with bullying and harassment efficiently e.g. by joining the school council, by becoming a buddy.
- Encourage teachers to discuss bullying issues. Take part fully in the curriculum opportunities offered e.g. stories, poetry, surveys and role-play.
- Provide good role models to younger pupils and support them if bullying occurs.
- Keep parents and carers informed about activities in and out of school. Contact support agencies for help if necessary.

**Many of our pupils will be able to understand the content of this section but may be unable to read it themselves. The responsibilities and strategies will be made clear to children through class discussions, assemblies, etc.**

## Appendix 3

### Summary for teachers

**The role of the teacher is crucial in implementing the school's anti-bullying and Behaviour for Learning Policy. The classroom ethos, which they establish, will ensure that equality of opportunity and anti-discrimination works in practice.**

### Responsibilities

- Ensuring that they know the content of the equal opportunities and anti-bullying policy.
- Ensuring that training opportunities are taken up.
- To be sensitive to the possibility of bullying and harassment and dealing with all incidents in a consistent manner in line with the school's guidelines including the logging and reporting procedures used in the school.
- Ensuring that the beliefs and values underpinning equal opportunities and anti-bullying are reflected within the classroom environment and the curriculum.
- Be aware of the cultural and social diversity and the beliefs of students in the class in order to be aware of comments and or behaviour, which could be offensive to particular individuals or specific groups of pupils.
- Manage behaviour in a way that is seen by the pupils as fair and which models respect for the individual.

### Strategies

- Reiterate the school rules with pupils on a regular basis.
- Display the school rules prominently within the class.
- Have regular opportunities for whole class and or small group discussion where the topic of bullying and harassment is raised and all pupils are encouraged and supported to give their views and express their feelings. It is important to create a climate where it is safe and acceptable to 'tell'. Circle time is one established way where this may be accomplished.
- Consider at the planning stage of any topic how equal opportunity issues can be promoted. Become aware of which resources available within the school can support this. Where appropriate deal with instances of bullying and harassment explicitly through the curriculum.
- Use of display materials within the classroom and around the school can help to promote positive values.
- Be aware of pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities that may make them more vulnerable.
- Use discussion and curriculum opportunities to discuss the role of the 'bystander' in supporting bullying and harassment. Methods such as the 'no blame approach' ensure that the on-lookers no longer collude with bullying behaviour and develop a role in supporting anti-bullying values.

- Intervene when incidents are observed outside and inside the classroom so that pupils do not feel unprotected during particular parts of the day.

## Appendix 4

### Summary for support staff

Support staff includes teaching assistants, admin staff, midday meal supervisors and the site team. These are adults who are often in a position to observe pupils out of the classroom. Therefore the contribution of support staff to the successful implementation of the anti-bullying policy is vital.

### Responsibilities

- Ensure familiarity with the school's equal opportunity and anti-bullying policies.
- To attend training (which may be within school) on dealing with instances of bullying and harassment
- To be sensitive to all instances of bullying and harassment within the class and around the school; to deal with every incident in a fair and consistent manner according to the school's guidelines.
- To find out about the diversity of pupils represented within the school and wider community to be alert to comments or behaviour which could be offensive to specific groups of people.
- To report incidents of bullying and harassment as set out within the school's guidelines.

### Strategies

- Participate in training to become familiar with the school's equal opportunities, anti-bullying and anti-harassment policies.
- Ensure familiarity with the school's systems for managing behaviour and then follow them consistently.
- Intervene in any incident observed around the school.
- Remain calm and avoid getting into confrontations with pupils. Model ways of talking and behaving which exemplify respect for the individual. Challenge stereotypic remarks e.g. sexist comments; racist assumptions. Keep a watch out for 'loners' who may be vulnerable to bullying and try to involve them in games with other pupils.
- Be aware of pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities that may make them more vulnerable.
- Chat informally to pupils about their interests and their news. Being proactive about building up positive relationships with potentially difficult pupils can be helpful when later trying to modify their behaviour.

## Appendix 5

### Medway Anti-Bullying Strategy Statement and Objectives

#### **Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in Medway.**

This strategy sets out the steps that Medway Council and its partners will take to reduce the levels of bullying experienced by our young people. It also sets out our plans for preventing young people becoming bullies in the first place, thereby breaking a cycle of abusive and aggressive behaviour that can persist into adult life, blighting working and personal relationships and damaging everyone concerned.

Fear of bullying is equally damaging. This document also sets out our plans for removing that fear, in order to help young people believe that Medway is a safe place to live. It describes how we will use a range of methods to help communities live peacefully together.

Lastly, we recognise that we all have a responsibility for our personal safety. The strategy includes our aims for improving awareness of bullying and how we can protect ourselves from it.

This strategy aims to support and build on the following:

- Every Child Matters
- The Children's Plan
- The Youth Crime Action Plan
- The Medway Children and Young People's Plan

It is also relevant to:

- Schools' duty to promote well-being
- Duties around safeguarding children from harm
- The Medway Difference and Diversity policy

#### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is a very specific form of behaviour. It is not the ordinary squabbles and disputes that are a normal part of growing up.

Bullies may be aggressive and violent but these on their own do not automatically count as bullying behaviour.

Bullying is systematic, deliberate and continuous. It is unprovoked and can cause either physical or emotional harm, especially by making the victim feel powerless.

However, it is important to remember that amongst very young children, comments or teasing may not be intentionally harmful, even if they are hurtful. In these cases it can be more appropriate to deal with the behaviour by helping children to understand other people's feelings, and how to recognise what is or is not an acceptable way to react.

**The main types of bullying are:**

- Physical – hitting, spitting, stealing belongings
- Verbal – name-calling, racist or homophobic abuse, false accusations
- Indirect – spreading rumours or gossip, ignoring someone or refusing to allow them into a group
- Cyber bullying – using technology such as the internet or text messages to hurt or intimidate someone else.

This strategy recognises that bullying can happen everywhere. It is therefore not just one person's responsibility. Everyone involved – school, family, victim, bully – must acknowledge that they have a part to play in stopping the behaviour.

Certain groups are more vulnerable to bullying. This can be on the basis of the victim's sex, sexuality, race or special educational need or disability. Children who have been abused or neglected are particularly likely to be bullied.

**To address these issues we will:**

Ensure that all children and adults are clear about what bullying is and that it will not be tolerated in Medway.

Ensure that all victims of bullying can get the help, support and care they need.

Provide training for teachers and other adults in how to recognise and intervene in cases of bullying.

Use information such as the Communities that Care survey results to design support and training that is relevant and accessible to the people and communities involved.

Monitor incidents of racist, sexist and homophobic bullying and support schools, families and others to take appropriate action.

Support schools and families to deal with issues of bullying based on special educational needs or disabilities.

Provide specialist training on protecting children from cyber bullying.

Offer extra support to children who have been the victims of neglect or abuse, or who are being Looked After by Medway Council.

### **What makes someone become a bully?**

People become bullies for many reasons but the behaviour often begins in childhood. Some may enjoy feeling powerful, especially if they lack a sense of control in other areas of their lives. Others may not realise or care about the harm they are causing. Many bullies have been bullied themselves, or have grown up in families where punishment and aggression were the usual way of dealing with problems.

It is important to remember that nobody is born a bully. It is behaviour which is learned at some point in life. Unless it is challenged and stopped it becomes a habit which cannot easily be broken.

### **To address these issues we will:**

Continue to offer support (including training or advice) for parents/carers in how to develop a calm, peaceful family life that does not involve aggression, whilst at the same time ensuring that young people grow up with a sense of discipline and responsibility.

Promote programmes such as SEAL, which are designed to improve emotional literacy in schools and other settings, helping young people understand how their actions affect other people.

Support schools and other settings in recognising the early signs that a child is developing bullying behaviours.

Offer training and advice to schools and families on how to nip bullying in the bud.

Ensure that all schools and other settings have a comprehensive behaviour policy which sets out fair, reasonable and restorative sanctions for bullying behaviour, and states how the victim and the bullies will be supported and helped.

Encouraging the use of Restorative Justice and Community Justice Panels as methods of dealing with incidents, ensuring that these are used fairly and with the support of trained facilitators.

Offer non-judgemental support and help to anyone seeking help for their own bullying behaviour.

### **Who will deliver this strategy?**

There are many organisations and groups who can offer valuable help in preventing and reducing bullying in Medway. These include:

- Parents, carers and families
- Young people in Medway
- Schools, youth clubs and other settings
- Youth services such as Medway Youth or Connexions
- Medway Safer Communities Officers
- Kent Police
- Transport companies

- The Youth Offending Team and Youth Intervention Support Panel
- Medway Mediation

**How will we know we are making a difference?**

It is important that we can tell whether our actions are actually preventing or reducing bullying. To do this we will seek information and advice from our partners on our progress so we can tell what is working and what is not.

We will ensure that children and young people are a key part of this programme. Their opinions and experiences will be heard, validated and acted upon.

Information gathered will be reported to the Local Safeguarding Board and the Community Safety Partnership. These groups will be responsible for making sure that the information is shared within their own networks, and for reporting on whether or not there has been a measurable improvement.

Information collected will be both quantitative (such as the number of incidents recorded,) and qualitative (asking people how they feel about bullying and safety.)

This strategy and all the supporting papers will be reviewed and updated every two years.