



'At Matching Green CE Primary School, we are all learning with our head, heart and hands so that we can experience life in all its fullness'

Anti-Bullying Policy

(A STATUTORY DOCUMENT)

Publish on Website?	NO / YES
Approved by curriculum committee on:	Summer 2024 – early adoption
Staff Consulted:	Teachers and SLT
Ratified by Governing Body:	Summer 2024
This policy is linked to and should therefore be read in conjunction with:	Child Protection Policy Behaviour Curriculum & Policy RSE/PSHE Curriculum Equalities Statement SEND Policy The Church of England's Valuing All God's Children 2017
Review in:	Autumn 2026

*When seeking to achieve our vision we put our Christian Values of **kindness, endurance, thankfulness, forgiveness** and **friendship** at the heart of every decision.*

Aims

At Matching Green C of E Primary School we are committed to ensuring that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will challenge any behaviour that falls below this. Our aim is to involve the whole school community in developing and promoting whole school anti-bullying ethos and culture. Children are taught to know that they have the right to respect, to safety and to their own space and that if they feel threatened or 'unsafe' they must tell someone.

However, through this policy, we recognise that bullying can happen from time to time and make children's lives unhappy and hinder learning. As such we aim to work to prevent bullying and, if it does happen, children and parents should be assured that they will be supported through a consistent and constructive school response.

At Matching Green CE Primary School we will:

- Not tolerate any form of bullying
- Prevent, de-escalate and stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- Encourage and equip the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including those who have experience being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident
- Respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying using a restorative approach and/or sanctions where necessary
- Apply reasonable and proportionate disciplinary sanctions to children causing the bullying
- Support children who are bullying in recognising the seriousness of their behaviour and to offer support and counselling to help them to readjust their behaviour
- Safeguard and offer support and comfort to children who have been bullied and provide longer term support where necessary to reduce likelihood impacts on behaviour and self esteem
- Address the emotional needs and have behavioural needs of children who bully others to reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents of bullying
- Ensure that all staff are supported to enable them to model positive relationships
- Regularly monitor incidents of bullying and harassment and report to the governing body
- Provide a curriculum that frequently includes topics linked to bullying, diversity, discrimination and personal safety delivered at age appropriate levels.

Definition

Bullying is defined as:

***behaviour** by an individual or a group, **repeated over time**, which intentionally hurts another person either physically or emotionally. It can often involve the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more people.*

People are bullied for a variety of reasons and it can happen to anyone.

This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture, special educational needs, appearance or health conditions, sexual orientation, young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances, sexist, cyber-bullying, socio-economic status, members of the child's family.

Bullying can take many forms but typically includes the following types of behaviour:

- Physical – pushing, hitting, kicking, biting, spitting, pinching, punching, scratching and taking or destruction of belongings.
- Verbal – name calling, malicious teasing, insults (about race, religion or culture), threats, and offensive remarks.
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending abusive mail, e-mail and text messages and abuse of any kind via social networking sites (Cyber bullying refers to bullying through information and communication technologies).
- Electronic/cyber bullying – via text, social media sites, email images/videos posted on the internet or spread by mobile phone

As a school community we understand that there are different roles within bullying. We discuss these roles with our children. We also understand that the same child can adopt different roles at different times, or indeed at the same time.

- The ring-leader, the person who through their social power can direct bullying activity
 - Assistants/associates who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader).
- Re-enforcers who give positive feedback to the bully, perhaps by smiling or laughing.
- Outsiders/bystanders who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour.
- Defenders who try and intervene to stop the bullying or comfort children who experience bullying.

Some children can adopt different roles simultaneously or at different time e.g. bullied child might be bullying another child at the same time, or a 'reinforcer' might become a 'defender' when the ringleader is not around. Bullying is very complex.

It is important to make the distinction between bullying and friends 'falling out' with each other. Falling out is an inevitable part of a child's life that they need to learn to cope with. A single incident involving conflict – aggression, intimidation or nastiness – is also not bullying.

Recognising Signs and Symptoms

Some children are more vulnerable to bullying than others and our staff are sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate a child is being bullied. Children who are being bullied

may demonstrate physical, emotional and behaviour problems. The following physical signs and behaviour could indicate other problems but bullying will be considered as a possibility:

- Being frightened to walk to or from school
- Loss of self confidence and self esteem
- Being frightened to speak out when previously would have done so
- Developing unexplained injuries
- Development of school phobia and unusual patterns of non-attendance emerging
- Failing to achieve potential with school work
- Withdrawn, losing concentration, not engaging in learning
- Becoming isolated from and not engaging with other children
- Developing physical behaviour changes e.g. stammering or nervous ticks
- Regularly having books or clothes destroyed
- Having possessions go 'missing' or 'lost' including food and/or money
- Stealing money to pay perpetrator
- Becoming easily distressed, disruptive or aggressive
- Developing problems with eating food
- Running away from home or school
- Developing sleep problems and having nightmares
- Developing suicidal thoughts or attempting to take own life
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. When children are exhibiting extreme signs of distress and changes in behaviour, the school will liaise with parents/carers where appropriate and relevant professionals from other agencies e.g. GP/School Nurse, CAMHS. The school also seeks the support and guidance from relevant local and national agencies and organisations e.g. NSPCC, anti-bullying alliance to ensure that those who work with children within the school are best equipped with skills and knowledge to address bullying effectively and offer support to all children.

Prevention

Our whole school community works together to reduce bullying as part of our efforts to promote a positive and inclusive environment that is safe and healthy. We implement a proactive and preventative interventions to reduce bullying. These interventions are implemented throughout the school year at a school, class and individual level.

At Matching Green C of E Primary School we use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying through the explicit and implicit curriculum. RSE/PSHE lessons, class and whole school assemblies/Collective Worship and circle times explicitly discuss behaviour and bullying and its impact and help to support children in how to deal with bullying behaviour and when and how to seek help. The RSE/PSHE curriculum plays a vital role in the development of children's self-esteem and their emotional resilience and ability to empathise

with others. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn and develop the skills to identify, manage and challenge incidents of bullying as well as providing opportunities for children to learn about bullying in relation to the wider context of diversity and inclusion.

Implicit and explicit teaching of British Values and guidance from the Church of England document 'Valuing All God's Children' also form part of our curriculum. Teachers share information about the NSPCC and Childline via posters or within the curriculum to allow children to access support outside of school. Links are also available on the school website.

Implementing an effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos and regularly reviews the statement, support, provision and interventions. Senior Leaders also review the development and supervision of the school inside and outside including the outdoor areas and playground to ensure that provision is safe, inclusive and supports children's emotional wellbeing.

More implicitly, our school values of friendship, endurance, thankfulness, forgiveness and kindness; and the consistent positive approach to behaviour (See Behaviour Policy), promote good behaviour choices and encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Staff reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings. One-off incidents of aggressive behaviour or use of discriminatory language will be dealt with in accordance with the wider Behaviour Curriculum and Policy.

We provide social skills groups for vulnerable individuals as and when required for whatever duration we feel is suitable. We also work with key individuals whom we may have concerns about their behaviour. Within these groups we endeavour to set up buddy systems that allow children to build support networks around them. Another way of implementing peer support is by regularly working in house groups; this allows younger and older children to work together, allowing supportive friendships to form.

Staff regularly discuss behaviour with children and reassure children that staff are serious about dealing with bullying. Staff reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular discussion both inside and outside the classroom. At all times (and particularly during playtimes and lunchtimes) staff are vigilant regarding the interaction and behaviours of individuals and groups of children. Staff receive regular training throughout the academic year on behaviour management and anti bullying.

Children are also supported in building positive peer relationships through the use of our playground Friendship Bench and Playleaders (older children who mediate in minor friendship issues on the playground) and nurture groups or individual sessions with members of our Teaching and Teaching Assistant team.

Children are engaged in annual events and projects such as Friendship Week and Anti-Bullying Week. Children engage in the school's anti-bullying statement around the school.

Providing a School Council and regular Circle Time to enable children to talk about their feelings and concerns in a safe environment and to enable them to share concerns about

bullying and to recognise what it is. The children are also encouraged to use the Worry Boxes that are located in classrooms and in the prayer space.

Children are involved in the prevention of bullying in the following ways; being involved in the setting of rules, taking part in anti-bullying workshops and anti-bullying elements of the school curriculum, listening to and engaging in stories/role play etc during Collective Worship, being involved in age appropriate discussions about bullying; its impact and what would be regarded as unacceptable behaviour towards others, engaging with online materials; resources, videos etc linked to Anti Bullying Week and within the wider curriculum.

Periodically throughout the year the children of Matching Green are actively listened to and their views and opinions sought regarding bullying as part of our whole school preventative work. This is an opportunity for children to have their voices heard, to speak out and to share any experiences of bullying. Children are encouraged to actively participate to identify problems and solutions to bullying; reviewing and continually developing the school's Anti-Bullying policy and practices support the anti-bullying ethos of the school. This active participation may include class, house and school council discussions, focus groups, active learning in RSE/PSHE and specialist weeks including role play, stories, art and survey or questionnaires.

Recognising Why Children Might Bully Others

Children may bully for a variety of reasons. Recognising why children bully supports the school in identifying children who are at risk of engaging with this type of behaviour. This enables the school to intervene at an early stage to prevent the likelihood of bullying occurring and to respond promptly to incidents of bullying as they occur. Understanding the emotional health and wellbeing of children who bully is key to selecting the right responsive strategies and to engage the right external support. Possible reasons for why some children may engage in bullying include;; struggling to cope with own personal situation, liking the feeling of power, having a temperament that may be aggressive or jealous, being bullied themselves previously, feeling frustrated, insecure, inadequate, finding it difficult to socialise with friends, having a lack of empathy for others, being unable to resist negative peer pressure, feeling under pressure to be successful at any cost.

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow:; Tell a friend, a peer, teacher/adult they can trust, writing a concern in the worry box, discuss it during a RSE/PSHE or Circle Time session, call Child Line or NSPCC helpline numbers, visit the school website for links.

School Action and Procedures

All incidents, which are reported to school staff, will always be dealt with and recorded. Each incident will be handled individually once the problem and the children have been identified. The school uses the 'no blame approach' and each adult is committed to recognising and putting an end to acts of bullying. When a child reports being bullied, the school will acknowledge their concerns and the incident will be taken seriously. Incidents of bullying reported by witnesses are treated in the same manner and will always lead to a conversation with the targeted child. The targeted child will be listened to and their views will be sought,

the school will record this on My Concern. Recording incidents helps to build a picture of behaviour patterns in school e.g. who, when, how and what action was taken. It enables the school to manage individual cases effectively and to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

If staff witness, or believe reported bullying behaviour, or believe that behaviours may be indicative of, or lead to, bullying then they need to record this in the incident book and inform a member of the Senior Leadership Team this incident will then be shared with all staff members to ensure that they are vigilant

If parents report incidents of bullying not witnessed or reported at the time in school, a note is made in the incident book and staff are alerted to be watchful of the situation. Parents/carers and children will be urged to discuss any incidents as soon as possible so that monitoring and support can be put in place – it is always difficult to deal with incidents that have occurred in the past.

Staff should not report an incident as 'bullying', just because children or other adults have chosen to describe it as such. Behaviour not characterised as described above, but serious enough to warrant recording should be reported to the Senior Leadership Team who will then log the incident appropriately. Regular reviews of these will allow patterns to emerge should bullying have gone undetected.

In every incident brought to a member of staff attention:

- All staff will be informed – this allows for vigilance
- The incident will be written up and submitted on to My Concern with actions recorded
- Full investigation including monitoring to be carried out (children will be spoken to separately)
- Reported to the parents of the children involved if necessary (name of the child committing the bullying will not be disclosed except under exceptional circumstances)
- Behaviour support for the bully and support for the child bullied to be put in place – this will be tailored to the circumstance, age, maturity etc of the children involved.
- Persistent occurrence will necessitate the involvement of outside agencies.

After listening to the account of the targeted child, the school will discuss an appropriate course of action with them. All incidents of bullying will be responded to seriously and the behaviour of those who have been bullying will be challenged.

Those who bully will be subject to sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour Curriculum and Policy and the targets of bullying will receive support from identified members of staff. Adult mediation may be used between the child being bullied and the child doing the bullying to discuss what has happened and how this made the children feel. The target of bullying will be assured that they should immediately report any future incidents and know they will be listened to. The child doing the bullying will also be offered support. There are often underlying reasons why a child displays bullying behaviour and acts in this way, and that needs to be addressed. We will ensure extra supervision and monitoring of the children's behaviour following incidents to check all is well. Parents of both 'parties' will be kept informed of outcomes of investigations and kept 'in touch' until it is felt there is no longer a risk of bullying.

In extreme cases the school may involve external behaviour support services. The school also reserves the right to exclude children whose behaviour remains wholly unacceptable – withdrawal of playtime privileges, withholding participation in school activities (e.g. trips or sporting fixtures), suspension or permanent exclusion. These decisions will be made on individual cases.

Where appropriate and in most cases of bullying the school will consider the use of a Restorative Approach to resolve the situation. A Restorative Approach involves perpetrators of bullying, focusing on the unacceptable behaviour in an emotionally intelligent way and ensure children causing harm are held to account for their behaviour enabling them to:

- Accept responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied
- Accept responsibility for the harm caused to others (if relevant)
- Recognise the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused

We believe that all bullying is unacceptable but that many children who display anti-social behaviour and lack empathy for others can be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and change their behaviour for the long term.

Sanctions

In certain cases of bullying, the use of sanctions will be considered e.g. if restorative approaches are not working or if there have been particular violent acts. This will be considered on a case by case and our Behaviour Curriculum and Policy will be consulted.

Bullying Outside School and Cyber-Bullying

This policy relates to children's behaviour when in school, when supervised by staff outside school e.g. when on school trips or at sports fixtures and when in extended school services including breakfast or after school clubs. However 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. Please refer to our E-Safety policy, which provides guidance on responding to different forms of cyberbullying and the safe and responsible use of technology.

Bullying can and does happen outside school and in the community. Bullying is a relationship issue and its occurrence reflects the ways in which children socialise in school and in the wider community. We believe that bullying is unacceptable wherever and whenever it happens.

When an incident of bullying is reported and has occurred off the school site and out of school hours e.g. walking to/from school, on the school bus, the school will follow the guidance in our Behaviour Curriculum and Policy. It should be noted that dealing with other issues of bullying outside school or school time (when parents and carers are responsible for their own children's behaviour) poses many problems for Headteachers, and will only be considered where actions are continued or impact directly upon relationships and learning in school. We do encourage children to seek help and to tell us about incidents that occur outside of school that we can raise awareness amongst staff and the wider school community if necessary, to

make contact with outside agencies if required and to offer support to the child and parents/carers to manage bullying off the school premises e.g. keeping safe on the internet.

Monitoring and Review

Matching Green's Anti-bullying Policy and practice is monitored, reviewed and evaluated regularly by the SLT to ensure its effectiveness. The process includes reviewing the school's definition of bullying, identifying new types and forms of bullying as they emerge. The policy review involves monitoring and evaluating anti-bullying preventative and responsive strategies to ensure the school's practice is effective and successful in fostering an ethos that does not tolerate bullying and instead promotes inclusion and respect. Governors are kept informed about incidents of bullying in school via the termly Headteacher's Report.