

Victoria Lane Academy



Whole School Policy and Guidelines for Anti-Bullying 2023-2024



Key Principles

Victoria Lane Academy aims to ensure that everyone at Victoria Lane Academy has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Bullying prevents this, undermines self-esteem and denies equality of opportunity.

Our school code uses the Equality Act 2010: To treat everyone Equally and Fairly regardless of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender
- Gender Identity
- Race and Nationality
- Religion or belief
- Pregnancy
- Marriage
- Sexual Orientation

We will adhere to the legal definitions of these protected characteristics as set out by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) code of practice (see Equal Opportunities Policy September 2016)

Our intent: It is everyone's responsibility to challenge bullying and this policy contains guidelines for action.

Where bullying exists or is suspected, the victims must feel confident to activate our anti-bullying systems within the school.

This policy is linked to Safeguarding, Behaviour, Child Protection. Equality, Inclusion, E-safety and Acceptable Use policies.

Aims and Objectives

- Provide sufficient and swift support for children and staff at risk of being bullied;
- Challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour;
- Develop an anti-bullying ethos in the school;
- Establish and maintain a record of bullying incidents and actions taken as a result

What is Bullying?

Bullying is: ***deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the person concerned to defend themselves.***

Our pupil version: ***Doing something Several Times On Purpose to hurt/upset someone else***

Bullying can take many forms:

- Name-calling,
- Violence,
- Threatened violence,
- Isolation,
- Ridicule,
- Emotional bullying,
- Indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories,
- Cyber bullying.

In some cases, bullying can be prejudice driven and some may be targeted at someone due to:

- Age,
- Race,
- Religion or culture,
- SEN or disability,
- Health conditions or appearance,
- Sexual orientation,
- Gender,
- Gender identity,
- Beliefs,
- Home circumstances.

At Victoria Lane Academy, all forms of bullying will be investigated and challenged.

Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to all forms of bullying within the school environment, between all stakeholders: children, staff and parents, for example:

- Children bullying each other
- Children bullying staff
- Staff bullying children
- Staff bullying each other
- Parents bullying staff

The school works hard to ensure that all stakeholders know the difference between bullying and simply “falling out”.

Actions to Prevent Bullying

Senior leaders will organise Assemblies and special events to tackle Bullying. These will be held regularly to remind pupils of the school's expectations, procedures and provide confidence to children who are vulnerable. Assemblies will also be held to encourage children to embrace and celebrate difference, for example using resources from the 'Educate and Celebrate' programme.

At the start of a new school year, senior leaders go through the School's behaviour code of conduct with all pupils, which includes anti-bullying. This is then done regularly by staff throughout the year.

Staff will be vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously. We will use the curriculum whenever possible to reinforce the ethos of the school and help pupils to develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour. In Personal, Social, Health & Education lessons, year group teachers will ensure that units of work are sufficient and progressively build understanding and confidence.

Pupil Involvement

School Council meetings and pupil voice sessions will be held throughout the year. These will routinely address bullying issues, but specific 'Anti-bullying' sessions will be held regularly to purely focus on this issue.

Buddies will be set up at playtimes to help deal with 'Friendship issues' at playtimes and provide a further link between pupils and staff.

Identifying Bullying

Bullying can be difficult to identify because it is often subtle, covert and rarely witnessed by adults. However, some of the warning signs can include:

- Torn clothing and damaged books
- Sudden mood swings
- Loss of belongings
- Requests to be accompanied to and from school
- Bedwetting
- Nail biting
- Nervous tics
- Sleep walking
- Flinching
- Underachievement
- School refusal
- Temper flare ups
- Physical marks
- Avoidance of certain days
- Psychosomatic illness

Reporting Bullying

Pupils are told, for example through regular whole school assemblies, staff reminders and PSHE lessons, that they must report any incidence of bullying to an adult within school; also, when another pupil tells them that they are being bullied or if they see bullying taking place, it is their responsibility to report their knowledge to a member of staff.

At Victoria Lane Academy, staff are always available to speak to parents about any concerns they may have. Parents are also informed via the school newsletters/Class Dojo/emails of what they should do if they have concerns about the safety of a child.

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and taken seriously by staff members. Details will be recorded from the alleged victim and perpetrator as well as any witnesses. If bullying **is not found** to be occurring, the incident will still be dealt with and the person reporting will be spoken to about why it is not an incident of bullying, for example it may be a one-off incident, two friends falling out, two children who just don't like each other, or a misunderstanding.

If bullying **is found** to be occurring, action will be taken to ensure that the bullying desists. This action will vary depending on the situation but will involve:

- Ensuring the victim has a way of reporting any incidents quickly to someone they feel comfortable talking to;
- Putting systems in place to ensure the victim and perpetrator/s are kept apart wherever possible;
- Informing all staff;
- Informing parents;
- An ongoing Bullying Record will be put in place to record any future incidents of bullying.

It may also involve:

- Working with the SENCO((Mrs Addison)
- Working with our Family and Pupil Support worker (Mrs Hodgkinson-Piggott)
- Working with outside agencies such as health care professionals, behaviour teams or the police.

In order to ensure effective monitoring of such occurrences, and to facilitate co-ordinated action, all proven incidences of bullying will be reported to the Headteacher.

Intervention Strategies

Upon discovery of an incident of bullying, we will discuss with the children the issues appropriate to the incident and to their age and level of understanding. If the incident is not too serious, a problem-solving approach may help. The victim will be offered the choice to be included or excluded from the enquiry. Our school uses a Restorative Approach towards all incidents that occur in school.

In discussion, the member of staff will try to remain neutral and deliberately avoid direct, closed questioning which may be interpreted as accusatory or interrogational in style. Each pupil must be given an opportunity to speak and the discussion should remain focused on finding a solution to the problem and stopping the bullying recurring.

Parents should be informed, their view point understood and involvement encouraged.

Rebuilding - If pupils expect follow-up, they are less likely to start bullying again!

When a solution is reached, a programme of tracking meetings needs to be put in place to closely review progress. In most cases, these short tracking meetings should be daily at first followed by longer intervals agreed by participants.

There are various strategies that can be applied if more than one pupil is involved in bullying another. Role-play and other drama techniques can be used as well as Circle Time. If held regularly, this can be an effective way of sharing information and provide a forum for discussing important issues such as equal rights, relationships, justice and acceptable behaviour.

Victims need to be taught assertive behaviour techniques.

If you are being bullied:

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible;
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away.

Parental Involvement

Parents of bullies and their victims will be informed of the incident and the action that has taken place. Parental views will be obtained and given due consideration. They will be asked to support strategies proposed to tackle the problem. The bully will also be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions for repeated incidents will be clearly explained.

Persistent bullying will not be tolerated and pupils who engage in this type of behaviour are at risk of being suspended from school. Where necessary we shall call upon outside support and resources such as Behaviour Support Service and Educational Psychoogy Service. .

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Roles and Responsibilities

It is the collective responsibility of all staff members including lunchtime supervisors, admin staff, teaching assistants and teaching staff to:

- Report any concerns about incidents which could affect the health or wellbeing of anyone in the school to the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher;
- Encourage and promote anti-bullying through directly or indirectly;
- Listen to any child or parent that has any concerns including those related to bullying incidents;
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy when dealing with any suspected incidents of bullying.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Leadership Team to:

- Ensure that the anti-bullying policy is implemented in school and shared with all stakeholders;
- Promote anti-bullying in various ways, e.g. through timetabled assemblies, through conversations with children and through display work;
- Report to the Governing Body, as necessary, on any bullying issues;
- Liaise with the Local Authority, as necessary, if a period of fixed term or permanent exclusion is required;
- Support staff in dealing with bullying incidents and meet with parents as necessary to support the actions of staff members
- Keep accurate records of all bullying incidents;

The Governing Body will...

- Support the Head Teacher in attempts to eliminate bullying from the school;
- Monitor the incidents of bullying that occur and review the effectiveness of this policy through discussion at Governing Body meetings.

Parents/guardians will...

- Raise any concerns that they may have with their child's class teacher;
- Support the actions of the school when carrying out investigations/dealing with any incidents.
- Promote the anti-bullying work that the school does by sharing in conversations about this at home.

The children will...

- Treat others with courtesy and respect at all times;
- Not bully another person in any way;
- Respect the differences between themselves and others;
- Talk to an adult immediately if they are worried about bullying.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy and guidance will be reviewed regularly at Senior Management meetings. Individual cases will be discussed and procedures evaluated.

The policy will be updated annually in conjunction with Governors and children.

Headteacher: *J Richardson*

Chair of Governors: *P Lawton*

Date of Implementation: September 2016

Date of Last Review: July 2023

Date of Next Review: July 2024