ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Last review date	March 2023
Date approved by the Local Academy Committee	March 2023
Date for next review	March 2025

Approved by St Hilary School Local Academy Committee for the period (Feb 2024 – March 2025)	

Document Control

Document version numbering will follow the following format. Whole numbers for approved versions, e.g. 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 etc. Decimals will be used to represent the current working draft version, e.g. 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc. For example, when writing a procedural document for the first time the initial draft will be version 0.1.

The table below provides details of the changes made to this document, to inform those reviewing and approving the document.

Document Edition	Section	Details of Change
1.0	All	Approved by Trust Board March 2023

Table of Contents

Introduction

Leading Edge Academies Partnership (the 'Trust') is a team of school leaders that aim to be Leading Edge and pioneering in their approach to education and well-being. We are a growing family of like-minded schools that offer a values-based education to the communities we serve and welcome staff, workers, students, parents/carers and volunteers from all different ethnic groups and backgrounds.

The term 'Trust Community' includes all staff, trustees, governors, students, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

We are a values-based Trust, which means all actions are guided by our three 'Es' as follows:

- **Excellence** – 'Outstanding quality'

- **Evolution** – 'Continuous change'

- **Equity** – 'Fairness and social justice'

This policy is based on the value of **'Equity'**

Rationale

St Hilary School is committed to preventing all types of bullying. All members of the school community have the right to be educated in a safe and secure environment. Everyone will be vigilant and will intervene promptly if there are any signs or reports of bullying. All staff will work to ensure that bullying is not prevalent in the school community by implementing preventative strategies involving staff, parents/carers and pupils and also the wider school community. We have a responsibility to safeguard all pupils. The aim of this document is to ensure a unified approach is practiced across our school when dealing with bullying and also to ensure consistency across all key phases with a wider purpose to enable pupils to thrive in a positive and safe learning environment.

Purpose

Our policy sets out the rights of all stakeholders in relation to bullying. It contains definitions of bullying and signs and signals for staff, pupils and other stakeholders to be vigilant of the signs that may indicate that a person has been, or is being, bullied. It also contains information on how to communicate concerns, procedures to deal with allegations and proactive and reactive strategies to combat bullying. The policy will be subject to regular review to ensure it conforms to the latest guidance. It reflects current practice within school. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all staff and stakeholders.

This policy is supported by and links closely to other policies, such as:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policies
- Equality & Public Sector Equality Duty Policy
- Code of Conduct
- SEND and Curriculum Policies
- Child on Child Abuse Policy

Statement of Intent

We believe it is important that:

- All pupils feel safe whilst learning to work, play with and relate to others.
- All pupils are treated fairly, with respect and dignity.
- We listen carefully to what all pupils have to say.

We treat reports from all pupils seriously and take prompt, appropriate action.

Equal Opportunities

- Every member of the school community is entitled to expect equality of protection from bullying as well as protection and support from school policies and procedures designed to ensure that the school remains a safe environment in which to teach, learn and thrive.
- As a school, we work together and strive to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010. This also includes promoting equality for people with 'protected characteristics'. The 'protected characteristics' that the Act covers as discrimination are based on: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- It is really important that all pupils gain an understanding of the world they are growing up in, and learn how to live alongside, and show respect for, a diverse range of people.

Definition of Bullying

"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 pupils, or perceived differences." (DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017).

Anyone can practice bullying behaviours/be a bully.

Bullying can take place between pupils, between pupils and staff; between staff; by individuals or groups; face to face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods. It can happen in isolation or quite often in the presence of others.

Some people know that they are bullying others and they mean to bully, i.e. there is intent. However, some people bully others without recognising the impact of their actions. Similarly, a victim of bullying might not recognise what is happening to them and that bullying behaviour has a very insidious effect that affects a person's self-esteem, confidence and well-being.

A one-off incident tends not to comprise bullying. A characteristic of bullying is that in its different forms/behaviours it happens repeatedly over a period of time. However, individual incidents will be monitored to ensure that they are not repeated, as if undealt with, these can become bullying over time.

Instances of bullying tend to have the following common characteristics:

- Repetitive and persistent. Bullying is usually experienced as part of a continuous pattern and it can be extremely threatening and intimidating even when very subtle. Nevertheless, sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time.
- Intentionally harmful. The act of bullying intends harm to another individual although occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are present.
- Involves an imbalance of power. Bullying leaves someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it. In some cases, an imbalance of power may mean that bullying crosses the threshold into abuse requiring implementation of safeguarding procedures.

We recognise that there are levels of bullying. It can take many forms, but the main types are:

- **Physical** - e.g. hitting, kicking, theft, shaking, biting, hair pulling
- **Verbal** – e.g. racist, sexist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling
- **Emotional** - e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group
- **Cyber** – e.g. mobile phone calls, text messages, pictures,video clips, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking websites, sexting.
- **Homophobic bullying** - e.g. prejudice motivation towards students who are LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender).

Bullying can also include sexual violence and harassment and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

This abuse can:

- Be motivated by perceived differences e.g. on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or other differences
- Result in significant, long lasting and traumatic isolation, intimidation or violence to the victim; vulnerable adults are at particular risk of harm

Pupils or young people who harm others may have additional or complex needs e.g:

- Significant disruption in their own lives
- Exposure to domestic abuse or witnessing, suffering abuse or experiencing violence at home
- Educational under-achievement
- Involved in crime

It can also be because:

- They don't know how to manage their own thoughts and feelings (e.g. they often hit and hurt others)
- They have been bullied or hurt by other people themselves
- They are scared of being hurt by other people
- They are jealous of other people
- They feel like they are not good enough

- They have negative beliefs about people who are different
- They are overcome by stress or pressure

Bullying is NEVER acceptable, but understanding what has led to a person harming another person could help to prevent re-occurrence of bullying incidents.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is the first priority of any educational setting, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical. School staff, alongside the Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or Deputy DSLs, must make their own judgements about each specific case and should use this policy guidance to help.

Examples of Bullying

Racist bullying – an incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. This can be in the form of:

- verbal abuse; name calling, racist jokes, offensive mimicry
- physical threats or attacks
- wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- showcasing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- inciting others to behave in a racist way
- racist graffiti or other written insults, even against food, music, dress or customs
- refusing to co-operate in work or play.

Sexual bullying – this is generally characterised by:

- abusive name calling
- looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- inappropriate and uninvited touching
- sexual innuendos and propositions
- pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- in its most extreme form, sexual assault or rape.

Sexual orientation – this can happen even if the pupils are not lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender. Just the perception of being different can be enough. This can be in the form of:

- use of homophobic language
- looks and comments about sexual orientation or appearance.

SEN or disability – These pupils are often at greater risk of bullying. This can be characterised by:

- name calling
- comments on appearance
- comments with regard to perceived ability and achievement levels.

The need for adult sensitivity should be taken into account in a number of instances, e.g. when grouping pupils, marking pupils' work, sharing of results and assessment arrangements, as well as an awareness of appropriate language being used when addressing pupils.

The Signs of Bullying

There is no definitive way of identifying that a person is being bullied. Staff should therefore be vigilant in order to identify any of these physical and/or behavioural changes in a person as soon as possible. The following physical and behavioural signs have been identified as possible indicators that bullying has, or is, taking place:

- Significant changes in normal behaviour or attitude
- Appearing upset
- Being withdrawn/low mood
- Appearing frightened or subdued, possibly in the presence of particular people
- Flinching at actual or anticipated physical contact
- Asking not to be hurt
- Refusal to eat
- Refusal to participate
- Unwillingness to travel on public transport
- Not wanting to go to a certain venue
- Starting to bully others
- Incontinence
- Vomiting
- Unexplained illness
- Claims of feeling unwell with no apparent signs or symptoms
- Bruising or other physical marks
- Torn clothing
- Unexplained loss of money or possessions
- Sleepless nights
- Repeating words the perpetrator has said to them, e.g. "shut up or I'll hit you".

Victims are more likely to have the following vulnerability characteristics:

- Lack of assertiveness, anxious or fearful and unlikely to fight back
- Solitary pupils with few friends.
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities
- Appearance
- Ability
- Health issues, including mental health
- Home circumstances
- Social class
- Ethnicity
- Gypsy/Roma and Traveller Pupils
- Pupils in Care
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, non-binary pupils
- Young careers

Pupils' Attitudes to Bullying

The most important indication of bullying behaviour is whether a "victim" themselves believes that they have been subject to bullying. At St Hilary School we strive to ensure that all systems enable all pupils to tell us if they feel they have a problem relating to bullying behaviour. We ensure all pupils know that what they say will always be listened to and taken seriously.

- Bullying is undesirable and unacceptable.
- Bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found.
- Seeking help and openness are regarded as signs of strength, not weakness.
- All members of the school community will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Everyone has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from fear.
- All of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others.
- Pupils should talk to an adult if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously.
- Pupils should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them.
- We all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse.

Responsibilities

Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.

Keeping Pupils Safe in Education (KCSIE), 2022 states that 'Governing bodies should ensure their child protection policy includes procedures to minimise the risk of child-on-child abuse and sets out how allegations of child-on-child abuse will be investigated and dealt with'. It also emphasises that the voice of the child must be heard. 'Governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place for pupils to express their views and give feedback. Ultimately, all system and processes should operate with the best interests of the child at their heart.'

We also recognise the role of pupils, staff and other stakeholders in reporting incidents and not taking on a role of bystander if they witness an incident of bullying.

Pupils' Responsibility

Pupils also have a responsibility to role model appropriate behaviour for their peers. We therefore believe that all pupils must:

- show respect for their fellow students and adults working within the school community;
- support and be sensitive to others when they may be feeling vulnerable;
- actively seek to develop a praise culture within the school;
- actively support the school anti-bullying policy;
- take responsibility for their own behaviour.

Staff Responsibility

We recognise that all adults in the school are, in effect, role models for the students. The way in which we behave towards each other and to students is particularly important in terms of providing positive role models. Therefore, as adults we must:

- show respect for every child and other colleagues within the school community as individuals
- be aware of vulnerable pupils
- criticise the behaviour rather than the child
- avoid favouritism
- be seen to be fair
- avoid labelling

- have high expectations of pupils
- never give pupils ammunition to use against each other
- actively seek to develop a praise culture within the school.

Staff will follow the school's procedures for reporting and recording cases of bullying.

Dealing with Bullying

We encourage pupils to report any incidents of bullying to any member of staff in the setting. We strive to create an environment where all students can discuss any concerns with staff and feel listened to and supported. Staff will deal with the incident as promptly and sensitively as possible.

The following list of actions will be used by staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the incident:

SCHOOL APPROACH:

- Meet with the victim and remain calm, using patience and understanding.
- Encourage to talk about incidents, issues and feelings.
- Try to establish what type of bullying is taking place and where, how often the bullying is occurring.
- Identify the alleged bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible.
- Advise the victim not to hit out at the bully or bullies as they themselves may end up being accused of bullying.
- Discuss options to resolve the situation, agree actions and advise the victim of what happens next.
- Meet with the child/ren alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour and encourage them to talk about reported incidents. Listen carefully to their perception of the incidents, accurately recording their words.
- If bullying behaviour has taken place explain that it is totally unacceptable and encourage child to acknowledge that the behaviour is wrong and needs to stop.
- Arrange a programme of support for both pupils where appropriate, including exploring motives or reasons for the behaviour and to ensure that there is no reoccurrence. Mediation will be used between culprit(s) and victim(s) where appropriate to support the right choices being made and good friendships rather than retaliation and to ensure that the victim's voice is heard. However, in serious cases this may not be suitable.
- The class teacher or member of the SLT will ensure that parents are informed of the incident on the day it has happened. Pupils will be offered the opportunity of having their parents involved to support the process throughout.
- Should any incidents of bullying behaviour be deemed of a particularly serious nature the Head will inform parents immediately of the sanctions.
- The Head may take the decision to suspend a child immediately for serious bullying behaviour in-line with the school behaviour and suspension and exclusion policies.
- Inform the relevant staff (eg lunchtime organisers and other relevant staff who work with both victim or culprit).
- Complete the Individual Bullying Incident Form (guidance for this is attached in Appendix 1)
- Arrange to meet the parents/carers of all of those involved in the incident(s) and any subsequent follow up meetings. Discuss relevant documentation and resulting action with parents/carers and what they can do to reinforce and support the school action.

- Think ahead about supporting both victim and bully and make regular checks to ensure the bullying has ceased.
- Any bullying incidents that occur are reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis through the Senior Leader reports. The types, rates and patterns of bullying, and the effectiveness of the school's actions to prevent forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying related to SEN, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion or belief, gender reassignment or disability, will be included in reporting.
- In order to support all pupils within the school, we focus on each individual. Evidence of this is recorded as appropriate through different methods, which can involve regular tracking and monitoring of absence and attendance rates, Team around the Child/ Family, Early Help meetings, pupil's voice and other plus targeted support for students.
- We are aware that the school has a responsibility to safeguard pupils outside school and it is our responsibility to safeguard and take action, providing evidence that we have done so. We teach our pupils about staying safe online and internet safety and the consequences of inappropriate actions.

Reporting, Tracking and Reporting Cases of Bullying

All incidents relating to bullying will be recorded by all adults involved via CPOMs and catagorised as bullying – essential if the school is to monitor and track reported and confirmed cases of bullying. All reports on CPOMs will remain free of judgement and record only the facts as they are seen or reported and alert the Headteacher / DSL / DDSL.

- The Headteacher and DSL / DDSL will track and analyse bullying data in order to identify and address patterns

Prevention

Culture: strategies to prevent bullying behaviour include:

- Belief that bullying does happen, whether we know about it or not.
- Careful implementation of the Behaviour and Safeguarding policies, Equality and Public Sector Equality Duty, SEND, and PSHE Policies, in addition to this policy.
- The encouragement and development of good relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils.
- The use of assemblies (collective worship), PSHE and circle time to explore those relationships, areas of conflict, feelings, ideas and opinions.
- Actively encouraging pupils to seek support with any problems and giving them time and privacy to share any concerns.
- Working with pupils to help them grow in understanding of the consequences of their actions.
- Working with other agencies – e.g other schools, Behaviour Support Services, Educational/clinical psychologists, CAMHS, Social Services, services for minority or vulnerable groups, commissioned work such as global policing education and interventions, play therapy, brain training and counselling.
- All staff who work with pupils to have appropriate training and a clear understanding of the school's approach to behaviour management and tackling bullying.
- Regular staff monitoring of behaviour during lesson time, at break time and lunch time.

The Curriculum: learning about healthy relationships, how to stay safe and the rights of the child.

We ensure that in all aspects of school life there is an emphasis on the importance of relationships, emotional well- being and a community ethos. Proactive strategies for the school can involve:

- PSHE, RE and RSE lessons support students in understanding what bullying is and how to combat it, encouraging students to problem solve. Through SMSC, pupils are encouraged to talk about their feelings and things that are worrying them.
- Educating pupils in an age-appropriate way, to understand and be respectful to people who may be different to them, including those with 'protected characteristics'.
- Involving parents and professionals in being proactive.
- Any child considered to be at risk is supported individually, e.g. counselling, and the class teacher and child work towards a resolution.
- Bullying is talked about openly.
- Problem solving activities are employed effectively in many areas of the curriculum and pupils work together.
- Regular assemblies to promote anti-bullying.
- Planned activities and events for national Anti-Bullying week each November.
- Recruitment and training of pupils in the Upper Key Phase 2 to be Play Leaders / Mentors.
- Useful information and displays in school to promote anti-bullying placed at child-friendly heights.

Furthermore, SRE will tackle, in an age-appropriate way, issues which are set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2022, such as:

- healthy and respectful relationships
- boundaries and consent
- stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- body confidence and self-esteem
- how to recognise an abusive relationship, including coercive and controlling behaviour
- the concepts of, and laws relating to - sexual consent, sexual exploitation, abuse, grooming, coercion, harassment, rape, domestic abuse, so called 'honour'-based violence such as forced marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and how to access support, and
- what constitutes sexual harassment and sexual violence and why these are always unacceptable

Training

We ensure that staff and Governors receive the latest appropriate training and guidance on behaviour and anti-bullying legislation, responsibilities and strategies.

This is to:

- Ensure all staff are familiar with reporting incidents and procedures and a summative record sent to governors as part of the termly Senior Leader's report.
- Ensure all incidents of bullying are recorded.
- Improve the behaviour of all pupils in school.

Communication

We, as a school, are aware of the need for open communication between stakeholders. All sections of the school organisation must understand its role and responsibilities. We understand the need to ensure this policy is a living document, known and understood by all. Parents/carers are made aware of the school's policy at the induction meeting and through documentation, including this Policy and supporting leaflets that are available on the website and displayed appropriately within the school for all stakeholders. Regular bulletins about what bullying is, how to communicate with staff, recognising early intervention is crucial. Parents know that the school acts to prevent bullying and not just deal with bullying incidents. The views of parents, carers and other stakeholders are regularly recorded and taken into consideration in the rollout of school strategies. Pupils and families who are new to the school, are reassured that bullying is not permitted and it is a warning to potential bullies that such behaviour is unacceptable from the outset. Our staff do not wait for bullying to be proved before it is acted against.

Confidentiality

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a pupil for help. Staff must make this clear to pupils. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made. It is very rare for a pupil to request absolute confidentiality. If they do, in situations other than those involving child protection issues, staff must make a careful judgement whether or not a third party needs to be informed.

This judgement will be based upon:

- The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the pupil may be experiencing.
- The pupil's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.

Where it is clear that a pupil would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek consent of the pupil to do so. If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the pupil. Unless clearly inappropriate, pupils will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/carer. An underlying principle in supporting pupils in our school is that all pupils are listened to sensitively and objectively and all incidences of bullying will be taken seriously