



Stratford Preparatory School

Name of Policy/Document	Anti-bullying policy
Date	October 2021
Author	Tracey Woodcock, Headmistress
Ratified by	Catherine Quinn, Proprietor
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This policy applies to all children and staff at Stratford Preparatory School, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Guide to the law

This policy has been written with regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Children Act 2004
- Every Child Matters
- Safe to Learn- embedding anti-bullying work in schools (DCSF 2007)
- Equality Act 2010
- Independent Schools Standard Regulations 2014 and revisions
- DfE Guidance on Preventing and Tackling bullying, 2014
- Cyberbullying: Advice to Headteachers and school staff 2014
- Supporting children and young people who are bullied: Advice for schools 2014
- Child net international- Using Technology
- DfE Behaviour and Discipline in schools 2016
- Sexual violence and Sexual harassment between children in schools and Colleges, 2021

Policy Statement

Stratford Preparatory School is committed to preventing all types of bullying. It is entirely contrary to the values and ethos of our school. 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 school staff and children and also the wider school community.

We have a responsibility to safeguard all our children. The aim of this document is to ensure a unified approach is practised across our school when dealing with bullying and also to strive towards commitment and excellence in a positive learning environment.

Purpose

Our policy sets out the rights of everyone connected with our community in relation to bullying. It contains definitions of bullying and signs and signals for staff, children and others to be vigilant of 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.

Our policy takes into consideration consultation with stakeholders, as well as guidance that exists, data available and training undertaken. The policy will be subject to regular review to ensure it conforms to the latest guidance. It reflects current practice within the school. The implementation of the policy is the responsibility of all staff. This policy is supported by and links closely to other policies such as the School's Behaviour, Sanctions and Learning Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and Curriculum Policy, all of which safeguard and promote the welfare of children in this school.

Definition of bullying

"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and may be motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation (LGBT), or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities." (DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017)

Recognising Bullying

Anyone can practise bullying behaviours/be a bully. 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 but the Headmistress and Principal will make the final decision should this arise.

A characteristic of bullying is that in its different forms/behaviours it happens repeatedly over a period of 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 upsetting even when very subtle.
- Intentionally harmful. The act of bullying intends harm to another individual although in some case an imbalance of power may mean that bullying crosses the threshold into abuse requiring implementation of safeguarding procedures (refer to the school Safeguarding Policy).

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

- Physical - for example, hitting, kicking, theft.
- Verbal – for example, racist, sexist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling.
- Emotional - for example, isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group.
- SEND – for example, highlighting an individual’s need for support.
- Cyber – mobile phone calls, text messages, pictures or video clips, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking websites.
- Homophobic bullying - for example, prejudice motivated towards pupils who are LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender).

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 in the presence of certain individuals
- Flinching at actual or anticipated physical contact
- Asking not to be hurt
- Refusal to eat
- Refusal to participate
- 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 possessions
- Sleepless nights

Vulnerable people

We actively promote a positive, caring ethos within our school.

We, as a school, would always take proactive steps to support any vulnerable child by supporting individuals and small groups.

Victims are more likely to have the following vulnerability characteristics:

- Lack of assertiveness, anxious or fearful and unlikely to fight back.
- Solitary children with few friends.
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities.
- Appearance
- Ability
- Health issues, including mental health
- Home circumstances
- Social class
- Ethnicity

- Children in Care
- Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual or Transgender children
- Young Carers

In order to support all children within the school, we focus on each individual child. Evidence of this is recorded in our 'Incident Log' kept in our staffroom. We track and monitor absence and attendance rates and consider bullying as a cause if a child is refusing to attend school.

Whistleblowing

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

Our children are encouraged to report anything that makes them feel uncomfortable or any incidence of bullying of which they can become aware to any member of staff.

All staff have a duty of care to report any incidence of bullying.

Procedures for Dealing with Reported Bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation will control the situation if necessary, reassuring and supporting the children involved.

Pupils should be removed to safety if necessary.

He/she will inform the Headmistress and class teacher.

The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.

The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and the teacher will write an account of events. Leading questions must be avoided and factual evidence should only be taken.

The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and the teacher will write an immediate account of events. They may be helped to do this

The incident will be recorded and kept on the files of all pupils concerned and in the behaviour log.

The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by the Headmistress and/or the Principal, separately from the alleged perpetrator.

It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.

The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by the Headmistress and/or Principal, separately from the victim and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress.

He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions. (See Behaviour policy)

The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and may be invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.

A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and possibly counselling should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for children who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures. Strong sanctions such as suspension or expulsion for repeated bullying may be necessary.

A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.

A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.

Bullying by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation (LGBT), or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities." (DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017) will be taken particularly seriously. All behaviour logs will reflect any incidents that have occurred around these protected characteristics. Any racial incident must be reported to WCC.

In very serious cases and after the Headmistress/Principal have investigated the situation it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Stratford Preparatory School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely

The Headmistress supports the staff through training in weekly staff meeting, to understand thresholds for bullying incidents. As DSL she would work with the staff to decide when to approach outside agencies eg: serious physical harm or racial abuse.

Any bullying incidents that occur are reported to the Principal on a weekly basis through the Headmistress's report.

Safeguarding

Stratford Preparatory School is aware that the school has a responsibility to safeguard children outside school and it is our responsibility to safeguard and take action, providing evidence that we have done so, (see Safeguarding Policy).

All behaviour deemed to be bullying is recorded in the incident log in the staffroom and this is checked by the Headmistress daily. A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Staff must understand the threshold for reporting bullying, cyber bullying and bullying outside school to outside agencies, such as the Police.

Cyber bullying

Staff at Stratford Preparatory School are fully aware of the increasing availability to children of electronic devices that give unrestricted access to the internet and that these devices have the potential to be used in positive and negative ways. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has overall responsibility for Online Safety in the School but staff and parents are also responsible for online safety. The school has web-filtering (Cloudflare Inc) which is set up at router level throughout the school. Certain websites are blocked by the school's internal filtering systems.

All class noticeboards display a ICT online safety poster.

Our Online Safety Policy and Acceptable use of IT is updated annually. The expected behaviour of all ICT users are clearly set out in these documents. Staff, sign the ICT Acceptable Use (Staff) agreement annually. The ICT Acceptable Use Agreements for pupils are in their planners and are also signed by pupils annually.

If a pupil is found to be in violation of this agreement, including the misuse or attempted misuse of the Internet, then the appropriate disciplinary action will ensue. If there are safeguarding concerns for a child as a result of any such violation then the principles set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

The children are not allowed to use personal mobile devices at school. They are taught the importance of keeping names, address, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe. They are taught about cyber-bullying and the safe use of social networking services in Computing. Cyber-bullying is also discussed in PSHE lessons. The children are taught in age- appropriate ways to understand the risks posed by adults or young people who use the internet and social media to bully, groom, abuse or radicalise other people, especially children and young people. The school is guided by reference material regarding the use of the Internet in schools from The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and follows the guidelines for 7 – 11 year olds on the www.thinkuknow.co.uk website. Staff are also guided by information on the UK Safer Internet Centre website www.saferinternet.org.uk and the DfE publication: 'The use of social media for online radicalisation'.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the School has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence then they must give the device to the police as soon as is reasonably practical. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is an image of a child being sexually harmed or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline. Staff should make all such decisions in conjunction with the Headmistress (DSL), a Deputy DSL.

Staff, complete online training modules to raise awareness. Parents are also invited to an e-safety evening to raise awareness and keep parents informed.

Pupils are required to report issues and concerns as part of the Acceptable Use agreement. They are regularly reminded of this during lessons. Any issues or concerns raised by pupils or identified by staff are investigated and appropriate action is taken which might include disciplinary action and sanction. If there has been a serious breach of the agreement or the issues or concerns raised are serious, then the matter might be referred to the Police.

Safeguarding concerns might also be referred to Children's Services following the principles set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Data protection laws are followed for the management of personal data

Prevention

The Curriculum.

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

- PSHE lessons supporting pupils in understanding what bullying is and how to combat it, encouraging pupils to problem solve.
- Through PSHE, children are encouraged to talk about their feelings and things that are worrying them.
- Regular assemblies to promote anti-bullying.
- Peer support and buddy systems.
- Parents are invited to a class meeting at the start of the year to set behaviour expectations.
- Parents must sign the children's planners including school rules, behaviour cards and house -points.
- Home communication books are employed to encourage parents to take part in the responsibility for their child's behaviour.
- Parents are invited in to meet with Headmistress in cases of suspected bullying.
- Any child considered to be at risk is counselled individually and the class teacher and child work towards a resolution.
- Bullying is talked about openly and children are encouraged to voice concerns.
- Fact and fiction books on bullying raise awareness and deepen understanding.
- Problem solving activities are employed effectively in many areas of the curriculum and children work together.
- Planned activities and events for national Anti-Bullying week
- School Council used as a voice of the child.
- Staff meetings each week to discuss any concerns/observations.
- Strong control of the use of computing and guidance on acceptable etiquette.

Supervision

We ensure that key areas of the school are adequately supervised and staff are vigilant. Children are given opportunities to take responsibilities and demonstrate initiative (peer mentors, school council).

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