THE DIOCESE OF GLOUCESTER ACADEMIES TRUST
unlocking potential

Anti-Bullying Policy

Our vision is to enable all to flourish

Status and review cycle;	Non-statutory. Cycle flexible
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Contents

1.0 Policy Statement 3
2.0 Purpose and Scope 3
3.0 Introduction 3
4.0 The aim of the Policy 4
5.0 Roles and Responsibilities 5
6.0 Defining Bullying 7
7.0 Signs of Bullying 8
8.0 What can a pupil do if they are being bullied? 10
9.0 Parents: Identifying signs of bullying 10
10.0 School Commitments 10
11.0 Action to be taken when bullying is suspected 11
12.0 Disciplinary Steps 12

1.0 Policy Statement

1.1 The core purpose of any school is to maximise the learning potential of every pupil. Creating a climate for education where all pupils want to engage in learning is paramount and this means pupils need to feel safe and happy and want to attend. Any form of bullying activity which thwarts security and wellbeing will have a detrimental effect on an individual's ability to learn. The Trust believes that every child is a child of God and should be valued as such. This is why Trust schools place a huge importance on ensuring that bullying is tackled.

2.0 Purpose and Scope

2.1 This policy is intended to provide guidance to Local Governing Boards and all Trust teaching and support staff regarding dealing with and preventing bullying.

2.2 This policy must be read and implemented alongside the Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2.3 This policy has been written in accordance with guidance from the DfE including but not limited to:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education'
- Children Safe in Education

3.0 Introduction

3.1 The school believes that all children have the right to protection from harm, neglect, and abuse and that their wellbeing is of paramount importance. Consequently, in line with the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

3.2 The school aims to ensure good relationships between, and good behaviour towards, all members of its community and that learning and personal development takes place in a climate of trust, safety, and confidence.

3.3 The school has a system of rewards set out in its behaviour policy, which aims to motivate and encourage pupils as well as helping to build individual self-confidence and self-esteem. The school values everyone's unique contribution to the community. Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all pupils and all staff have a duty of care to ensure that pupils are protected from harm.

3.4 The school's curriculum for Relationships and Health education will seek to ensure that all pupils understand how to form effective relationships and how to resolve fallings out when they occur.

3.5 The school will ensure fair treatment for all, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or sexuality, and encourage understanding and tolerance of different social, religious and cultural backgrounds.

4.0 The aim of the Policy

4.1 The school will clearly communicate a whole school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear expectation of behaviour closely aligned to the school's distinctive Christian Vision and values. This will be regularly promoted across the school and all within the school will be expected to follow these expectations.

4.2 The school understands that; under the Equality Act 2010 it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relationships between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

4.3 The aims of the school's anti-bullying policy is to assist in creating an ethos in which attending the school is a positive experience for all members of the community and to make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable. All members of the school community are responsible for helping to reduce bullying incidents; school staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against any bullying behaviours. The policy aims to encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying and, in turn, to ensure that incident of bullying are dealt with effectively.

4.4 All victims who report bullying will always be listened to and supported. Pupils displaying bullying behaviour will be encouraged to change their attitudes and understand the implications of their actions. The school will equip all staff with the necessary skills and information necessary to deal with incidents of bullying and ensure

that all incidents of bullying are recorded and, where appropriate, shared it with relevant organisations.

4.5 All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

4.6 All bullying will be discussed as part of the relationships and health education curriculum, in line with the RHE policy. This curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control

4.7 All content will be age and stage appropriate and is in line with the Church of England's Guidance 'Flourishing for All'.

4.8 Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in class activities and the wider curriculum.

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all Trustees and local governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that all Trust schools adopt a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring all Trust schools are inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring each LGB appoints a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

5.2 The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing this policy across the school. this policy,

- Keeping a record of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

5.3 Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil's teacher of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

5.4 Support staff are responsible for:

- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil's teacher of such observations.

5.5 Local governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring through its delegated monitoring responsibilities that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Monitoring data related to bullying to identify trends and the operational impact of this policy

5.6 Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

5.7 Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

6.0 Defining Bullying

6.1 For the purposes of this policy "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

6.2 Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those that are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted
- Pupils suffering from a health problem
- Pupils with caring responsibilities
- Pupils from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds

6.3 Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+ or perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
- Pupils with SEND.

6.4 Bullying can be:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Homophobic: Because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Transphobic: Based on a person's gender or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- Prejudicial: Based on prejudices towards specific characteristics e.g. SEND.
- Cyber: All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities, and malicious use of AI-generated content.

6.5 The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA and that all staff within the school fully comply. Although bullying is not a

criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and /or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1998, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene, or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Behaviour that may constitute sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Sexist/Gender-based behaviour, that demeans, intimidates, excludes or harms an individual because of their sex or gender, including sexist comments, gender, stereotyping, misogynistic behaviour, or gender-based harassment.
- Some bullying incidents can fall into the Hate Incident/Crime bracket. This can be defined as any incident, which may or may not constitute a criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person as being motivated by hostility or prejudice. (College of Policing 2014). If a criminal offence has been committed, it becomes a Hate Crime. The Protected characteristics under the current legislation (2019) are named as disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, and transgender identity. In Gloucestershire, this also includes, age, gender, and alternative subcultures, e.g. homeless. GCC procedures for reporting Hate Incidents/Crime must be followed in accordance with expectations set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- The Trust recognises that bullying may be motivated by prejudice, discrimination or harmful attitudes. Such behaviour will not be tolerated, passed off as banter and will be addressed in line with this policy, the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

7.0 Signs of Bullying

7.1 Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in schoolwork

- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

7.2 Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Pupils who display a significant number of these sings will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

7.3 Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate pupil is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including but not limited to, the following:

- They may experience mental health problems, which have let to them becoming more easily aggravated.
- They have been the victims of abuse.
- Their academic performance has started to fall, and they are showing signs of stress.

7.4 If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's class teacher in the first instance and they will investigate and monitor the situation.

7.5 The Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy lays out the stance that must be followed should there be a case of Child-on-Child abuse, including the procedures that should be followed in the event of this type of abuse. All staff will be aware and sensitive to the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

7.6 It is very important for pupils to realise the extent of bullying as many are mistaken or misunderstand the definition when they 'fall out' with friends. Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank and to be resilient. Pupils have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships. "Banter" is never acceptable within the school.

8.0 What can a pupil do if they are being bullied?

8.1 Pupils should always feel confident that they will always be listened to if reporting a bullying incident and should tell an adult that they trust. Victims will always be treated seriously, supported and kept safe.

8.2 Pupils will be encouraged to:

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG!
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Be assertive - shout "No!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Not immediately fight back or make counter threats as it may make things worse. Talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a parent and member of staff if they fall victim to cyber bullying.

8.3 If a pupil knows someone is being bullied:

- Take Action! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.

9.0 Parents: Identifying signs of bullying

9.1 In identifying or dealing with bullying, a parent should consider the following steps:

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school immediately by contacting your child's class teacher in the first instance. Your complaint will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school's policy concerning bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.
- If your child has been a victim of cyber bullying, please ensure that you keep screenshots.

10.0 School Commitments

10.1 The school will:

- Organise the school community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, e.g. provide increased supervision at play times.
- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying, and the appropriate way to behave towards each other in line with the school's distinctive Christian vision, e.g. in PSHE and RSE teaching and Collective Worship.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- Encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect and dignity.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Ensure the fair and consistent application of this policy and the school's Behaviour Policy.
- Not use teaching materials or equipment which give a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- Treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it.
- Work alongside other agency concerned with the wellbeing and welfare of children.
- Review and monitor the implementation school policy and its degree of success.

11.0 Action to be taken when bullying is suspected

11.1 Two main aims determine appropriate action when reacting to incidents of bullying:
- To make the child who has been bullied feel safe
- To encourage better behaviour from the child who has displayed bullying behaviours, colluders and bystanders.

11.2 When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:
- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately.
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupil's being interview, including electronic communication
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff will take the pupil immediately for first aid and ascertain the extent of the injuries.
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident: this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to gain the full picture.
- The headteacher will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos etc provided by the victim or parent.
- Premature assumptions will not be made.
- Members of staff will listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete.

11.3 The school will use a range of strategies appropriate to the nature, severity, and history of the bullying. This may include restorative practice. Advice and guidance for support in Gloucestershire can be gained from Restorative Gloucestershire, this practice can help tackle harmful bullying behaviours, reduce exclusion levels, and /or prevent unnecessary criminalisation (01452 754542 or Restorative Gloucestershire : Gloucestershire Healthy Living and Learning

11.4 If the bullying is recently established behaviour by an individual or group which includes regular name calling, intimidation or social exclusion, (but not gross physical violence) a problem-solving approach is adopted. The underlying intention is to change the dynamics of the situation, to raise the awareness of the participants about bullying, and to support the peer group in taking responsibility for bullying.

11.5 If the bullying involves an individual or group, who have been involved in bullying on a previous occasionally and the school has previously implemented the problem-solving approach then the following procedure will be followed:

- The Headteacher is informed
- The pupil who has been bullied is interviewed and their comments recorded
- The pupil or pupils who have been displaying bullying behaviours is/are interviewed and their comments recorded
- The parents of the individual/s who has shown bullying behaviour are contacted and invited to a meeting; a meeting between the Headteacher, pupil and parents is held; the incidents are outlined and the sanctions are detailed.
- Individual Behaviour Plans to set targets to improve and monitor behaviours are set up which may involve calling upon the expertise of outside agencies
- In cases where hate incident/crime has happened, all recording will ensure that this terminology is used in both recording and dealing with the issue. The school may choose to use a restorative approach when dealing with Hate Crime incidents to modify behaviours as well as supporting both the victim and perpetrator/s.

11.6 In persistent circumstances sanctions may include;

- Permanent exclusion
- Temporary exclusion
- Exclusion from the school premises

12.0 Disciplinary Steps

12.1 Where disciplinary steps are required, the school will consider the following actions, depending on the nature and severity of the incident:

- Bullies will be warned officially to stop offending.
- Parents/guardians will be informed.
- Pupils may be excluded from participation in play time at break and/or lunch times.
- Pupils may have other privileges removed.
- Pupils may be escorted to and from the school premises.

- If bullying is persistent, pupils may be excluded for a fixed period.
- If bullying continues following return from a fixed term exclusion, a longer period of removal may be considered.
- Ultimately, permanent exclusion will be considered.