



WOODTHORNE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Document Control Table

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Document History

Date	Author	Note of Revisions
September 2025	TH	New policy adopted from the MAT

Introduction

At Woodthorne Primary School, the Governors, staff and children are committed to creating a culture where any type of bullying is not acceptable. Everyone displays a mutual respect for each other against any act or type of bullying behaviour.

The ethos of our school builds upon up on respect for all individuals regardless of age, race, religion or culture, disability, sexuality, gender or physical characteristics. We recognise that bullying is closely related to how we respect and recognise the value of diversity. We recognise that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental emotional wellbeing.

We believe that every member of the school should feel safe and respected. This policy is designed to support children, staff and parents/families to recognise, report and address any bullying issues. We aim to promote a caring environment

across our Trust where support is given to both victims and perpetrators of bullying.
Everyone has a role to play in preventing all forms of bullying (including online) and putting a stop to bullying.

This policy explains the ways in which we work together to ensure a consistent approach to tackling bullying behaviour and in developing a whole Trust and each school's ethos in which bullying is regarded as anti-social behaviour and will not be tolerated.

This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations under the Education Act of 1986 to:

- have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils
- to make a written copy of the anti-bullying statement available on request
- to set out the strategies to be followed with a system to implement them and a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing their effectiveness.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined in a number of ways.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) defines bullying as:

“the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online.”

DfE guidance ‘Preventing and tackling bullying’ (July 2017) defines bullying as:

“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 children, or perceived differences.”

It is also important to establish what bullying is NOT. It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. Bullying is behaviour that happens ‘several times on purpose’ (STOP). Children sometimes fall out and say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, although unkind, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns or issues of this nature. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop skills to repair relationships.

In all of our schools, we have rules and expectations around behaviour, and these will be used to manage any incidents that are not classed as bullying, based on the definitions given in this policy.

Statement of Intent

At Woodthorne Primary School, we believe that:

- Bullying is 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 our school communities will be listened to and taken seriously if they report bullying incidents or concerns.
- Everyone has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from fear.
- We all have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others, and to act if we witness bullying behaviours.
- Young people should talk to an adult if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect their concerns to be listened to and treated seriously.
- Young people should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them.
- We all have a duty of care to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse.
- A restorative approach is the best way forwards for all parties involved in incidents.

Aims of the Policy

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending Woodthorne is a positive experience for all members of each school community.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable.
- To enable everyone at Woodthorne to feel safe while at school and encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying.
- To deal effectively with bullying.
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- To help and support bullies (perpetrators) to develop their self-esteem and understanding of their behaviour and why bullying is not acceptable.
- To liaise with parents/carers and other appropriate members of the school community.

- To ensure all members of the school community are clear about their responsibilities for combating and challenging bullying behaviours

Objectives

- To ensure that all stakeholders are aware of and have access to this policy via our website.
- To maintain and develop effective listening systems for pupils and staff within the schools.
- To involve all staff in dealing with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly.
- To equip all staff with the skills necessary to deal with bullying.
- To involve the wider school community within each school (e.g., lunchtime supervisors) in dealing effectively with, and if necessary, referring bullying incidents.
- To communicate with parent/carers and the wider school communities effectively about bullying.
- To acknowledge the key role of the class teacher in dealing with incidents of bullying.
- To ensure that all incidents of bullying are recorded, and appropriate use is made of the information and where appropriate shared with relevant agencies.

Forms and types of bullying

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying (any bullying behaviour with a sexual element)
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics):
 - Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
 - Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
 - Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
 - Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
 - Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
- Bullying related to other (perceived) vulnerabilities

At risk groups

Some children & young people are more likely to experience bullying. Examples include:

Racist/faith targeted bullying – an incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to be racist or bullying that targets a person’s faith. This can be in the form of:

- verbal abuse, name calling, racist jokes, offensive mimicry
- physical threats or attacks
- inciting others to behave in a racist way
- refusing to co-operate in work or play.

(Macpherson report 1999)

SEN or disability – Disabled young people and those with SEND are significantly more likely to experience bullying - including online bullying - than their peers. Children who have learning disabilities and autism are particularly at risk. This can be characterised by:

- name calling
- comments on appearance
- comments regarding perceived ability and achievement levels.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying - Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (HBT) bullying is bullying directed at someone who is or is perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (LGBT).

Bullying is recognised by Woodthorne as being a form of child on child abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

Bullying behaviours, including online bullying, can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours and being attacked in any way due to religion, gender, disability, appearance, racial or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.

No form of bullying will be tolerated, and all incidents will be taken seriously.

Links with other school and Trust policies

This policy links with several MAT-wide and individual school level policies, including:

- Behaviour and discipline policy
- Complaints policy
- Safeguarding policy
- E-safety/online safety

- Curriculum policies, such as: PSHE, RSE etc.

Relevant legislation and statutory requirements

Schools and other settings must have regard to legislation and guidance that relates to bullying. There are several pieces of legislation and statutory documents which set out requirements and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework
- Preventing and tackling bullying, DfE July 2017

Code of Conduct (regarding school behaviour and relationships within the school community)

At Woodthorne Primary School, we recognise that all adults are role models for pupils. The way in which we behave towards each other and to pupils is particularly important in terms of providing positive role models. Therefore, as adults we must:

- Show respect for every pupil and colleagues within the school communities as individuals.
- Be aware of vulnerable pupils.
- Challenge the behaviour rather than the pupils.
- Avoid unconscious bias
- Treat everyone equally
- Be objective
- Avoid labelling
- Have high expectations of all pupils.
- Actively seek to develop a praise culture within the schools
- Take bullying or reports of bullying behaviour seriously
- Act in accordance with expected professional standards and the ethos and values of the Trust and our school.

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

- Show respect for their fellow pupils 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.
- Actively support the school anti-bullying policy.
- Take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Challenge and report any incidents of bullying behaviour as necessary – do not be a bystander
- Behave in line with individual school expectations and behaviour policies

Responses to Bullying

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.
- We will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- The Headteacher / Designated/ Designated Deputy Safeguarding Leads will interview all parties involved.
- The Designated / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- We will inform other staff members, and parents/carers, where appropriate.
- Sanctions (as identified within the Behaviour Management Policy) and support for individuals will be implemented, in consultation with all parties concerned.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as: the police (if a criminal offence has been committed) or other local services including Early Help or Children’s Social Care (if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm).
- Where the bullying takes place off school sites or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), we will ensure that the concern is fully investigated and where appropriate, action will be taken, including providing support to the pupil and parents involved, sign posting/ referring pupils to the appropriate agencies. Our schools will implement sanctions only if deemed appropriate in accordance with the individual school’s Behaviour Management Policy.
- A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded by the school in accordance with existing procedures.

Supporting adults

Woodthorne takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents, or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the head of school/headteacher.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the head of school/headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

Equal Opportunities

Every member of Perry Hall Multi-Academy Trust is entitled to expect equality of protection from bullying as well as protection and support from school policies and procedure, so that the schools remain a safe environment in which to teach and learn.

What to do in regard to bullying incidents

a) Role of pupils in reporting/dealing with a bullying incident.

- If you are being bullied:
 - Tell an adult or somebody you trust what happened straight away.
 - Remove yourself from the situation as quickly as possible.
 - Try and stay calm and look/act as confident as you can. Don't retaliate
 - Be firm and clear –if possible, tell them to stop and how you feel
 - Keep yourself safe as a priority
- If you are witness to a bullying incident:
 - Can you do anything to help – is it safe to do so?

- Are you contributing in some way as a bystander to the bullying? If yes – stop!
- Speak out and challenge the bullying behaviour (if safe to do so)
- Tell an adult or somebody you trust what happened straight away – report it

When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about:

- What happened.
- How often it has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Who saw what was happening.
- Where it happened.
- Why you think it is happening
- Any help that is needed

b) Guidance for parents.

If your child is being bullied:

- Calmly talk to your child about his/her experiences and listen
- Make a note of what your child says including who was involved, how often the bullying occurred, where it happened and what happened.
- Reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying.
- Explain to your child that should any further incident occur; they should report this to a teacher immediately.
- Make an appointment to talk to a member of staff in school – alert someone as soon as possible
- Explain the problems your child is experiencing
- Do not take matters into your own hands
- Check in regularly with your child and support them

When talking with members of staff in school about bullying:

- Try to stay calm and bear in mind that the member of staff may yet have no information that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened, give dates, places and names of other children involved.
- Stay in touch with the school and let them know if things improve or if the problem continues.

If your child is bullying others:

- Talk with your child and explain what he or she is doing is serious, unacceptable and makes other children unhappy – challenge their behaviour
- Make an appointment to see a member of staff and explain the problems your child is experiencing as well as discussing how you can work together to stop him/her bullying others.
- Regularly check with your child how things are in school.
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he/she is co-operative or kind to other people.

c) Role of staff

At Woodthorne Primary School we take all incidents of bullying seriously and treat them accordingly. All staff know the procedures set out in this policy and are expected follow them.

- Staff will be observant for any incidents or signs of bullying, verbal or physical or online.
- Staff will observe and investigate any changes in behaviour of their pupils.
- Staff will talk to children if they have any concerns and listen and deal with incidents swiftly when they are drawn to their attention and follow the guidelines set out in this policy.
- Staff will be available for parents to express concerns and will keep parents informed of progress when dealing with incidents.
- Staff will keep the Head informed at all times.
- Staff will follow school/MAT procedures at all times

Cyberbullying/online bullying

This includes the same type of unacceptable bullying behaviours expressed online. Although this may happen outside of school premises or hours, it is an issue that will spill over into school and can be particularly damaging to those who are targeted. This can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages or images by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, schools will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation (staff must never ask for evidence to be forwarded to them by email/text).

- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - looking at use of the school systems
 - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation.
- Act in accordance with all related MAT/school policies and practice

Signs which may indicate bullying is taking place

- Child's unwillingness to attend school / lateness /erratic attendance.
- Avoidance, hanging back from playground or staying late at school.
- Deterioration of work or mislaid books, money, equipment or belongings / under achievement
- Spurious illness / non-specific pains, headaches, tummy upsets, withdrawn, loss of appetite.
- Nail biting / flinching / jumpiness / forgetfulness / distracted.
- Impulsive hitting out / out of character temper, restlessness / sudden aggressiveness.
- Stresses manifested at home – bed wetting / insomnia / nightmares / restlessness and irritability.
- Reluctance to sit beside or near certain pupils / hesitant to walk home.

(N.B. these behaviours may also be symptomatic of other issues)

Strategies to Reduce Bullying

Our schools have a range of strategies in place to prevent and reduce bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and related issues and support targets and perpetrators. These can include:

- A pupil-friendly anti-bullying policy which ensures all children understand and uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Co-operative group work
- Circle time
- Peer support/mentoring programmes
- School councillors
- PSHE lessons, including relevant statutory Relationships and Health Education content
- Work with school pastoral teams
- Visiting speakers or appropriate external services
- Online safety lessons build into the curriculum addressing online bullying.

- Taking part in Anti-Bullying Awareness week, and other awareness raising events
- Difference and diversity are celebrated in a range of ways across the Trust
- Working with parents and carers, and in partnership with community organisations, to tackle bullying where appropriate

Children who have been bullied will be supported by (as appropriate)

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- reassuring the child
- offering continuous and ongoing support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- if online, requesting on behalf of the target of bullying that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider
- specific interventions and support, if needed

Children who have bullied will be helped by (as appropriate):

- discussing honestly what happened and work with the adult to resolve it
- discovering why the child became involved
- establishing the wrongdoing and need to change
- providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the child and offering continuing support
- if online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider
- sanctioning, in line with school Behaviour Management Policy; this may include official warnings, detentions, and fixed-term or permanent exclusions, but will be decided on a case by case basis
- specific interventions and support, if needed
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Confidentiality

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a pupil for help. Staff must make this clear to the pupils and must follow the guidelines set out in the schools safeguarding policy. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.

This policy has been shared with all staff and Governors. Parents are welcome to request a copy if they wish. The policy is located in the school policy file. It can also be found on the Trust and school's website.

Training

Each Head is responsible for ensuring that all school staff (including teaching assistants and lunchtime support assistants) receive regular training on issues surrounding bullying behaviour, so they can take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- the Head to communicate this policy to the school community to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently, reasonably and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- all staff, including governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- pupils to abide by the policy.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher will oversee all aspects of this policy along with support from all teaching and non-teaching staff.

The Governors will annually review and update this policy accordingly with the support of the Trust.

- Schools will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The Head will be informed of bullying concerns as appropriate.
- The named Governor for safeguarding will report on a regular basis to the governing body on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.