



Austin Farm Academy

Anti – Bullying Policy

Reviewed May 2024

Rationale

At Austin Farm Academy we believe children should feel safe, secure and happy in their school environment. The school's positive behaviour policy sets out clear guidelines and expectations of behaviour. Bullying is unacceptable at our school. If acts of bullying occur all pupils should be able to tell and know that the incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Bullying damages children's and young people's physical and mental health, including their self-confidence and ability to build and sustain relationships. It can also destroy self-esteem sometimes with devastating consequences and with the effects lasting into adult life. Bullying undermines the ability to concentrate and learn and can impact on children's and young people's chances of achieving their full potential at school and later in life. Bullying causes harm to those who bully, those who are bullied and those who observe bullying. We strongly believe that all children and young people have the right to learn and work in an environment where they feel safe and that is free from harassment and bullying. The purpose of this Policy is to communicate how the school aims to create a climate and school environment in which everyone agrees that bullying is unacceptable and is committed to tackling it to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Aims

At Austin Farm Academy it is our aim to:

- Ensure that all adults and children in the school have a common understanding of what bullying is
- To communicate clearly that the whole school community acts together on this issue
- To work hard to maintain a harmonious atmosphere within the school community where we embrace every opportunity to celebrate differences and challenge prejudices.

What is bullying?

The Government defines bullying as '*Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.*'

The term 'bullying' refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. Bullying behaviour usually has the following four features:

1. It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, for it can be experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating.
2. It is intentionally harmful – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible;
3. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it;
4. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying behaviour across all types of bullying can represent itself in a number of different forms. Children and young people can be bullied in ways that are:

Physical – by being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to do.

Emotional - being unfriendly, never letting somebody play, forcing you to give them things, threatening gestures, scary looks, hiding things, whispering behind your back, starting rumours, excluding people.

Verbal – by being teased in a nasty way, insulted about their race, religion or culture; called names in other ways or having offensive comments directed at them.

Electronic /'cyberbullying' – via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phones.

Specific Types of Bullying

At Austin Farm Academy we recognise that although anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference, some children may be more vulnerable to bullying than others. Research has identified various different types of bullying experienced by particular vulnerable groups of children. These include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Bullying related to being gifted or talented
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying of young carers or looked-after children

BULLYING IS NOT

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of 'falling out'. Children are naturally sociable; it is vital for them to select and build friendships. The making and breakdowns of friendships are an important part of growing up. When children 'fall out' they can say and do things because they are upset. It is essential to teach children the skills to repair relationships and enable them to utilise these. If as adults we intervene too readily to help rebuild our children's friendships on their behalf, our children may not develop the necessary social skills. Occasionally situations go beyond broken friendships or minor differences and, on these occasions, adult intervention may be necessary.

Strategies for the Prevention of Bullying

An approach to teaching and learning that considers different learning styles will help to engage children in learning, build self-esteem and make children feel part of the school. We recognise that the example that is set by adults in their relationships with other adults and with children will have a great effect on the way that children behave towards others. We should not just focus on the bullies and victims but need to look wider at the school as a whole and particularly the 'bystanders' or children who witness bullying incidents. Children's behaviour does not exist in isolation and peer pressure can both have a positive as well as negative impact on all children's behaviour.

We raise an awareness of bullying and its effects both on the victim and on the bully through PSHE lessons, assemblies, stories, and discussions. We aim to build an anti-bullying ethos.

By raising awareness, we aim:

- to create a culture where bullying is not accepted and does not happen
- to encourage those who are bullied to tell an appropriate person
- to help individuals cope with bullying
- to help individuals to respond to bullying

What do we do about bullying?

1. Talk about it...

Austin Farm Academy staff work hard to develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills to enable to 'tell' about bullying behaviours. Children will be facilitated to discuss their concerns not only as victims, but also as bystanders or witnesses. Even if the bullying target is too afraid to tell a teacher, all the bystanders know that it is their duty to do so and that they won't be accused of telling tales. Children must be made aware that they will be supported and taken seriously if they report bullying. If they do not 'tell' then they are in fact condoning the bullying. These witnesses need to be aware that they will be safe from bullying themselves. It is a deterrent because the bully knows that he/she won't get away with it.

All instances of bullying are recorded in an Anti-bullying log (kept in the Head Teacher's office) and on CPOMs.

2. Consequences...

Consequences for acts of bullying will be applied in line with our Positive Behaviour Management Policy. If a child is found to have been bullying others has relevant social or emotional difficulties these will be considered carefully before applying sanctions, although we recognise that bullying is unacceptable under any circumstances. The seriousness and impact of the bullying will be considered before deciding on the level of consequence.

The response will depend on the severity of the incident. The response may include:

- discussion between adult and children involved
- questioning of all individuals involved, including any possible witnesses to try and establish an objective viewpoint of what has happened
- a restorative, problem-solving approach, where children find their own solution through discussion with a teacher present, if this is considered appropriate by the victim
- discussion in class PSHE lessons

The school takes verbal and indirect bullying as seriously as physical bullying. When deciding upon appropriate sanctions for bullying the school will ensure that the sanctions address bullying behaviour in a way which does not lead to an escalation of the behaviour but instead supports a resolution to the problem. As with the school's restorative approach, sanctions for bullying are intended to hold children to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. Consequences of actions are very important and the message goes beyond the punishment itself. There is a clear message that bullying is not tolerated, both children and parents/carers can recognise that something has been done to support them and make it stop.

3. Support for the bully...

Each case will be treated individually according to circumstance but in general:

- The bully will be asked to genuinely apologise and desist from bullying others. The parents of both the victim and the bully should be spoken to ensure they are aware of the situation. All the children involved should be aware that the situation will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not occur.
- Where sufficient evidence has been gathered the bully will undergo mentoring sessions with an identified adult such as the PSA or the school's Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA)
- The children involved will be monitored carefully at all times of the day
- All staff will be informed of the situation so that adults are aware of the issue.

If bullying persists further strategies will be adopted:

- the implementation of sanctions as those listed in our positive behaviour policy. E.g. separating the children, exclusions at lunchtime
- further discussion with parents, both to inform parents about strategies already employed and to find a way forward together
- involvement of external agencies
- part time or temporary exclusion guidelines

When an incident of bullying is reported and has occurred when they are not on the premises of the school and out of school hours and not under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff e.g. walking to and from school, the headteacher or a member of SLT will contact parents.

The school encourages children to seek help and to tell us about incidents of bullying that happen outside the school so that the school can:

- Raise awareness among the whole school community of possible risks within the community
- Alert colleagues in other schools whose pupils are bullying off the school premises
- Make contact with local police officers and PSCOs
- Offer children and parents/cares strategies to manage bullying off the school premises e.g. guidance on how to keep safe on the internet and when using their mobile phones.

Monitoring and recording behaviour and relationship issues.

The school follows a clear behaviour management system, which enables challenging behaviour and relationship problems to be identified, recorded and addressed. This process is part of the school's overall Positive Behaviour Management Policy. It supports the detection of bullying and allows for intervention at an early stage. This system involves using CPOMs to record individual child incident logs and the school's definition of bullying to assess situations as they arise and working alongside all parties to form a judgement as to where bullying has occurred.

When bullying is reported to an adult, they should investigate to ensure that the difference between an isolated incident and systematic/repetitive bullying is clear. The first port of call for a child may be the class teacher, but it may be any member of the school's staff, who should inform the class teacher. The class teacher should keep a record of **every** complaint of bullying.

After listening to the views and feelings of the targeted child and their account of what has happened to them, the school will record the incident appropriately either using the system above or by completing Section A of the Bullying Incident Report Form (**see Appendix A Bullying Incident Report Form**) where bullying has occurred. Section A includes:

- Date, time incident reported
- Member of staff to whom the incident was reported
- Date, time, location of alleged incident
- Nature of the alleged incident from the perspective of the person being bullied
- Date, time when parents/carers were informed.

When an incident of bullying is reported, the school will endeavour to make a written record of this incident within 24 hours of the incident being reported. Written records are factual and where opinions are offered these will be based on factual evidence. Recording incidents helps to build a picture of behaviour patterns in school e.g. who, when, how, what action taken. It enables the school to manage individual cases effectively and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

Implementing the Policy

The response to bullying needs to be consistent as set out in this policy. Everyone needs to be aware that:

- bullying will not be tolerated
- bullying should be reported
- bullying will be responded to.

Staff and pupils will need regular reminders of the policy over time to ensure that it is remembered.

Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the Policy

The implementation of this policy must be monitored to ensure that it is being followed and that it is effective. This will be by staff through staff questionnaires and by children through the School Council and through discussion. The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated by staff discussion and by SLT.

The policy was reviewed and agreed with SLT 2.5.24 and presented to the HAB board Summer 2024.

To be reviewed: Summer 2026

SECTION B: ACCOUNTS OF THOSE INVOLVED

Alleged perpetrator(s) account of the incident

Name(s)

Year group:

Class:

Bystanders'/ witnesses' accounts of the incident

Name(s)

Year group:

Class:

Parents/carers of alleged perpetrators informed:

Date:

Time:

SECTION C: ACTION TAKEN

Details of immediate action taken

Monitoring of action taken and details of follow up and longer term action taken