



Anti-Bullying Strategy and Statement

Firbeck Academy



Approved by: TSB

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31 August 2025

Introduction and aims

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated in any schools within our Trust.

Purpose

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive students can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or student, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child be best able to benefit from the opportunities available at the school.

The Trust is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. Bullying is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute, in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment. As such, everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the well-being of all students and all staff have a duty of care to ensure our students are protected from harm, and this includes bullying.

Principles

We will:

- Adopt a definition of bullying that is agreed across the Trust.
- Have a consistent approach to any bullying incidents that occur.
- Raise awareness of bullying and promote positive relationships based on mutual respect.
- Seek to involve all stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Promote positive action to prevent bullying through our PSCE and pastoral programme, related activities and through curriculum opportunities.
- Provide support for all members of the school community that may be involved in dealing with an incident of bullying.
- Provide appropriate training for both staff and students to support the implementation of the policy across the School.
- 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.
- Pay due regard for those students with SEND who may be at higher risk of peer group isolation and can suffer a disproportionate impact of bullying. Students with SEND may have difficulties with communication and it is important that staff are aware of changes to behaviour or mood. Injuries may not be consistent with their SEND but could be related to incidents of abuse or bullying.

Definition of bullying

There may sometimes be misunderstanding about the meaning of the term 'bullying'. One-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'.

We define bullying as persistent or repeated, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone.

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated over time.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour.

It can be:

Verbal Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, harassment

Emotional Being unfriendly, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures or actions).
Inappropriate 'looks' or body language designed to intimidate or exclude from groups, games or activities.

Physical Pushing, kicking, shaking, biting, hitting, punching or any use of violence that may cause physical harm. Unwanted physical contact including an 'invasion of personal space', This includes the threat of violence or the encouragement of physical harm towards another.

Prejudiced Racial / sexual / homophobic taunts, graffiti, gestures, comments on identity / culture / beliefs. Unwanted physical contact or threats / harassment

Sexual Unwanted physical contact, sexual harassment or sexual comments, remarks, jokes. Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent including forcing someone to strip or touch themselves sexually. Rating appearance and derogatory remarks. Upskirting designed to obtain images of buttocks or genitalia which can cause distress, alarm or humiliation. In extreme cases, rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault / violence.

Online All areas of internet use such as email, social media and internet misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls, sharing of consensual or nonconsensual nude or semi-nude images (sexting or youth produced sexual imagery) Misuse of associated technology; i.e. camera and video facilities

Hazing or initiation rituals which may involve harassment, abuse or humiliation, this can be online or in person.

Cyber-bullying

To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes personal, social, health and economic (PSCHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff, governors and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training.

The school also sends information on cyber-bullying to parents so that they are aware of the signs, how to report it and how they can support children who may be affected.

In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, all schools will follow the processes set out in their anti-bullying strategy and the school behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

The DSL will report the incident and provide the relevant material to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable, if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that possessing that material is illegal. They will also work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying. The Head Teacher is ultimately responsible for the well-being of all students and staff.

All staff, students and parents should be made aware of the individual schools anti-bullying strategy and policy alongside awareness being raised of the issues associated with bullying.

Staff

All staff will:

- Treat each other respectfully
- Foster in our students' self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our students.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to appropriate class teacher or House Office (SSA, tutor or Senior Tutor).

Students

We expect our students to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the student who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances. Witnessing bullying without acting or reporting it will be regarded as offering tacit support for the bully and effectively joining in with the bullying. Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:
- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.
- Not use bullying tactics themselves as retaliation.

Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying.
- Taking appropriate responsibility for the use and misuse of technology, including social media
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a member of staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students.
- Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken; whilst helping to foster confidence, assertiveness and negotiation skills to deal with unkind behaviour
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved;
- Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, trying to ascertain the truth. • Speaking respectfully when talking to all members of college staff

All schools will have their own Anti-Bullying Charter / Strategy, these include but are not limited to:

- How pupils, parents and staff can report incidents of bullying
- How the school investigates allegations of bullying
- Whole-school proactive strategies to prevent bullying
- How the school trains staff and governors in preventing and handling bullying

Creating a positive learning environment

- The Trust School Behaviour Policy explains how positive behaviour in school is used to create an environment where students take responsibility for their own and each other's well-being.
- Curriculum opportunities in class are used to raise awareness about bullying and our anti-bullying policy, create an anti-bullying ethos and encourage students to manage their relationships positively with others.
- We use the SMSC and British Values programme to develop social and emotional skills such as empathy and the management of feelings, thereby providing continuity from primary to secondary education.
- Assemblies and tutorial time are also used to promote awareness of the negative consequences of bullying.
- The Trust also believe in raising awareness through the Anti-Bullying week events, which provides a direct link to school experiences.
- Whenever possible, Trust schools will endeavour to work with feeder schools, parent/carers and students to create the best possible learning environment for every pupil.
- We aim to provide understanding and tolerance of all our differences and encourage our students to disown bullying in any form. Transitional visits by staff and peer mentors into primary schools ensure continuity and coherence in our approach to behaviour, particularly bullying.

Bullying Log

All incidents of bullying will be recorded on the Bullying Log to allow tracking, monitoring and evaluation. This will in all instances include:

- Incident details
- Action taken including sanctions applied
- Resolution
- Staff involved

This information will be used by the Senior Leadership Team and Pastoral Teams for:

- Sharing of good practice
- Ensuring parity in dealing with incidents
- Identifying where bullying is a factor in non-attendance at school
- Exclusion data relating to bullying

Sanctions

Will be issued in line with the behaviour policy

Complaints

If a parent or member of staff is not satisfied with the steps taken as a result of a bullying, the complaints procedure is the same as for other complaints.

School Specific Procedures

What is bullying?

A one-off incident tends not to comprise bullying. A characteristic of bullying is that in its different forms/behaviours it happens again and again 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 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 case an imbalance of power may mean that bullying crosses the threshold into abuse requiring implementation of safeguarding procedures (refer to the school safeguarding procedures). 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 or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling); and
- emotional (for example, isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group)
- cyber – mobile phone calls, text messages, pictures or video clips, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, social networking websites.

THE SIGNS OF BULLYING

There is no certain way of spotting that a person is being bullied. Staff should be vigilant in order to identify any of these physical or behavioural changes in a person as soon as possible. The following physical and behavioural signs have been identified by a number of agencies who have undertaken research around bullying (including Kidscape, BullyonLine, NHS Choices, Anti-bullying Alliance) as indicators that bullying has or is taking place:

- Significant changes in normal behaviour or attitude
- Challenging behaviours
- Appearing upset
- Anger
- Being withdrawn
- Quietness
- Depression
- 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”.

We also recognise the role of pupils and other stakeholders in reporting incidents and not taking on a role of bystander if they witness an incident of bullying. We aim to promote a positive, caring ethos within our school. We as a school are taking proactive steps to support our vulnerable pupils by supporting individuals and small groups. There are designated staff roles. We are aware of our individual pupil’s needs, have school intervention programmes and work in partnership with external support agencies.

In order to support all pupils within the school, we focus on each individual pupil. Evidence of this is recorded as appropriate through different methods, which can involve regular tracking and monitoring of absence and attendance rates and parental meetings, pupil voice and other plus targeted support for pupils

PROCEDURE:

We as a school recognise the need for a prompt response to an incident that appears to be bullying. The following list of actions might be used by staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the incident:

- Remain calm
- Discuss and log incident with victim using patience or understanding. Consider the antecedent and environment that might make the victim more vulnerable.
- Listen carefully. Allow the victim or reporter of the incident to tell their story. He/she may wish to have another person present, such as a friend.
- Record events using exact wording at every stage, including actions agreed/taken.
- Try to establish what type of bullying is taking place and where, how often the bullying is occurring, who is carrying out the bullying and how the victim is responding to the bullying.
- 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 advise the victim of what happens next.
- Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible.
- Arrange to speak with the alleged perpetrator, to be able to define the experience from each person's view.
- If it appears to be bullying, make the unacceptable nature of the behaviour clear to the bully, ensuring the act is separate to the person.
- Try to enable the bully to see things from the victim's position. Explain clearly the reparation.
- Inform the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher who will have overall responsibility for overseeing the records, reports and the effectiveness of interventions of the incident.
- Record on the school Bullying Incident Log
- Arrange to meet the parents/carers of all of those involved in the incident(s).
- Think ahead about supporting both victim and bully.
- Discuss relevant documentation and resulting action with parents/carers and what they can do to reinforce and support the school action.

We as a school 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 are teaching our pupils about staying safe online and internet safety and the consequences of inappropriate actions.

The school aims to analyse incident logs, behaviour in and out of lessons, complaints, pupil/parent and other stakeholder voice, rewards and sanctions and to respond to these appropriately. We as a school continually monitor and measure the effectiveness of our anti-bullying policy and practice and will make changes to bring further improvements to the procedure as appropriate. The safety and wellbeing of pupils and all stakeholders is the basis for this policy and work on anti-bullying conducted by the school.

At Firbeck Academy, we are part of the Anti-Bullying Alliance: <https://antibullyingalliance.org.uk/> where we Unite Against Bullying.

Other preventative methods:

- Our PSHE curriculum covers topics including bullying, online bullying and e-safety to help prevent bullying.
- Our regular S.T.O.P. (Several Times on Purpose) and S.T.O.P. (Start Telling Other People) whole school assemblies aim to educate pupils and staff about bullying to further help prevent bullying from happening in our school.
- All teaching staff will complete the Anti-Bullying Alliance's online CPD.