



# Anti Bullying Policy 2023 - 2025

**Last reviewed:** March 23

**Last reviewed by:** Richard Williams

**Ratified:**

**Next review:** Spring 2025



# Alma Park Primary School

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### Preamble

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with our:

- E-Safety Policies and Appendices
- Promoting Positive Behaviours Policy
- Public Sector Equality Duty Policy
- Other Central Teaching Policies

All practitioners must be familiar with and apply our Central Teaching Policies through all their work in school. All other school policy statements should be regarded as add on statements to these core beliefs, practices and values.

### Principles and Values

The prevailing ethos at Alma Park is one where an atmosphere of mutual support and understanding is fostered. There is a commitment on the part of all staff to create a warm, caring environment for children. As a school we take bullying and its impact seriously. Children and parents should be assured that known incidents of bullying will be responded to. Bullying will not be tolerated. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school. The school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this. We believe that each child has a right to enjoy an education free from fear and distress. We encourage all children to develop into confident empathetic individuals who are able to make responsible and positive choices in life.

### Objectives of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to work together to ensure that our school is a safe place for children and adults to be.

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, children and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is, what the school policy and procedures are on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.

All children and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises and how the school will respond to allegations of bullying.

### What Is Bullying?

#### Definition

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time. Bullying is defined as repeated behaviour, which causes harm or discomfort to others.

In other words, bullying at Alma Park is considered to be, “unacceptable behaviour which occurs **several of times, on purpose**.” It is repeated, targeted and deliberate.



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It is important to us at Alma Park to understand the difference between behaviour that is rude, behaviour that is mean and behaviour that constitutes bullying. It is also important to us to help our children and our families to understand this difference too.

Rude: Inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else.

Mean: Purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (or maybe twice).

The main distinction between 'rude' and 'mean' behaviour has to do with intention.

Bullying: Intentionally aggressive behaviour, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power.

All of these can cause upset and need to be dealt with. We need to be able to distinguish between these behaviours so that we can deal with it effectively and fairly.

All members of the school community deserve the right to feel valued, equal and respected and be able to come to school without fear. This policy recognises that anyone can be a bully, or a victim, and that bullying can take many forms.

Forms of bullying can include although are not limited to:

- Name calling
- Damaging or stealing property belonging to somebody else
- Coercion into actions contrary to the wishes of the victim(s)
- Violent behaviour or assault
- Punching, pushing, pinching, biting, hitting or kicking
- Teasing
- Online bullying, i.e. sending abusive emails or text
- Intimidation-verbal and physical
- Damage to schoolwork and/or equipment belonging to somebody else
- Threats
- Offensive comments
- Spreading rumours
- Excluding people from friendship groups or activities

Bullying may be related to:

- Race
- Sex and gender identity
- Religion
- Culture
- Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances, including young carers and poverty
- Sexual bullying



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Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, and toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and online. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community.

### **Bullying is not:**

The occasional falling out with friends, a one-off incident of name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone is not considered, by our school's definition, to be bullying. Children 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 children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name-calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships. At Alma Park, we empower children to have healthy relationships. One way we achieve this is by delivering structured, focused lessons as part of our Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) scheme of work on friendships and what to do when we fall out with our friends.

We use the acronym STOP (Several Times On Purpose) to remember that a situation is officially defined as bullying only after 'on purpose' incidents have been documented several times.

### **Perpetrators and Victims**

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another.

This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of online bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts
- Strength of personality/popularity of an individual

### **Signs and Symptoms for Parents and Staff**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
  - Begg to be driven to school
  - Changes their usual routine
  - Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
  - Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
  - Starts stammering
  - Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
  - Feels ill in the morning - complaining of headaches and tummy aches
  - Begins to make less effort with school work than previously
  - Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
  - Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
  - Has unexplained cuts or bruises
  - Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
  - Is bullying other children or siblings
  - Stops eating
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- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when an online -message is received
- Makes limited eye contact
- Becomes short tempered
- Shows a change in attitude to people at home

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect

### Outcomes

#### Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying

Staff are aware of the nature of bullying and its impact on a child. Furthermore, due to the insidious nature of bullying we are aware that it is often difficult to detect and will look out for any changes in a child's behaviour that might be an indicator. Where bullying is identified, (through whatever source), then the Phase Leader and the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher must be informed. We would seek to find out all relevant information of the victims and perpetrators with the involvement of parent/carers. On the basis of information gathered and recorded, the following action will be taken:

- Involvement of parent/carers of the offending child/ren in decisions taken with respect of appropriate sanctions (in line with our behaviour policy)
- Appropriate involvement of the offending child/ren in decisions taken with respect of appropriate sanctions (in line with our behaviour policy)
- Counselling the offending child/ren in respect of the impact of their actions
- When appropriate the victim and perpetrator can meet face to face and discuss what happened with a member of staff to mediate. This is intended to empower the victim to express their feelings and to allow them to have 'a voice'.
- Children who bully are supported to learn different ways of behaving.
- Counselling the child who has been bullied with the reassurance that action will be taken to eliminate the problem and details of sanctions explained to the parent/carers
- Monitoring of the situation with feedback to all concerned. There may be a need to repeat earlier steps outlined above until all parties are satisfied that the situation has improved

If a child's behaviour is extreme, a school exclusion may be considered. Exclusion is the ultimate sanction and the Headteacher has the responsibility of deciding if this is an appropriate course of action. LA procedures will be followed at all times.



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### Responsibilities of all stakeholders

Everyone should work together to combat and, hopefully in time, to eradicate bullying.

### Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- Foster our children's self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our children
- Discuss bullying with all classes on several occasions across the school year and when necessary, so that every child learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens
- Attend staff training on how to recognise signs of bullying and how to deal with incidents in line with school policy and procedure
- 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 (name of teacher and post, e.g. our designated teacher for child protection/head of pastoral care)
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures
- Seek support if they have been affected by any issues raised by children e.g. talk with another colleague within their team

Alma Park provides staff with additional free health care services one of which is 1 to 1 counselling. If staff need support to deal with difficult feelings and emotions arising from a child's disclosure of bullying all they need to do is ring the schools advisory service and give their name as well as the schools to access this service. This is a confidential service and school will not be notified if a member of staff accesses counselling services.

### Responsibilities of Children

We expect our children to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the child 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.
- Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets. We appreciate that this is a not an easy thing to do and that children may be too frightened to say what is wrong. We urge children not to suffer in silence.



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### Responsibilities of Parents/carers

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
- Advising their children to report any bullying to a member of school staff and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other children
- 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
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- Informing the school if there are any issues regarding staff conduct, to allow SLT the opportunity to fully investigate any concerns. Comments relating to specific staff must not be posted on social media.
- Co-operating with the school if their children are accused of bullying to try to ascertain the truth and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

Do not:

- Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
- Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.

### School strategies for the Prevention and Reduction of Bullying

#### ABC

We continue to promote behaviour to prevent and reduce bullying. To this end, we have introduced our Anti Bullying Council (ABC) run by Junior children who have applied for their position and have gone through a formal interview process. They feedback any behaviour concerns that they may have to staff who can then ensure that appropriate action is taken. These children (who wear a clearly visible cap/beanie) play a very proactive role at break-times and lunchtimes and encourage cooperative play to ensure a positive break time for all children. Within the curriculum, the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE lessons, assemblies and involvement in the national anti-bullying week events.

#### Pastoral provision

We employ a trained team of pastoral staff to offer support and intervention to at risk and vulnerable children. Members of the Pastoral Team are present every morning in the Breakfast Club and during each lunchtime to offer informal support to children. In KS2, there is a 'Worry Box' system in place that allows children to indicate if they would like to speak with a member of staff about something that is troubling them including if they feel that they or someone they care about is being bullied. If staff in school were concerned about a child, they would share this with a member of the pastoral team. The team meet informally daily but have formal meetings at least every fortnight. During meetings, the team will plan support for identified children. Interventions can be offered to groups, pairs or 1:1. Some programmes are for a set number of sessions and others might be ongoing. Some vulnerable children

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require in class support and this can be directly from a member of the pastoral team or via support / advice offered to the class teacher.

### **Healthy Friendships**

It would be easy to limit our understanding of bullying to children who do not like each other or children who are not friends. This would be a mistake. Bullying within a friendship or within a friendship group can take place and can be easily dismissed without due care. Coercive control within a friendship or relational aggression can be a form of bullying in which children use their friendship, or the threat of taking their friendship away, to hurt someone or to manipulate their behaviour.

It is therefore an integral part of the Alma Park curriculum to help children to understand their own emotions and to name them, to understand what a healthy friendship looks like and to build confidence in themselves.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The Headteacher is responsible for the monitoring of this policy and ensuring that its recommendations are put into practice across the whole school. The Head will be supported by the AHT Inc. and the Anti-Bullying governor in order to do this.

An incident log will be used to record any incidents of bullying. We will monitor and evaluate our incident log termly and share any information or trends with the Governing body so that immediate, appropriate action can take place in accordance with this policy.

### **Policy**

We will monitor and evaluate our anti-bullying procedures annually and assess their implementation and effectiveness making any changes as and when required.



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### Appendix 1

Read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Grievance, bullying and harassment
- Whistleblowing

### Workplace bullying and harassment

Bullying and harassment is behaviour that is the persistent (and normally deliberate) misuse of power or position to intimidate, humiliate or undermine. Harassment is unlawful under the Equality Act 2010. (Please see the Equality Scheme for full details)

Examples of bullying/harassing behaviour include:

- Spreading malicious rumours/slander e.g. making false accusation about someone behind their back, insulting someone by word or behaviour (copying memos that are critical about someone to others who do not need to know, ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail)
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Overbearing supervision or other misuse of power or position
- Unwelcome favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- Making threats or comments about job security without foundation
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- Preventing individuals progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities

Bullying and harassment are not necessarily face to face. They may also occur in written communications, email, phone, and automatic supervision methods such as computer recording of downtime from work or the number of calls handled if these are not applied to all workers.

Bullying and harassment can make someone feel anxious and humiliated, their performance can be adversely affected and relations in the workplace can suffer. Feelings of anger and frustration at being unable to cope may be triggered. Some people may try to retaliate in some way. Others may become frightened and de-motivated. Stress, loss of self-confidence and self-esteem caused by harassment or bullying can lead to job insecurity, illness, absence from work, and even resignation.

It is also important to note that misunderstandings between colleagues do sometimes occur which can lead to a perception that bullying is taking place. In some of these cases, it will be possible to resolve the issue through informal discussion between the two parties.

### The law

Bullying itself is not against the law, but harassment is. Harassment as defined in the Equality Act 2010 is: Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.



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Harassment may be related to one of the following:

- Age
- Sex
- Disability
- Gender identity
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation

### **What employees should do if they are bullied or harassed?**

Employees should see if they can sort out the problem informally first. If they cannot, they should talk to their:

- Manager
- Trade union representative

If this does not work, they can make a formal complaint using their employer's grievance procedure. If this does not work and they are still being harassed, they can take legal action at an employment tribunal.