Stepgates Community School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Approved by Head teacher: 24/06/25
Next review due: Summer 2028

Mission Statement

At Stepgates Community School everyone has the opportunity to learn and grow together, as independent, enthusiastic and confident learners in an inclusive, creative, safe, healthy environment.

This policy is based on our Mission Statement and Aims for our school.

Aims of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

Stepgates Community School has an ethos of good behaviour where children treat each other and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour that affects everyone. It is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Stepgates. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will children be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available in school.

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying. This policy aims to bring school procedures to prevent bullying among children to the attention of staff, parents and children.

Links with other documents & policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Self Evaluation Policy
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy
- DfE 'Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' – July 2017
- DfE 'Behaviour and discipline in schools Advice for headteachers and school staff' – January 2016
- DfE 'Keeping Children safe in Education' – September 2018

What is Bullying?

Bullying behaviour is

- anti-social behaviour, by an individual or group;
- repeated over a period of time;
- an intentional act;

- difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves;

- can take many forms - physical and/or psychological or emotional;

Bullying takes place in many forms such as:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings;

- Verbal – name-calling, threatening, insulting, repeated teasing, making offensive remarks;

- Indirect/emotional – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious emails or text messages.

- Cyber - via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video.

Bullying might be motivated by actual differences between children or by perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

A bully is someone who likes to feel powerful by making others feel powerless. They rely on their victims not telling others about the problem.

A victim is a person or group that is harmed physically or emotionally by the behaviour of others. They have a continuing fear of the bully, even when the bully is not there. This differs from random acts of aggression.

School Ethos

Stepgates Community School recognises 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 wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our Community:

- Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.

- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.

- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.

- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.

- Ensures our pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the policy against bullying.

- Requires all members of the community to work with the school to uphold the policy against bullying.

- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.

- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy.

- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.

- Utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

Safeguarding children and young people

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Leads in school so their concerns can be referred to the local authority children's social care team. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, school staff may need to draw on a range of external services to support the child who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Criminal law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Bullying outside school premises

Teachers have the power to discipline children for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a child. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the child on school premises or elsewhere when the child is under the lawful control of a staff member. More detailed advice on teachers' powers to discipline, including their power to punish children for misbehaviour that occurs outside school, is included in DfE 'Behaviour and discipline in schools – advice for head teachers and school staff'.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

For more information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how children can keep themselves safe can be found in the school's E-Safety Policy.

Implementation

School

Within the curriculum the school will raise children's awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, Jigsaw Circle Times, Anti-Bullying Weeks, assemblies and curriculum subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate bullying in the school.

Children are taught to understand the difference between 'friendship fallouts' and 'bullying behaviour'. Restorative practices are used to develop children's abilities to resolve conflict.

The school will proactively gather information about issues between children which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring.

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents of bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be recorded immediately on an Incident Form by the member of staff who has been approached.

- If a parent reports a suspected incident of bullying, it will be recorded on a Parent Interview Record and handed to the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher for investigation.

- A Senior Leader will adopt a 'No blame Approach' to follow up the incident following the ten steps below.

- Class teachers will be kept informed by the Senior Leader.

- Parents will be kept informed by the class teacher and/or Senior Leader.

- Restorative Practices will be used to support the 'No Blame Approach' and encourage children to recognise the effect of certain behaviours on others.

A Senior Leader will

Step 1   Talk with the victim to understand what happened from their perspective, encourage them to say how they feel and offer reassurance and support. Recognise that their **feelings** and **self-esteem** are important.

Step 2   Gain their consent to follow up the incident and convene a meeting. Ask them to suggest children involved in the bullying together with some of their own friends.

Step 3   Convene a 'Fix-it Circle' with all those involved and some of their own friends, Following restorative practice procedures, explain the problem by stating how the victim feels.

Step 4	At no time should incidents be discussed or blame be allocated to individuals or the group. Share the responsibility for making the victim feel better. State that the group has been called together to help solve the problem and make the victim feel happier.
Step 5	Ask the group to make suggestions about ways in which they might help to make the victim feel happier. Each member must come up with something positive they can do.
Step 6	Thank the group, arrange a time to meet with them in a weeks time and leave it up to them.
Step 7	Convey throughout this process your belief that the children involved are not "bad" or "unkind".
Step 8	During the week meet informally with the victim and each member of the group to discuss how things are going. This may continue over the next few weeks and may involve restorative approaches.
Step 9	Feedback to the class teacher who will keep parents informed of the actions & consequences for the bully and the victim.
Step 10	All incidents must be recorded and passed to the Head Teacher.

Roles and Responsibilities

Every **member of staff** has a responsibility to pass any incidents of bullying to a member of the Leadership Team immediately.

We involve **parents** to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and that we expect them to contact the school immediately if they believe their child is being bullied.

A **Senior Leader** will respond to all incidents, record actions taken and pass the information on to the Head teacher.

The **Head Teacher** will meet with those concerned in incidents of bullying and their parents. Should the bullying persist the Head Teacher will meet with all parties concerned to discuss future strategies in line with the Behaviour Policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Head Teacher will

- monitor incidents of bullying throughout the term and report concerns to staff and governors each term;
- review the impact of this policy and procedures against the number of incidents.

The Leadership Team will review and assess this policy's implementation and effectiveness annually.

The governor with responsibility for Child Protection will visit the school and meet with the Head teacher at least annually to monitor the implementation of this policy and will report back to governors on an annual basis.

Review due: Summer 2028