Diocese of Chelmsford
Vine Schools Trust

Anti-Bullying Policy

This is a model policy for all Vine schools that has been reviewed and adapted for St. Leonard's Church of England Primary School

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"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit

JOHN 15:5

‘Bullying has no place in our schools. Every child deserves to learn in an environment where they are loved, supported, and respected.’

(Flourishing For All: C of E Anti-bullying guidance Sep 2024)

1. Introduction – Flourishing in schools - our approach

1.1 The starting point for tackling all forms of bullying is a welcoming and inclusive culture in which all pupils and adults feel a sense of belonging.

1.2 The drive to eliminate bullying should go beyond compliance to deep compassion and relentless pursuit of flourishing for all.

1.3 This policy has been produced to help our academies prevent and respond to bullying as part of their overall behaviour policy. It outlines the Government’s approach to bullying, relevant legal obligations, the powers academies have to tackle bullying, and the principles which underpin the most effective anti-bullying strategies. It is also underpinned by the Guidance – Flourishing for All: Anti-bullying Guidance for Church of England Schools.

1.4 Our academies have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and create and maintain a safe learning environment where both children and adults can flourish. Therefore, the importance of having a strong and consistent bullying policy in place, allows us to educate staff to identify any situation which is likely to result in conflict or bullying behaviour before it happens and before it becomes a significantly more serious issue.

1.5 This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour and Relationships Policy and Child Protection Policy. This Policy is also compliant with statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.

2. Safeguarding Children and Young People

2.1 Under the Children’s 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, staff should report their concerns to the DSL using the schools’ safeguarding system and decide if there needs to be a referral made to their local authority children’s social care.

2.2 Schools are specifically expected to make every effort to prevent child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse can look like:

- Bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying)
- Hate incidents or hate crimes (including online)
- Abuse between young people in an intimate relationship
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking hair pulling, or threats of physical harm

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- Racism (including verbal abuse or physical attacks)
- Sexual violence (such as sexual assault)
- Sexual harassment (in person or online)
- Coercive sexual behaviour
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images or videos
- Upskirting
- Initiation or hazing violence or rituals
- Misogyny (prejudice towards girls and women) or misandry (prejudice towards boys and men)

2.3 Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, we may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

'Flourishing children are to be loved unconditionally, enabled ambitiously, supported compassionately and championed relentlessly.'

(Flourishing For All: C of E Anti-bullying guidance Sep 2024)

3. What is Bullying?

3.1 Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally and can be repeated over time. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, background or family context or having caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

3.2 Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is our first priority, but emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical - so teachers will have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

3.3 Bullying prevents belonging and inclusion for those being bullied, hinders academic and vocational progress, diminishes the ability or desire to participate in school life and disconnects them from others.

3.4 In the most extreme cases, bullying can lead to self-harm or, long-term, to suicidal ideation.

Bullying behaviours that might occur:

- Use of discriminatory or offensive language, name-calling
- Physical harm, including threats of physical harm
- Coercive and harmful sexual behaviour

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• Damage to property or stealing

• Repeated exclusion from groups, games and other activities

• Intentional ignoring to cause hurt

• Sharing of untrue or private information without permission

• Creation and sharing of images intended to denigrate or shame another person

• Inappropriate or unkind commenting on social media posts

4. Prevention

4.1 We believe that responding to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. Developing more sophisticated approaches in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through worship.

4.2 For Church schools – who often employ restorative justice approaches – there is a mandate to engage with the perpetrators to understand the behaviour and work with them to put an end to it.

4.3 Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

4.4 Creating an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the Academy staff with respect because they know that 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 Academy environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

4.5 Any approach eliminating bullying needs to go beyond the school to engage families and households, churches, local community groups and other partners involved in pupils' lives.

4.6 Schools should support all pupils to know their worth so they can protect themselves or know how to find the support they need.

'An understanding of difference removes any tendency towards bullying.'

(Flourishing For All: C of E Anti-bullying guidance Sep 2024)

5. Cyberbullying

5.1 The rapid development of and widespread access to technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside the Academy. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a

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potentially bigger audience and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

5.2 The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2010 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 further information please refer to our Behaviour and Relationships Policy and Online Safety Policy.*

NB Any nude or semi-nude images will not be viewed or deleted and referred directly to the police.

6. Dealing with Bullying

6.1 All Vine Schools seek to create environments that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place, by educating our staff to gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and developing strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.

6.2 Unfortunately, despite the best preventative efforts of a school, we recognise that bullying still occurs. Therefore, it is important that schools have clear systems and processes in place to address bullying when it happens. (see Behaviour and Relationships Policy and On-line Safety Policy)

6.3 Policies should be available to parents, pupils and staff so that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly.

6.4 Academy staff and leaders are best placed to decide how best to respond to the particular issues that affect our pupils. There is no single solution to bullying.

However, the response should include the following:

- challenging unacceptable behaviour
- including setting standards of acceptable behaviour and reinforcing a culture of dignity and respect
- supporting the pupil/ adult who has been bullied (and as appropriate, the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour and any non-intervening bystanders)
- reporting what has happened and monitoring those reports

7. Interventions

7.1 We use clear consequences and support measures for pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong and enable them to make positive behaviour choices. All consequences must be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

7.2 It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

7.3 In terms of intervention schools should also consider:

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7.3.1 Involving parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home;

7.3.2 Involving pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders;

7.3.3 Regularly evaluating and updating the approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers;

7.3.4 Implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable;

7.3.5 Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities;

7.3.6 Provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the Trust's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support;

7.3.7 Work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed;

7.3.8 Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside the school including cyber-bullying;

7.3.9 Create an inclusive environment. We seek to create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination;

7.3.10 We celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive Trust/school ethos around the issue.

'If bullying is going to be eliminated from Church of England schools, then those who have responsibility for ensuring the effectiveness of Church schools must take an active role in encouraging their schools to implement measures to tackle it'.

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