



## ALPHA PREPARATORY SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This is a whole school policy, including the EYFS.

### Statement of Intent

At Alpha, we wish all of our pupils to be able to come to school without fear or worry. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment and bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We seek and expect the support of our parents in upholding this policy.

This policy pays due regard to DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2024). This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy Rewards and Sanctions.

### Definition of Bullying

What do we mean by bullying? We do not mean having a spontaneous argument in the playground. Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. In whatever form it takes, bullying can cause severe psychological damage and is not tolerated at Alpha.

### Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others. It can involve social networking sites, emails and mobile phones. It is a particularly intrusive form of bullying that can happen at all times of the day and can extend the bullying to a wider audience and potentially more participants. Cyber-bullying by pupils will be treated as seriously as any other type of bullying and will be managed in line with our E-safety Policy. In serious cases, a response under our Child Protection procedures may be warranted.

Social media apps are extremely popular and we encourage parents to speak openly to their children about the apps their children may have uploaded. It is a parent's responsibility to check that their child is age-appropriate, with an appropriate ability, to have access to the sites and apps their child visits or uploads: a vast majority of apps and social media outlets have an age limit of 13-years-old, which children in a primary school setting should not be accessing. It is also a parent's responsibility to address any incidents which occur on social media outside school. Should a parent consent to their child's use of social media platforms, including WhatsApp, the parent is also consenting to deal with any repercussions of any interaction their child may experience. The school will not get involved in disputes between parents and/or children related to social media accessed outside school. Should a parent wish to inform the school of any online incidents outside of school, particularly if they feel there is a concern of

safeguarding, they should contact the school office and they will be directed to the relevant member of staff. We also encourage the children, through PSHE, circle time and assemblies, to speak up as soon as possible if they feel uncomfortable with anything they see or have been sent online.

### Potential signs of bullying

Signs that indicate a pupil may be being bullied include:

- being worried about coming to school
- belongings being persistently damaged or going missing
- pupil becoming withdrawn or losing confidence
- unexplained cuts or bruises
- deterioration in quality of work
- disturbed sleep patterns, nightmares or bed wetting
- frequent visits to the medical room, complaining of headaches or tummy aches
- isolation from peers at break times

Although there may be other causes for these symptoms, the possibility of bullying should be investigated by parents and school staff.

### Advice to parents

- Be alert to danger signs at home, particularly if your child is worried about coming to school.
- Advise any member of staff if you are worried. **NEVER** approach another parent or child directly.
- Let us know of any family problems which might affect your child's behaviour or attitude at school.
- Support the school in our stand against bullying. This may mean accepting that your child is engaging in bullying behaviour.

### Preventing bullying

At Alpha, we take pride in providing a happy and caring environment so that children can concentrate on learning and nurturing their individual talents. However, we recognise that bullying can happen in any organisation and that pupils may also become victims of bullying outside of the school environment. We strive to create an atmosphere in which pupils and parents are given a clear message that bullying of any kind is not acceptable at Alpha and feel able to discuss and report bullying issues without fear of discrimination or reprisals. We encourage and celebrate success and positive behaviour and constantly reinforce a moral and caring ethos (see Behaviour Policy Rewards and Sanctions).

Our PSHEE programme raises awareness of bullying. Rules and issues such as friendship, caring for others and an emphasis on our school rule of 'be kind' and dealing with worry are revised and reinforced through assemblies. We also take part in focus weeks, such as anti-bullying and internet safety and these are led by our PSHEE coordinator and E-Safety coordinator with support from the Digital Leaders. The School Council will also make suggestions and raise issues related to behaviour.

Children have opportunities to raise concerns through circle time discussions, confidential worry boxes or by talking to their teacher or a school mentor. They are encouraged to speak to an adult as soon as possible to deal with any worries. Pupils are made aware of the school's

approach to anti-bullying and are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying they become aware of.

Issues of E-Safety and cyber-bullying are dealt with through the curriculum and our Digital Leaders bring a peer dimension to re-enforcing these messages. The pupils discuss and sign agreements for using communications technology in an acceptable and safe manner. Our ICT systems are protected through up-to-date filtering, anti-virus software and are actively monitored. Potential misuse is flagged up and investigated. (see E-Safety Policy)

The Monday afternoon staff meetings are used to discuss any children who are cause for concern so that ALL staff are aware of potential problems and staff are reminded of the principles and procedures contained in this policy.

We ensure that there is adequate supervision at break times.

We introduced the concept of mentors for any children who are feeling isolated or fearful. Mentoring may also help a child who may unwittingly become a victim of bullying or ridicule through his or her own actions, by helping them to learn how to deal with certain social situations. Alternatively, a mentor may work with individual children who are in danger of becoming bullies, but who may not realise the seriousness of their words or actions. Bullying can lead to serious psychological problems and so much of our strategy is designed to prevent situations which might lead to vulnerable children suffering distress.

### **Dealing with bullying**

If a child or parent approaches a member of staff with an allegation about bullying or a member of staff suspects a child may be being bullied, we will always investigate the matter thoroughly. This investigation may take different forms, depending upon the circumstances. However, it will always be done promptly and will be properly recorded on the bullying log and on the school's staff shared system; it will be shared with other teachers (at the Monday meeting) so that we can paint a broader picture by pooling our knowledge and so that we can ensure supervision is consistent and systematic.

Initially, the form teacher will liaise with the Deputy Head and decide on how further information will be gathered. This may involve interviewing the pupils and any witnesses involved and, according to the age of the pupils, asking for written accounts.

The form teacher/ Deputy Head will keep the Headmaster informed and discuss any proposed action, including sanctions or mentoring. In cases of severe or persistent bullying, the Headmaster/ DSL will consider whether a referral should be made to children's social care and also if reporting a criminal incident to the police is required.

The parents should be informed and their support should be sought. In addition to sanctions, possible counselling for both the pupil being bullied and the bully should be discussed and the form teacher will keep the relationship between the pupils under review.

The seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage should not be underestimated. Consequently, the school reserves the right to impose severe sanctions (including suspension or exclusion) if a child is found guilty of persistent and serious bullying.

This also applies to staff. The bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. The Department of Education have published a separate advice note which provides advice for headteachers and all school staff on how to protect themselves from cyberbullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

### **Remedial action**

The school will review and take action to address any elements of the school environment or organisation in order to reduce the likelihood of bullying.