UNICORN SCHOOL

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

This policy applies to all children at Unicorn School, including those in the EYFS. This policy also applies to bullying outside school of which the School becomes aware.

Parents may read this policy on the public section of the website.

The Anti-Bullying Officer and Designated Safeguarding Lead is: David Gladstone -Deputy Head - DSL

The School Listener is Miss Rachel Botes

To be updated annually by the Anti-Bullying Officer in conjunction with the Head.

This Policy links to The Behaviour, Rewards, Sanctions, Discipline & Exclusion Policy, The Unicorn School Code and The Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy

RESPONSIBILITY

Staff Member: David Gladstone -Deputy Head - DSL
Governors' Committee: Education & Staffing

Reviewed:	**October 2024**
Reviewed by Committee:	**October 2024**
Approved by Governors:	**November 2024**

This policy applies to all children at Unicorn School, including those in the EYFS. It is drawn up following DfE guidance 'Preventing & Tackling Bullying (July 2017)' and 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (2014)'. The policy also applies to bullying outside school of which the School becomes aware.

Parents may read this policy on the website.

UNICORN SCHOOL'S STATEMENT ABOUT BULLYING
Unicorn School values its pupils equally and is committed to making the school a happy and comfortable place for everyone. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and all pupils should know that if bullying does occur, it will be dealt with quickly and effectively.

AIMS
At Unicorn School our aim is that staff, children and parents work together to create a happy, caring learning environment in line with our school Code of Conduct. Our aim is to make the school an environment in which bullying has no place and to have a whole school approach to ensuring safety, security, openness and confidence.

OBJECTIVES
- To prevent and eliminate any bullying
- To communicate effectively to all members of the school community the school's stance on bullying
- To engage members of the school community in reaching a shared understanding of what bullying is
- To communicate effectively to all members of the school community the school's policy and procedures
- To promote an open atmosphere in which victims and witnesses know that it is right "to tell" and feel safe to do so
- To work with staff so that they can identify different sorts of bullying and know how to deal with cases sensitively, supportively and effectively
- To work with children in a range of ways to equip them with social and emotional skills in order to reduce bullying and to be able to counter and deal with bullying
- Where bullying occurs, all children, parents and members of staff to know the appropriate procedures.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

There is no legal definition of bullying, but the Anti- Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

'the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online'

Bullying can be:

PHYSICAL	Pushing, hitting, pinching, kicking etc.
VERBAL	Repeated name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, insulting, offensive remarks, threats
EMOTIONAL	Excluding, tormenting (e.g. "hiding" belongings), being unfriendly or threatening.
RACIAL, SEXIST/SEXUAL HOMOPHOBIC, RELIGIOUS, CULTURAL, DISABILITY or SEN based	Racial taunts, discriminating against because of difference
WHERE A CHILD IS ADOPTED, IS IN CARE, OR IS A CARER	taunts, discriminating against because of difference
INTELLECTUAL	Making someone feel uncomfortable regarding academic, intellectual performance or ability
INDIRECT OR MANIPULATIVE	Manipulating others to ostracise, marginalise or intimidate individuals or encouraging others to become agents of physical or verbal bullying against someone.
CYBER	Using technology - social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email - to deliberately hurt or humiliate another child

As mobile phone and internet use become increasingly common, so has the misuse of this technology. All staff remain aware of safety issues relating to use of online and mobile technologies by children. We take an active approach to promoting good behaviour, respect for others and to tackling all forms of bullying – including prejudice leading to cyber-bullying. There are clear rules that pupils agree to follow in order to use ICT in school. Staff and parents should refer to the **IT Acceptable Use and eSafety policy** and the **Mobile Phone Policy and the Safeguarding & Child Protection policy** in conjunction with the Anti-Bullying policy.

Bullying may be directed at an individual or it may arise out of the victim's ethnicity, nationality, colour, sexual orientation, gender, appearance, health condition, family circumstances or some form of disability and thus affect a wider group. Some children may be more vulnerable than others, e.g. children who are different or children with special or different needs.

Some children are more likely than others to bully other children:
- children who have themselves been bullied
- children who don't fit in or are unpopular;
- children with low self-esteem
- children under pressure to succeed.

WHAT IS NOT CONSIDERED BULLYING

It is essential to distinguish bullying from other playground behaviour which, whilst it may be hurtful, does not involve an imbalance of power, is not repetitive or targeted, or is not deliberately intended to cause emotional distress. Some behaviour, such as teasing or physical play, may be the result of emotional immaturity or indeed the latter is a form of play in itself. Such behaviour becomes bullying when the intention changes and, as such, it is calculated to cause distress.

SERIOUSNESS OF BULLYING

The seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage, depression, self-harm and even suicide is strongly communicated to all staff, parents and volunteers. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, staff, parents and volunteers are aware that there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of a protected characteristic as defined in the Equality Act 2010, and bullying on the basis of these protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion, sex or sexual orientation) is taken very seriously. When recording bullying incidents on CPOMs, it will be noted whether they are based on particular protected characteristics.

CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable concern to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Refer to our Safeguarding Children / Child Protection policy for information on Child on Child Abuse.

Occasionally, allegations may be made against pupils by others in the school, which are of a safeguarding nature. Safeguarding issues raised in this way may include physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. It is likely that to be considered a safeguarding allegation against a pupil, some of the following features will be found:

The allegation:

- is made against an older pupil and refers to their behaviour towards a younger pupil or a more vulnerable pupil
- is of a serious nature, possibly including a criminal offence
- raises risk factors for other pupils in the school
- indicates that other pupils may have been affected by this student
- indicates that young people outside the school may be affected by this student

Examples of safeguarding issues against a pupil could include:

- **physical abuse:** violence, particularly pre-planned, forcing others to use drugs or alcohol
- **emotional abuse:** blackmail or extortion, threats and intimidation
- **sexual abuse:** indecent exposure, indecent touching or serious sexual assaults, forcing others to watch pornography or take part in sexting

- **sexual exploitation:** encouraging other children to attend inappropriate parties, photographing or videoing other children performing indecent acts

In areas where gangs are prevalent, older pupils may attempt to recruit younger pupils using any or all of the above methods. Young people suffering from sexual exploitation themselves may be forced to recruit other young people under threat of violence.

Cases of child on child abuse will be dealt with as any other type of safeguarding issue in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL PREMISES
When bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. However, a teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.

DEALING WITH BULLYING

STAFF
In their pastoral care role, all staff should be available to support a child who feels victimised.

PROCEDURES
The Unicorn guidelines on practice/procedure have been designed to incorporate the following essential features:

1. Reporting – children and staff must understand the importance of reporting any actual or suspected incidents of bullying and everyone must know to whom they should report. In particular all staff are reminded to let the Anti-Bullying Officer know of any suspected or alleged bullying. Suspected bullying is never ignored. Parents are informed and involved where necessary. Outside agencies are involved where necessary.

2. Confidence in referral - anyone who reports a problem in this area should know that they will be taken seriously and that something will happen. Staff must protect and support a child who has been bullied. Staff listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean that they are telling the truth. It is important not to make premature assumptions, and to make a written record. Records will be kept secure and confidential (on CPOMS) by the Anti-Bullying Officer who will allow access to the records only to the Senior Leadership Team and any other members of staff on a 'need-to know' basis

3. All incidents (or alleged incidents) of bullying must be dealt with promptly, fairly and effectively. If informed about possible bullying, staff must be extra vigilant in areas such as the lunch hall or the playground in order to build a clearer picture of what is occurring.

4. Recording –all notable behaviour incidents are recorded by class teachers on CPOMS. The Anti-Bullying Officer is made aware of all behaviour incidents and will determine which should be recorded as bullying on CPOMS. Similarly, a record of any parent meetings where bullying is alleged must be recorded on CPOMS to enable potential patterns to be identified.

5. Approach - **all** parties involved (including those accused of bullying) should be handled in a non-aggressive, fair and understanding way. The principles of 'Restorative Justice' should be applied as detailed in the Behaviour, Rewards, Sanctions, Discipline and Exclusion policy. Children who have bullied are asked
    -   What did you do?
    -   What should/could you have done?
    -   What can you do now to put things right?

6. Staff will apply appropriate sanctions which will help the child recognize the effect of their behaviour. This will include missing playtimes and activities such as Clubs, or seeing a member of SLT or the Headteacher. Internal or External Exclusion may be necessary in the cases of severe and persistent bullying.

7. Parents of both bully and victim are kept informed as to incidents and sanctions.

8. The victim is supported so that they feel listened to, safe, and protected. They will be given opportunities to talk about their experiences and will be monitored by staff closely.

9. Time is taken to look into the bully's situation and possible issues which may lie behind the bullying behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to speak to an adult about their behaviour so they can be helped. Consideration is given to the possibility that the child's special educational needs or disabilities may have contributed to their behaviour.

10. Children are told in assemblies, house meetings and class PSHE lessons about members of staff who are available to listen and help in particular the School Listener (The number for Childline is also highlighted and posters are up in the children's toilets.

Staff follow up by repeatedly checking that bullying has not resumed. Follow up is at least weekly but might be more regular at first.
The Safeguarding Team meet weekly to monitor children of concern.

IN ADDITION TO THE PROCEDURES OUTLINED ABOVE STAFF UNDERTAKE TO:
-   Never ignore suspected bullying.
-   Not make premature assumptions.
-   Take practical measures to help e.g. changing seating, using Circle Time and PSHE;
-   Pay careful attention in staff meetings where issues of bullying and all relevant and new procedures are discussed by the Anti-Bullying Officer.
-   Conduct a regular audit of 'hot spots' in the school, the playground and off-site facilities, and to identify areas and times where children feel vulnerable or at risk. All teaching and non-teaching staff are asked for their inputs into this review to discuss the places where it is most likely to occur.

Staff awareness of bullying and relevant procedures is raised through training. Training ensures that they understand the principles of the school policy and their legal responsibilities to resolve and prevent problems, and that sources of support are available. On occasion we use the specialised skills of a health and wellbeing consultant to help parents, staff and pupils with issues related to independence,

resilience and bullying. Awareness-raising includes anti bullying week, drama workshops and anti-bullying booklets sent home to all families.

Staff and Parents have access to ['Tooled Up Education'](#) for resources and advice.

All new members of staff and volunteers are asked to read the Anti Bullying Policy as part of their induction.

PREVENTION OF BULLYING

Unicorn School has adopted the following practices:
- Everyone should be treated with respect, courtesy and consideration;
- Vulnerable children are highlighted at the weekly staff briefing and also at the respective Junior and Infant staff meetings.
- Staff on duty in the playground should always be vigilant, and children who would like a friend be encouraged to use the Buddy Bench.
- Unicorn has an Anti-Bullying Officer and a School Listener and bullying is a regular Assembly topic.
- Unicorn's Anti-Bullying Officer is the Designated Safeguarding Lead and as such is expected to be available and supportive of children seeking help.
- The DSL will also promote anti-bullying through assemblies and maintain an awareness of good practice, including the part children can play to prevent bullying, even when they find themselves as bystanders.
- Children's good behaviour is celebrated in assemblies.
- Parents are asked to support the school in helping to create an environment of good behaviour and respect.
- Older pupils and staff are expected to set an example to others.
- Staff awareness is raised through training, at a minimum interval of every three years, taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to happen.
- The Safeguarding Team meet weekly to monitor children and issues.

ADVICE TO PARENTS:

Parents who become aware of bullying are asked to discuss the matter with their child's Class Teacher. We encourage parents to tell the school of any concerns, including those relating to incidents out of school. The name of the Anti-Bullying Officer (Mr David Gladstone) is publicised in the newsletter and on the school website.

Any concerns raised by parents will be sympathetically heard and investigated. Parents of both victims and bullies will be supported. Should they be unhappy with the outcome, then the matter should be referred to the Head of Infants/ Deputy Head, as appropriate. The matter may ultimately be referred to the Head, and parents are asked to work with the school to deal effectively with the problem.

Any of the following **may** indicate that a child is being bullied: unwillingness to attend school; damaged or lost clothes; becoming withdrawn; performing or behaving badly; poor sleep or eating habits; unexplained bruises or scratches/injuries; unexplained obsessive behaviour; frequent complaints of illness and evasiveness. Many of the above, however, could also be signs of emotional distress occasioned by a change in a child's circumstances e.g. divorce/bereavement.

ADVICE TO CHILDREN:

Children who are victims of bullying should **tell someone**: this may be a friend, teacher, Listening Buddy, parent or the Head. They should know that whomever they tell about the problem will then do something to help. Children who know bullying is happening should always **tell** an adult. Children are told about members of staff who are available to listen and help, in particular the School Listener The number for Childline is also highlighted and posters are up in the children's toilets.

THRESHOLD FOR REPORTING BULLYING TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES

In all cases of bullying, cyber-bullying and bullying outside of school, staff must follow the school's reporting procedures and ensure the Head and the DSL are aware of such incidents. Decisions on referrals will then be made as detailed in the School's Child Protection: Safeguarding Policy.

HELP ORGANISATIONS

NATIONAL BULLYING HELPLINE	0300 323 0169 or 0845 225 5787
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon +Tues, 9.30-2.30)	020 7823 5430 or 07496 682785
FAMILY LIVES – Parent Helpline	0808 800 2222
YOUTH ACCESS	020 8772 9900
BULLYING ONLINE	www.bullying.co.uk

The Anti-Bullying Officer will review the effectiveness of the policy annually with staff.

Updated Oct 2024 DG
Updated Sep 2023 DG
Updated Sep 2022 DG
Updated Sep 2021 DG
Updated Sep 2020 PF
Updated Sep 2019 PF
Updated Sep 2018 PF
Updated Sep 2017 DG
Updated March 2015 KT
Updated Sept 2014 DG
Updated February 2014 KT
Updated Aug 13 KL (reference to Headmistress changed)
Updated April 2013 RL
Updated September 2012 DG
Updated June 2011 DG/KE/RL
Updated November 2010 RL
Updated November 2009 RB