



# Anti-Bullying Policy

## The Alwyn and Courthouse Federation

<b>Owned by</b>	Executive Headteacher
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<b>Last reviewed</b>	Summer 2023
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<b>Next review</b>	Summer 2025
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## **1 Introduction and legislation**

In line with the federation ethos, all members of the school community should feel safe and listened to in our schools. Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place in or out of school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.

### **The Education and Inspections Act 2006**

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all children, school staff and parents.

### **The Equality Act 2010**

A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

At Alwyn and Courthouse, bullying is a serious breach of our rules and we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This policy is linked to our behavior policy.

## **2 What is bullying?**

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.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is each school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship, which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its

target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

### **Cyber bullying**

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 Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Executive Headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, the Executive Headteacher can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

## **3 Vulnerable groups**

Bullying can happen to all children and young people and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. School staff will support all children who are bullied. This means being alert to the effect any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact. There is evidence to suggest that children that are badly bullied in school are more likely to be bullied out of school, for instance either on their way to or from school or through cyberbullying.

Some children are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. Children in care that are frequently on the move may also be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer. These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all.

There will also be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some children being more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others. Being aware of this will help schools to develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening. It will also help schools be alert to those children who may be severely affected when it does occur. The impact of bullying can be severe because of the nature and extent of the bullying or because it is combined with other factors such as those mentioned above that also affect the social, mental and emotional health of the child.

## **4 Signs of bullying**

Staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues including:

- Physical: unexplained bruised, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.
- Emotional: losing interest in school, withdrawn, secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, and lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.
- Behavioural: asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asks for more money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

## **5 Preventing bullying**

Children are taught about issues of difference through the curriculum and assemblies as well as dedicated events or projects. We strive to create a calm, purposeful environment that is safe. The schools do not tolerate bullying.

## **6 How the school responds to allegations of bullying**

When an allegation of bullying arises, the adult will reassure the child and make notes before passing the details on to the child's year leader.

The year leader will investigate by speaking to all named parties and potential witnesses before reporting their findings to the Head of School / Executive Headteacher, who will decide whether the actions constitute bullying and what the next course of action will be.

### **Support for children who are bullied**

This can include:

- a quiet word from a teacher that knows the child well,
- asking staff with specialist expertise (ELSAs) to provide support and
- engaging and working with parents/carers.

### **Discipline and tackling underlying issues of bullying**

Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the children may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable children. 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. The behavior policy sets out strategies that can be applied.

### **Record keeping and monitoring**

All incidents of bullying are recorded and reported to the governing body at regular intervals throughout the year.