ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Date of Review	September 2023
Date reviewed by Governors /trustees	November 2023
Cycle of review	annually

We are a Unicef Rights Respecting School

This policy links directly with **Articles 2, 12, 15, 19, 24, 27, 28, 29 and Article 31** of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:

Articles 2/12: We respect the right to be listened to and listen to others.

Articles 19/24: We respect the right to feel safe at school and help others feel safe.

Article 28: We respect the right to learn and let others enjoy their learning.

Articles 15/31: We respect the right to join in and be part of a team.

Article 29: We respect the right to develop our potential and to do it with a growth mind-set.

Article 27: We respect the right to look after our own and others property.

Statement of Intent

Agate Momentum Trust schools are committed to Keeping Children Safe in Education as well as the Every Child Matters outcomes. We aim to tackle and prevent bullying to ensure that children and adults share a supportive, caring and safe environment so they can feel safe and learn in a disciplined environment where they are able to achieve their full potential. We also believe that adults should be able to work in a safe and secure environment that is free from bullying.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our schools. Everyone at the Agate Trust works towards creating a friendly and equal environment. As an inclusive school, we aim to

understand, accept and embrace the differences and similarities between us. If bullying does occur, all pupils know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Our schools are TELLING schools. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell an adult in their school.

We understand bullying as hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time. We believe that those who bully others could themselves be experiencing difficulties and may be in need of support. Our aim is always to support the victim of bullying and to ensure that they are able to learn and play without fear, whilst also working with the bully to identify the reasons behind their behaviour and support them to change.

Objectives of this policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents are to have a good understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff to know what the school policy/procedures are on bullying, and follow them when bullying is reported.
- Parents and carers will have access to the Anti-bullying Policy on the Agate Momentum Trust schools' websites.
- All pupils and parents are to know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Agate Momentum Trust schools take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents are to know that bullying will not be tolerated in our school.

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. There is often an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and victim which makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying takes many forms:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting

- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Cyber – via text messages, social media or gaming which can include the use of images and video
- Psychological – knowing what upsets someone and deliberately doing it
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Peer on Peer abuse
It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

We know that bullying, if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on children and can be a barrier to their learning. It can also have serious consequences for a child's mental health. Our schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to any issues of bullying.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. See KCSIE Part 1
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1080047/KCSIE_2022_revised.pdf

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups:
- Race
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexual orientation and gender identity
- Special educational needs or disabilities
- Adopted children, children in care or children that have caring responsibilities

Who is vulnerable?

- Looked After Children
- Children/adults with special educational needs
- Children suffering from health problems
- Children/adults from ethnic minorities
- Mid-phase admissions
- Children/adults with disabilities
- Travelling children/adults

Staff should be alert to the fact that children with disabilities or special educational needs can often lack the social or communication skills to report incidents.

Signs and symptoms of bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. All staff and parents should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Begs to be driven to school rather than walk
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to come to school
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions go missing
- Asks for money, loses money frequently or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home hungry (lunch/money has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Gives unbelievable / strange excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Prevention of Bullying

In the Agate Momentum Trust we celebrate diversity and work hard to create a culture where prejudice and hatred is not accepted. Agate Momentum Trust schools are UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools and this underpins the work of our school community. Through our school values, we aim to create an ethos of mutual respect where pupils treat one another and staff with respect because they know it is the right way to behave (see the school's behaviour policy).

Some methods to educate children and help to prevent bullying may include:

- The school's ethos, vision and values ensure that every member of the school community contributes to building children's well-being and that children's safety and self-esteem is of the highest importance at all times.
- The school values are displayed around the school and are regularly discussed in assemblies. Children know and use the values as guidance of the expected behaviour for everyone in the school.
- Each class creates a UNICEF Rights Respecting Class Charter and signs a behaviour contract for their class.
- Children, parents and staff know the anti-bullying policy and have access to it.
- The use of discriminatory language, e.g. sexist, racist, homophobic, is universally challenged by the staff. Staff receive training on discriminatory behaviour and stereotyping.
- Children who are experiencing distressing circumstances e.g. separation, illness or bereavement are identified and supported by staff. Recent arrivals to our school are supported by their class teacher. They are assigned a reliable "buddy"- a child in their class to help them around the school, particularly in the playground.
- Assemblies focus on equalities, rights and community as a matter of course and there is a particular focus annually during the National Anti-Bullying Week.
- Visitors are invited into school to help tackle bullying e.g. police

- Opportunities for discussions focused on LGBTQ+ are weaved throughout the curriculum and there is a particular focus annually during Pride Week.
- RE lessons are used to develop pupil understanding and respect of different religions
- PSHE lessons, using Jigsaw, and Philosophy for Children are delivered regularly in Year 1-6 to promote critical thinking, tolerance of the views of others and the exploration of "big ideas" and moral dilemmas.
- Children are regularly read stories about bullying and children with differences to help them develop empathy and understanding of others.
- Children from KS2 are selected and trained as Playground Mediators and spend time in the playground supporting children. There is a particular focus on spotting and addressing bullying behaviour.
- Our schools are TELLING schools - children are taught the importance of speaking out about bullying concerns and the importance of not being a bystander by reporting what they see.
- Children having a voice through the school council and the rights ambassadors. Both groups meet regularly to discuss bullying and how to tackle it.
- Children receive at least one e-safety lesson every half-term on how to keep themselves safe online.
- The Trust works with parents to educate them about bullying online on social media and instant messaging services such as Watsapp and online games.

How do we respond to bullying?

We aim to tackle bullying through early intervention which sets out clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable in our schools. We ensure that all prejudice, name-calling, unwanted touch, rumour mongering and disrespect between pupils is challenged and dealt with in line with our behaviour policy. When bullying of a child is suspected or reported, the incident is dealt with immediately. Restorative measures and consequences are used as appropriate.

Procedures

- All reports of bullying will be taken seriously.
- Children/parents should report bullying incidents to staff (TAs and non-teaching staff to report incidents to teachers).
- Teachers will report all incidents onto Safeguard software.
- Class teachers will investigate the bullying issues reported.
- The investigation will be discussed by the class teacher and the phase leader.
- In all cases of bullying, parents/carers will be informed and a meeting arranged to discuss the problem.
- Class teacher and phase leader will meet with the child and parents to update them on the findings of the investigation and the actions that will be taken moving forward. (The contents of this meeting will be recorded on safeguard software).
- The school will take measures to ensure the victim of bullying is safe.
- The perpetrators will receive disciplinary sanctions. (see 'outcomes' below).
- The phase leader will monitor all reported cases of bullying and update safeguard software. Staff working with both the victim and perpetrator will be asked to monitor and feedback to the phase leader. If bullying continues the Deputy Headteacher or Head of school should be informed and will intervene.
- All incidents of bullying are reported to governors.
- Support will be given to children who are bullied and children who bully.
- If deemed appropriate, the school will draw on external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying.
- Schools will try to tackle underlying issues/motivations that have contributed to a child engaging in bullying and seek support from outside agencies if necessary.
- If staff feel an offence may have been committed, the police will be informed (e.g. harassing/threatening behaviour or communications).
- Any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse should be reported to the DSL or deputy.

Outcomes
Pupils who have been bullied, hurt or upset will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of the staff to check their well-being.
- Reassuring the pupil and encouraging them to describe the nature of the bullying and how they feel through talking, drawing a picture, writing a description. Depending on the child's wishes, this can then be shared either with the whole class or with the children involved in the bullying so they can understand the impact of bullying.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence through restorative measures such as playground friends allocated, daily check in with a key member of staff, additional P4C or PHSE lessons with the class.
- Protecting the child and ensuring their safety
- Receiving a genuine apology from the bully either verbally or written.

Helping Pupils who have been bullied or have been involved in bullying others:

Pupils can be supported in different ways, depending on the individual involved and the severity and type of bullying which has occurred.

Some strategies include:
- Discussing what happened together.
- Discovering why the pupils became involved.
- Establishing clarity about the wrong doing, the effect on others through sharing of the victim's feelings about the bullying, and agreement on the need to change.
- The victim and the perpetrator/s agreeing together how to move forward and if possible, the pupils will be reconciled (make friends).
- Guiding, supporting, advising and offering the bully strategies to change their behaviour.
- Insisting that they take responsibility for their actions and help them to actively make amends.
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not

take place. Our schools follow a behaviour policy where there is a hierarchical order of adults that monitor behaviour and bullying.

- A member of staff will check in with the victim regularly to make sure the agreement is continuing and the bullying has stopped.
- If the victim reports that the bullying has not stopped, more direct action will be taken. This might involve exclusion from the playground for a period of time or, in more serious cases, an internal exclusion from class or, in some cases, a fixed term exclusion from school may be considered.
- Involving outside agencies when necessary.

Safeguarding

When there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, this will be addressed as a child protection concern. School staff should report to the school's safeguarding lead, who will report their concerns to the local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action (see part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Bullying which occurs outside the school premises

Where bullying that takes place outside of the school premises is reported to staff, it will be investigated and acted on following the procedures above. If appropriate, the police/anti-social coordinator in the local authority will be informed.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying, or bullying online, is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience.

- Any reports of cyber bullying will be acted upon following the procedures above.
- If parents/children report cyber bullying, it will be taken seriously and staff should ask if it is possible for them to provide evidence.
- Staff have the right to seize any electronic devices, such as mobile phones, and to examine data and files where there is good reason to do so. There is no need to have parental consent.
- If an electronic device has been seized and the staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation

to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as is reasonably practicable.
- Evidence should not be deleted prior to giving it to the police.
- If staff do not suspect there is evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

<u>Where bullying has severe impact</u>

If bullying leads to a child experiencing pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties, our schools will make appropriate provision to meet the child's short-term needs which will be decided on individual circumstances.
- Schools will take measures to tackle the bullying so that the bullied child feels safe at school and on their way to and from school.
- Schools will make every effort to ensure that bullied children continue to attend school as absences disrupt their education and make it difficult for them to reintegrate.
- If a child suffers from persistent, long-lasting difficulties, which causes them to have significantly greater difficulties in learning than the majority of their year group, the child may benefit from being assessed for SEN.

<u>Bullying of Staff</u>

Bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues is unacceptable. All forms of bullying (including cyber bullying) will be handled as a community issue and staff should report it to their phase leader or the head teacher immediately.

Staff should be aware of the *'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff'* document which offers advice on how to protect themselves from cyberbullying and what to do if it happens.

Anti-Bullying Statement

Produced by School Council Members and
Rights Respecting Ambassadors of the Agate Momentum Trust

We **define** bullying as:
Hurting someone (verbally, physically or emotionally, online or in person) on a regular basis.

We **believe** that:
No one should ever have to experience bullying.
It is the right of every child to feel safe and protected in school.

We **recognise** that:
Bullying is extremely harmful and victims will feel sad, worried and scared.
Bullying can have a negative impact on the victim's education, self-esteem and self-confidence.
Bullies often hurt others because they are unhappy themselves.

We will seek to **prevent** bullying by:
Raising awareness through lessons and assemblies.
Using pupil leaders and peer mediators to help supervise the playground.
Working with bullies to support them so they become happier, kinder pupils.

We will **respond** to bullying by:
Reporting any bullying concerns to an adult!