MORPETH FIRST SCHOOL

ANTI BULLYING STATEMENT

Date	Changes/reason
Ratified Autumn 2024	Updated Relational Policy

At Morpeth First School (Goosehill), we strive to maintain an ethos in which all children feel secure and valued. As a School of Character, children are supported to become 'Treasured, Courageous and Empowered' individuals, and are taught to acknowledge and celebrate diversity and question inequalities. Relationships between all members of the school community are based on openness and respect.

While reports of bullying are extremely rare within our school we are aware that the potential for bullying behaviour cannot be dismissed, therefore this policy outlines our strategy on how it would be dealt with.

Importantly, we also recognise that bullying may be a sign or symptom of something that is happening in the child's life and will always take this into account when dealing with any issues that arise.

Definition

At Morpeth First School we define bullying behaviour as:

- Regularly Repeated
- Deliberate
- *Intention* to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- Often (but not exclusively) aimed at certain groups with protected characteristics, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation
  It may be perpetrated by a person or group against a person or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Nature of Bullying

Bullying may take the form of name calling, verbal teasing or taunting, intimidation, cyberbullying, extortion, damaging other children's property, coercion or physical aggression. It may refer to race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. We also consider that children showing signs of extremism or radicalisation may be classed as a form of bullying.

Signs of Bullying

In monitoring for signs of bullying, as well as direct reports, we are vigilant for evidence such as physical marks, as well as more subtle indicators such as reluctance to go into the playground, feigning illness, desire to remain with adults, change in school performance or behaviour, erratic attendance or reluctance to come to school, withdrawal or possessions going missing on the part of the victim.

School Policy

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Headteacher and Governors
- Encourage the whole school ethos of care, friendliness, empathy and safety where consideration of others is rewarded.
- Ensure staff members are trained to implement pupil behaviour and anti- bullying policies. This includes reporting of an incident promptly and responding in a timely fashion to a report of alleged bullying.
- Oversee a programme of Personal and Social Development for pupils including Anti-Bullying message.
- Support staff to fully and sensitively investigate an incident.
- Ensure all staff adhere to due exclusion procedures and policies if these are invoked.
- Communicate related policy and procedures to all concerned.
- Action any responses to address parents' or children's concerns raised in safeguarding surveys

All Staff
- Model, encourage, expect and remind children to display behaviour that shows fairness, consideration, respect and kindness.
- Respond promptly to any pupil, parent or member of staff who reports any incident that could be perceived as bullying.
- Complete an incident form and log it with the Head Teacher.
- Share details across the whole staff group, to enable wider monitoring or any developing patterns of behaviour.
- Keep parents informed, in a timely manner, of the investigation and response.
- Implement close monitoring in the longer term to explore any developing patterns of bullying behaviour.
- Where necessary work with external agencies to further address incidents.
- Reflect on an incident once it has been addressed to ensure that there are no longer problematic patterns of behaviour.
- Adhere to due formal review and exclusion procedures and policies if these are invoked by the Head Teacher and Governors.

Children
- To understand what bullying is and that it is not acceptable at our school.
- Understand that every pupil has the right to report openly and without fear of reprisal, any behaviour that worries them.
- To participate in the programme of Personal and Social Development.
- Display behaviour that shows fairness, consideration, respect and kindness to others.
- Support others to show fairness, consideration respect and kindness, informally and more formally (e.g. Playground Buddies).

- Reflect upon their own actions and possible alternatives, as necessary (see Relational Policy).
- Know how to report any behaviour that they worry could be bullying in nature.

<u>Strategies</u>

At Morpeth First School we recognise that social constructs are learned over time and it is our responsibility to help to support children to navigate relationships and social situations appropriately within the bounds of what is acceptable in the wider society. For many children, these social skills are gradually acquired and learned over time, however, for some of our pupils, this may take longer to establish.

Our Relational Policy sets out our approach to ensuring a positive ethos within our school and our aim to develop and nurture self-reflective pupils who recognise and demonstrate, kindness, respect fairness and consideration for others and their belongings. Positive recognition of these and our other Character Values are explicitly 'sought, caught and taught' to support our positive ethos within school. Our PSHE curriculum teaches children about respectful and positive relationships as well as building pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Part of our P.S.H. E. scheme includes helping children develop strategies for dealing with feelings which may result in inappropriate behaviour. Staff regularly talk to children about emotions and how this affects their behaviour towards others. Children are taught strategies to manage and regulate feelings such as frustration and anger which may manifest as incidents of negative behaviour or another child being unintentionally involved. We are aware, however, that for some children, more especially so for those with diagnosed or particular needs, managing significant emotional outbursts which may be unpredictable in nature can be upsetting for other children to witness. Staff work closely with these children and their parents/carers to put in place individual behaviour plans to support them in managing their behaviour.

Regular safeguarding reviews allow the children to identify areas of the school or times of the day that they may feel less safe and strategies are put into place to monitor and rectify this. Staff regularly talk to children about bullying and the difference between this and normal friendship difficulties.

In order to prevent bullying, we take the following measures:

1) The children are aware through the School rules and behaviour policy that bullying will <u>not</u> be tolerated. Issues of name calling or making fun of others are dealt with in the initial stages of the stepped system of sanctions

2) We promote a positive ethos, where consideration and support for others and their property is valued. One of our school rules is '*Respect everyone and Everything*'.

3) We include anti-bullying messages as part of our PSHE curriculum as well as taking part in specific anti-bullying initiatives (eg Anti – bullying week) and displaying anti-bullying messages around school.

4) We regularly survey children and parents to ascertain whether the children feel safe in school and to assess if they know who they can go to for help and support.

5) 'Worry Monsters' are situated prominently in each class where children can write concerns down and they are dealt with by teachers. There is also a 'Time to Talk' box outside the Head's office. Posters to signpost children to key personnel or helplines are situated in prominent areas of the school (Cloakrooms etc).

We do recognise however that sometimes despite these strategies, bullying may occur for a variety of reasons. We always ensure that any allegation is taken seriously and investigated. In some extreme circumstances, we recognise that bullying behaviour may be severe or serious enough to be dealt with as part of the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

If bullying occurs, we use the following strategies to deal with those involved. A written record is kept of events and stages of development.

The child who is bullied

To the child who is bullied we offer support and an opportunity to talk when the perpetrator is not there. They are reassured that action would be taken and that supervisory staff (both teaching and non-teaching) would be made aware of the situation. The child would be asked if they feel they have a solution for the problem. Efforts would be made to raise the child's self-esteem and confidence.

The child who has bullied

We are aware that children who bully may do so as either a direct or indirect result of something else going on in their life and that it may be a cry for help. This will always be considered when investigating an incident of bullying and we recognise that often the bully may need the support of the school to manage this.

The first step with the child/children who bully is to get them to verbalise and recognise the inappropriate behaviour. This may be to the class teacher or as a final resort to the Headteacher. It is made clear that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and must be dealt with, and that it is the action not the child which

is being criticised. The child who has carried out bullying behaviour should suggest possible solutions to the problem and then a contract or 'Behaviour Plan' is agreed with both the child and their parents/carers which would include short term achievable targets to be monitored until a guarantee of improved behaviour is evident. The consequences link with our Relational Policy. Parents are kept informed and the contract may include home/school monitoring of behaviour. The ultimate sanction would be suspension.

Staff Training

a. **The Method of Shared Concern**

This Swedish counselling approach is designed for situations where a group of pupils have been bullying one or more pupils on a regular basis for some time. The overall aim of the method is to establish ground rules which will enable the pupils to co-exist within the same school.

It starts with a series of brief individual 'chats' with each pupil involved in a quiet room. The pupils doing the bullying are seen first. The talks are non-confrontational; the premise is that there is a problem - it has been witnessed by others that the bullied pupil is unhappy and has experienced bullying. The teacher follows a structured script with each pupil which leads to mutual agreement that the bullied pupil is unhappy at the present time and is concluded by each pupil agreeing to help improve the situation in some way.

A chat with the bullied pupil then follows, being supportive and involves:

i.   for those who contribute to their own problems helping them understand that their behaviour too should change.

ii.   for those who are suffering bullying behaviour, helping them to gain in self-esteem and develop assertiveness strategies such as:

- making assertive statements
- resisting manipulation and threats
- responding to name-calling
- leaving a bullying situation
- escaping safely from physical restraint
- enlisting support from bystanders
- boosting their own self-esteem
- remaining calm in stressful situations

b. **The No Blame Approach**

The teacher meets the bullied pupil first and takes an account of his/her distress and upset to a group of peers including the bullying pupil. Each pupil suggests a way in which they will change their own behaviour in the future.

We strive in our PSHE scheme to help potential victims of bullying to be aware of strategies they can use. These include being assertive (but not aggressive) about their own feelings about received behaviour, to inform an adult and to go to a place of safety. Class collaboration times involve children discussing solutions themselves.

Communications with Parents

Parents of both parties are kept informed, but are dealt with separately. Parents are made aware of strategies developed for dealing with inappropriate behaviour and are encouraged to share the school aims for behaviour.

Involvement of External Agencies

In some cases it may be necessary to involve external agencies, whether for reinforcement of messages given or in order to deal professionally with specific problems. These agencies might include the Police Community Liaison Officer, the Educational Psychologist or a Social Worker.
This policy should be considered in conjunction with other safeguarding policies including (but not exclusively) Safeguarding and Child Protection, Relational Policy, Tackling extremism and radicalisation and Online Safety Policy.