Vernon Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

'Nobody Else is Quite Like Me'

This policy is designed to be used alongside and in addition to other relevant policies and documentation, such as the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy and Procedures (Safeguarding), SEND Policy, Equality Policy and Objectives, Accessibility Policy and Plan, Confidentiality Policy, Online Safety Policy, Relationships and Sex Education Policy and Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy.

At Vernon Primary School, staff, Parents/Carers and children work together to create a happy, caring, inclusive and welcoming learning environment. We promote an ethos of truth and honesty in a place in which everyone feels valued and shows respect for each other and their surroundings. As a team, we are committed to high expectations and continuous improvement. We adopt a child-centred approach to high quality teaching and learning, inspiring everyone to achieve their full potential.

Headteachers have a legal duty to outline procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring the procedures to the attention of staff, governors, Parents/Carers and children.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a secure atmosphere. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated at our school. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

Bullying can be brought to the attention of staff either by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s)/carer(s) or other interested people.

Bullying is hurting a person deliberately, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It is described as a deliberate act carried out to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the person bullying. It can be a single incident that has a lasting effect upon the victim, or it may be a pattern of repeated behaviour that takes place over time.

When children are asked about bullying, they often describe unkind or hurtful behaviour rather than actual bullying. This kind of behaviour needs to be addressed and everyone concerned needs to know how to deal with it. It is imperative that we fully understand what is bullying before we identify all hurtful behaviour as bullying.

Bullying (including forms of child-on-child abuse) is:

- meant to hurt or intended to cause distress
- deliberate
- may be repeated over a period of time
- an imbalance of power
- targeted

Bullying (including forms of child-on-child abuse) manifests itself in several ways:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- Verbal (e.g. name calling)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone)
- Isolating and excluding a child
- Emotional (being unfriendly, tormenting)
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact or abusive comments, sending of inappropriate images)
- 'Cyber-Bullying' or 'Virtual' bullying (the use of technology and/or social media to bully an individual)
- Bullying of children with Protected Characteristic: Pupils who may be targeted based on age, sex, gender reassignment, disability, religion or beliefs, race, sexual orientation or medical conditions such as allergies. For example, homophobic bullying or a child being treated unfairly based on gender, such as girls being targeted with misogynistic language or behaviour. This type of bullying could take some or all of the above forms.

For more information of forms of child-on-child abuse, see school's Child protection Policy and Procedures (Safeguarding).

Signs of Bullying:

A pupil may display signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of coming to or from school;
- Increased reliance or obsession with mobile phones or social media;
- changes their usual routines;
- is unwilling to go to school;
- is often absent or shows a pattern of absence;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts becoming nervous when asked to speak;
- attempts or threatens to run away;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- changes their behaviour in school or their attitude to school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions going 'missing';
- asks for money or starts stealing money;
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- becomes aggressive, disruptive, unreasonable;
- Sudden changes in friendship groups;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- begins relying on adult support;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered as a possibility and should be investigated. All staff must be aware of the signs of bullying (supported by the signs of bullying checklist) and act promptly against in in accordance with school policy.

The school acknowledges the need to be proactive in addressing bullying and understands that a culture of openness and honesty is of paramount importance.

Strategies in place to specifically address bullying and its effects include:

- The school's up-to-date PSHE Curriculum (which follows the PSHE Association's thematic model) teaches distinct units on bullying and online behaviour.
- The school's 'Safeguarding Committee' comprises a group of proactive Key Stage Two children, who design and implement a range of strategies (including and separate to these listed) which have a whole-school impact and address bullying using the power of pupil voice.
- School code of conduct;
- Creating an open culture where feelings are validated;
- Using Circle Time and PSHE lessons within and across the curriculum to explore children's feelings and raise awareness of different kinds of behaviour;
- My Happy Mind Program;
- Exploring different scenarios (through video, story, poetry, role play, discussion, drama);
- Encouraging empathy (what is he/she feeling/how would they feel);
- Encouraging children to see another's point of view;
- Class Rules
- Displays around school to remind children of positive and appropriate behaviour.

- Praise assemblies to develop children's confidence and self-esteem;
- Buddy systems;
- Certificates, praise and reward systems, including "shout out certificates" and class Dojo's;
- Worry boxes in classrooms;
- Pastoral care programme; including 1-1 sessions with pastoral manager and also group interventions based around emotional literacy and emotional wellbeing.
- ELSA sessions;
- Access to additional support to manage worries and anxiety from the mental health support team (MHST).
- Focused assemblies;
- Theatre Group Visits;
- Links with and activities alongside the high school to ensure smooth transition from Year 6 to Year 7.
- Recognising National Anti-Bullying week, within school;
- Support from outside agencies to talk with children re Anti-Bullying including Local Police, PCSO's, SCIES and Community Support Teams;
- Promotion of respect for others and understanding the effects of their own behaviour.

Implementation:

The following steps may be taken when dealing with any incidents of bullying (see also **Appendix A** for Anti-Bullying Flow Chart):

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with promptly by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and discussed with the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or Pastoral Manager.
- The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or Pastoral Manager will interview all concerned and will record the incidence.
- Class teachers will be kept informed
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all involved, including parents/carers and in line with this policy, as well as the behaviour policy.

Strategies for addressing bullying:

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach, as the children bullying others are often victims too and this could be the cause of the behaviour (see also **Appendix A** for Anti-Bullying Flow Chart):

- Discussions at length with the victim. This will require patience and understanding. Remember – listen, believe, act.
- Where long term bullying is identified bullying checklist will be completed by a person known to the child.
- Identify the child(ren) bullying the victim. Obtain witnesses if possible. Notify the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.
- Discussions with the child bullying the victim. Confront them with the details and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable at Vernon Primary School.
- If they own up, then follow the procedure outlined below alongside the Behaviour Policy
- If they are not open and honest, investigate further. If it is clear that they are not telling the truth, continue with the procedure. Children are usually more likely to be open and honest if presented with all the facts. Ask them to note down what they have done and how they will make the right choices in future.
- Separate discussions with parents/carers of all children involved.
- Sanctions for the child (according to and in line with Behaviour Policy) may include withdrawal from favoured activities, loss of playtimes, exclusion from school during lunchtimes, exclusion from school, depending on the perceived severity of the incident(s).
- Continue monitoring the situation by observing at playtimes/lunchtimes and having discussions with victim to ensure no repetition (ask the midday assistants to monitor the situation at lunchtimes).
- As the behaviour of the child improves, then favoured activities can be reinstated, and the child should be praised for good behaviour.

- Ongoing support should be provided for any pupils involved in or affected by the incident(s), such as the victim(s). This support can include praise, rewards, liaison with parents/carers, safe space, circle of friends activities, listening time, Personal Development lessons with a specific focus and buddy systems, 1-1 support or group interventions with Pastoral Manager.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice;
- Reassuring the pupil that they have done the right thing by making a report and the School will be responding;
- Offering of continuous support in relation to their safety and emotional well-being;
- Ensuring safety;
- Working to restore self-esteem and confidence;
- Where appropriate, support will be offered and a wellbeing plan may be implemented.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened;
- Discovering why they became involved;
- Exploring different perspective as appropriate ;
- Establishing all hurtful behaviour and the need to change;
- Informing parents/carers to support change in the pupil;
- Where appropriate, support will be offered and a wellbeing plan may be implemented.

Pupils who have acted as bystanders will be supported by:

- Exploring ways to help them aid the situation using sensible and safe strategies (identifying the correct choice of behaviour, not encouraging others to make the wrong choice of behaviour);
- Encouraging pupils to share information and concerns with trusted adults;
- Discussing ways to support individual pupils (bystanders) and the impact on their emotional wellbeing.

Roles and responsibilities across the School

In order to identify incidents of bullying and the identities of children who display bullying behaviour, at Vernon Primary School, we have agreed that all staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils; all staff listen, believe, act.

The first point of contact for parents:

- in EYFS, it should be the Class Teacher and then the EYFS Leader;
- in Key Stage One (Years 1 and 2), it should be the Class Teacher and then the Phase Leader;
- in Lower Key Stage Two (Years 3 and 4), it should be the Class Teacher and then the Phase Leader;
- in Upper Key Stage Two (Years 5 and 6), it should be the Class Teacher and then the Phase Leader.

Governor's role and responsibilities:

Role

- Promote the wellbeing and ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in school
- Ensure the School carries out statutory duties and observes national and local guidance
- Provide leadership to ensure the development, implementation and regular review of the anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that policy and good practice is reflected in the School's anti bullying practice

Policy development and implementation

- Nominate a named governor to oversee the anti-bullying work of the School. This will be the Safeguarding Governor;
- Make anti-bullying a regular item on the agenda at Governor meetings;
- Publish and keep under annual review the anti-bullying policy;

- Review the policy in consultation with pupils, Parents/Carers and staff and ensure that it is informed by, and responsive to, their experiences;
- Ensure that the School makes use of monitoring data and understands its implications for the development of policies, procedures and practice;
- Provide leadership to ensure a consistent response to all incidents of bullying and harassment;
- Ensure the development and publication of a complaints procedure;
- Record, investigate and respond to any complaints from Parents/Carers or the wider community related to the School's response to bullying.

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team:

Role

- Build and maintain a school ethos which is welcoming, supportive and inclusive of all pupils, Parents/Carers and staff;
- Promote the wellbeing and ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in the School;
- Provide support for the Governors through the development and implementation of an effective anti-bullying policy;
- Ensure the voices of pupils, staff, parents and carers are heard and communicated to Governors;
- To keep an up to date log of all levels of incidents of bullying within the school.

Policy development and implementation

- With the advice and guidance of Governors and through consultation with staff, pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders, develop, implement and review anti-bullying policy and strategies which promote good behaviour, respect for others, and self-esteem amongst pupils;
- Ensure the effective communication of the policy to all pupils, staff and stakeholders;
- Ensure that pupils, staff, parents/carers and other stakeholders are involved in the creation of a positive school ethos;
- Take action to prevent all forms of bullying;
- Ensure that the School's anti-bullying policy and related practice is complied with consistently and effectively;
- Ensure that effective monitoring procedures are developed, operated and maintained;
- Ensure all staff (including support staff) regularly receive appropriate training to enable them to recognise and prevent all forms of bullying and ensure they are clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying;
- Develop and implement a system for recording incidents of bullying and hurtful behaviour which staff understand and use consistently;
- Ensure that appropriate support systems are in place to prevent and respond to bullying, including peer support programmes;
- Use partnerships and multi-agency approaches to prevent, and/or respond to, bullying which happens off-site;
- Provide structures and systems that respond effectively to pupils' views and ensure that all staff, pupils and other stakeholders are supported to participate in the review and impact assessment of behaviour and anti-bullying policies;
- Monitor the continued progress and self-esteem of the victims and perpetrators of bullying;

Behaviour

- Celebrate and share the anti-bullying work of the School and its pupils and highlight outstanding practice;
- Act as appropriate role models for all school leaders, staff, parents and pupils;
- Respond appropriately to stakeholder consultation and ensure that suggestions, opinions and concerns are included in policy review and impact assessment;
- Involve external agencies (including SCiES team, Local Authority, Police) as appropriate, to respond to incidents.

All Teaching and Support Staff:

Role

- Contribute to building and maintaining a school ethos which is welcoming, supportive and inclusive of all pupils and staff;
- Promote the wellbeing and ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in school;
- Behave with respect and fairness to all pupils, carrying out the procedures and spirit of the anti-bullying policy and all other relevant policies (e.g. the Behaviour Policy).

Policy development and implementation

- Observe and implement the School's anti-bullying, child on child racist/sexual/physical incidents, behaviour and equalities policies and practices, including the keeping of relevant records of incidents;
- Contribute to consultations, reviews and impact assessments;
- Develop and support curriculum opportunities to promote equalities and address bullying.

Behaviour

- Provide a consistent response to incidents of bullying and hurtful behaviour whatever its nature or motivation;
- Provide support to both the victims potential bystanders and perpetrators of bullying;
- Take part in relevant professional development and maintain awareness about their role and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying and promoting equalities;
- Model positive attitudes and relationships;
- Promote the wellbeing of all pupils and take steps to ensure freedom from bullying and harassment;
- Promote a positive view of difference and challenge prejudice and stereotypical views, both through classroom practice and by modelling the behaviour and values they are trying to instil;
- Raise issues with line managers which could contribute to policy review and development.

Pupils:

- Report any incidents of bullying to a member of staff, whether directed at themselves, at somebody else, or acting as a bystander;
- Take responsibility for personal behaviour and choices and treat one another with respect and kindness;
- With the help of staff and parents/cars, create a positive working atmosphere within School, where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, difference is celebrated and discrimination is actively challenged;
- Respond to requests for information, opinions and suggestions to help improve the anti- bullying work of the School;
- Actively support the School's Safeguarding Committee.

Parents/Carers:

- Model appropriate behaviour at all times within the School grounds;
- Demonstrate positive support for the School's anti-bullying and behaviour policies;
- Report to the School any concerns regarding pupils involved in bullying;
- Support work undertaken by the School to promote equalities, celebrate difference and challenge discrimination;
- Respond to requests from the School to provide feedback on the anti-bullying policy and procedures.

Policy Date: September 2026
Review Date: September 2027
Ratified by Governors: September 2026

Appendix A

Anti-Bullying Flowchart

Flowchart for responding to all alleged or witnessed bullying incidents at Vernon Primary School:

An incident is reported or witnessed – ALL STAFF

An alleged or witnessed incident is reported to a member of staff or witnessed by a member of staff

Investigation – Senior Leadership Team

- Incident is investigated by the appropriate member of staff e.g. Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, Phase Leaders, to establish the nature, roles and seriousness of the incidents and those involved
- Bullying Investigation and Monitoring Notes are made.

Staff should look for evidence that the behaviour:

- Has occurred before or by its nature has caused repeated experience or the fear of it e.g. cyberbullying or serious incident
- was deliberately intended to cause distress and/or harm
- has created a sense of powerlessness on the part of the individual being targeted and consider whether any aggravating factors such as equalities dimensions have been taken into account and been addressed.

Hurtful behaviour has occurred but the definition of bullying has not been satisfied.

Further action the Team will take:

- Ensure notes are completed
- Provide support to those involved
- Inform parents/carers of the pupil(s) involved in the incident
- Decide if any sanction needs to be applied in accordance with our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies
- Provide extra learning opportunities and skill practice opportunities if needed for all involved (including bystanders)
- Inform and engage external agencies if necessary.

Evidence of bullying incident is found.
Further action the Team will take:

- Ensure all investigation notes and forms are completed
- To ensure all relevant paperwork and records are completed and in place
- Provide support to those involved
- Inform parents/carers of those involved, ensure at each stage that they understand the action that the School will be taking
- Decide if any sanctions need to be applied in accordance with our Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies
- Provide extra learning opportunities and skill practice for all involved (including bystanders)
- Inform and engage any other external agencies if necessary
- Consider the appropriateness of informing the Police and/or Social Care Services and/or Scies team if necessary.