

Leverton Church of England Academy



Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

At Leverton Church of England Academy our Christian vision shapes all we do. We provide our children with the opportunities to flourish spiritually, academically and as confident individuals. We believe that all children are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

At Leverton Church of England Academy we encourage open discussions around differences between people. Within our PHSE curriculum we teach children about difference, discrimination and tolerance. This learning is embedded through our Christian values and ethos.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents/carers.

All staff, parents and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying within the school.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Relationships and Health Education Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy
- Remote Education Policy

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or background.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that all Governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link Governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that the pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Keeping a 'Bullying Log' (form on CPOMs) of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data in the bullying records at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.
- Corresponding and meeting with parents as necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

The Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support following bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing other staff of these observations as required.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

The Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's class teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involved in bullying in any way.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

The Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are the victim of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils on incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as the persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted
- Pupils suffering from a health problem
- Pupils with caring responsibilities
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+ or perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils
- Pupils with SEND

Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and biphobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviours that focuses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived 'quality' of their clothing or belongings.

Bullying and Relational Conflict

We recognise that sometimes incidents occur between pupils, which may not be deemed as 'bullying' but still require support or intervention from adults. These incidents maybe referred to as 'relational conflicts' or falling out. Relational conflicts differs to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional).

Usually, following a relational conflict, pupils show remorse and there is a general willingness to make things right or to resolve the conflict.

Not all relational conflict or falling out leads to bullying, but we are aware that occasionally some can, and we are mindful that unresolved bad feelings or relational problems can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intent is to cause harm or distress.

Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as 'relational conflict' or 'bullying', as a school we will address the situation and support pupils to resolve any negative feelings. We will monitor children following an incident of relational conflict to ensure the situation has been resolved and does not escalate into bullying.

Statutory Requirements

The school understands that under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual 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.
- Foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not share it.

The school understands that under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The Headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

Prevention

The school will clearly communicate a whole school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be promoted across the whole school.

All members of the school community will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with different types of bullying.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the relationships and health education curriculum through our PHSE lessons, in line with the Relationships and Health Education Policy.

The curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a pupil is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's class teacher, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

Staff principles

The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.

Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

Staff will always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others, unless the pupil has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped.

Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.

The school's Child-on-child Abuse Policy outlines the school's stance on addressing child-on-child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances are uncovered or disclosed. More information on the school's approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips

- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

All learning at home will follow procedures outlined in the Remote Education Policy. During times when remote education is being utilised, the school will frequently be in contact with parents to make them aware of their activities online, but also to reinforce the importance of pupils staying safe online, and explaining how filtering and monitoring procedures work.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- Possible extensive scale and scope – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
- The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to the Headteacher for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided. Pupils will report incidents to a trusted member of staff.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or pupil, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the school, the Headteacher will request they remove it directly.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, 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.

Reporting bullying

At Leverton Church of England Academy we want pupils, parents/carers, staff and visitors to confidently report bullying and know that their concerns will be taken seriously. This can be done by speaking to an adult in school, telephoning or emailing. The class teacher will make contact with the parent/carer and discuss their concerns and action plan what will happen next to best support their child and all pupils concerned. We remain committed to supporting and safeguarding all children involved including the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders/witnesses to the bullying behaviour and the wider school community.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community, the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year with the safeguarding senior leadership team and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

Pupils, including bystanders/witnesses

We ask that all pupils report concerns of bullying or bullying behaviours to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, TA, the headteacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and collective worship to remind our pupils of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the pupil and make an initial note of their concerns, they will then discuss the next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. The member of staff will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated safeguarding lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We understand that some pupils may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Worry boxes are provided in each classroom for pupils can post a letter/note or picture with their name – these worry boxes are regularly referred to as part of our PSHE teaching and at other appropriate times. Classroom teachers will monitor and address any worries/concerns with a pupil on a daily basis.

Even if a behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is through to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

Parents/Carers

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher (in person/via telephone/via dojo) to explain their concerns. The class teacher will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the teacher will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's reporting system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We ask that parents/carers come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

School staff

Our school staff work closely with our pupils and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to a Designated safeguarding lead. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal report of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOM's) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The member of staff must directly alert the school's Designated safeguarding lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Visitors

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g. supply teaching, governor, external agency etc.).

We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about bullying behaviour that they have witnessed, or been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated safeguarding lead. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The member of staff will directly

alert the school's Designated safeguarding lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Procedures for responding to bullying

At Leverton Church of England Academy all reports of bullying or reported concerns of bullying behaviours will be taken seriously and investigated. Even if an incident is deemed 'not bullying' or a 'relationship conflict', our school remains committed to supporting all pupils who have been involved and effected.

Our school keeps records of all reports of bullying, this information is stored on our school's recording system (CPOMs). These records are used to identify trends and inform our school's preventative work. Information from these records is discussed regularly at staff meetings to ensure that all staff are kept up-to-date and are alert to any ongoing concerns.

Our staff use a contextual approach to safeguarding and each incident will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Some of our school's responses may include, but may not be limited to:

- Talk to all pupils involved in the reported incident – this may include the target, the alleged perpetrator, and any bystanders/witnesses.
- Talk to the parents (of the target and/or the alleged perpetrator)
- Implement appropriate consequences in accordance with our school's behaviour policy. *Consequences range from expressions of disapproval, withdrawal of privileges, to referral to senior leaders, letters to parents/carers and as a last resort, suspension or fixed term exclusion (following DfE guidelines). Most instances of poor behaviour are relatively minor and can be adequately dealt with through minor consequences. It is important that the consequence is not out of proportion to the offence (School Behaviour policy).* These consequences will be graded according to the seriousness of the incident, but will send out a message that bullying is unacceptable.
- Discuss the report/incident/case with other agencies and organisations when appropriate and make referrals to those organisations when appropriate
- Liaise with the wider community if the bullying is taking place off the school premises (e.g. Police, District Council etc).
- Keep in touch with the person who reported the incident/behaviour to inform them that action has been taken – this may include a pupil, a parent/carer/guardian, a member of staff or visitor, or another member of the school community. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.
- Implement a range of follow up support/interventions appropriate to the situation (this may include informal or formal restorative work with the target and alleged perpetrator, solution-focused meetings, individual or group work with the target, individual or group work with the alleged perpetrator, individual or group work with any witness/bystanders, group work with the wider community etc.).
- Monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and reassess/take more actions if appropriate
- Liaise with the Designated safeguarding lead if there are safeguarding issues or concerns – a DSL may refer to the Nottinghamshire MASH
- Refer to the Nottinghamshire County Council 'Pathways to Provision' document and complete an EHAf if appropriate.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with the school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available from our school website and on request from the school office.

Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The Headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with emotional support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually or inline with any changes to legislation or procedures.