



ANTI- BULLYING POLICY

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1. Statement of intent

Furze Platt Senior School believes that all students are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being 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.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

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 Behavioural Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

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 at the school.

2. Legal framework

2.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation 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

2.2. This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2024), 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'
- DfE (2022) 'Searching, Screening and Confiscation'
- DfE (2024) 'Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Sex & Relationships Policy

3. Definitions

"Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally." (DfE, 2017)

3.1. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) 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

3.2. Vulnerable students 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 students may include, but are not limited to:
- Students with SEND
- Students who are adopted
- Students suffering from a health problem
- Students with caring responsibilities
- Students from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

4. Types of Bullying

4.1. Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything.

Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

4.2. Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)

4.3. **Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion 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. This includes: those who are, or thought to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersexual, asexual or pansexual (LGBTQ+).

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

4.5. **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 a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

- 4.6. Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focusses 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 an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.
- 4.7. Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.
- 4.8. 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.

5. Roles & Responsibilities

Due to their day-to-day contact with students, school staff are uniquely placed to observe changes in children's behaviour and the outward signs of bullying. Children may also turn to a trusted adult in school when they are in distress or at risk. It is vital that school staff are alert to the signs of bullying and understand the procedures for reporting their concerns.

5.1. The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory
- The overall implementation of this policy
- 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
- 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

5.2. The Headteacher & Senior Leadership Team are 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 log 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 record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members

5.3. Heads of Progress are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for students and parents, when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Pastoral Managers are responsible for:

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Offering emotional support to victims of bullying
- Alerting the relevant Heads of Progress regarding any incidents of bullying

5.4. **All Staff** are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class
- Being available for students who wish to report bullying
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the student's Heads of Progress /Pastoral Manager of such observations
- Refraining from gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying
- Understanding the composition of student groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a student for support – treating every report seriously

5.5. **Parents** are responsible for:

- Informing their child's Head of Progress, Pastoral Manager or form tutor if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

5.6. **Students** 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 victims of bullying
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents
- Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyber bullying

6. Statutory Implications

6.1. The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility 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.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

6.2. The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.

6.3. The Headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the Headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

6.4. 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

7. Prevention

The school clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying via ACHIEVE (the school's core values) which are regularly promoted across the whole school. The Form Time and Assembly programmes reinforce British Values and the ethos of the school.

7.1. All reported or investigated instances of bullying will be investigated by a member of staff.

7.2. Staff will encourage student cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the curriculum and beyond. Anti-bullying week is dedicated to raising awareness of bullying and reminding staff and students of their responsibilities to report it.

7.3. Diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various lessons.

7.4. Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying.

7.5. Potential victims of bullying are placed in class groups with other students who do not abuse or take advantage of others.

7.6. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

7.7. All members of the school are made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it.

7.8. All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

7.9. A safe place, supervised by a member of staff, is available for students to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. The member of staff supervising the area will speak to students to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.

7.10. Students deemed vulnerable, as defined in Section 3.3 will meet with their form teacher once per week to ensure any problems can be actioned quickly.

Pastoral Managers, Heads of Progress & form tutors will also offer an 'open door' policy allowing students to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.

- 7.11. Before a vulnerable student joins the school, the student's Head of Progress, Pastoral Manager and appropriate SLT will develop a strategy to prevent bullying from happening – this will include giving the student a buddy to help integrate them into the school.
- 7.12. The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour.
- 7.13. The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development isn't negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

8. Signs of Bullying

- 8.1. Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is a victim of bullying:
- Being frightened to travel to or from school
 - Asking to be driven to school
 - Unwillingness to attend school
 - Truancy
 - Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
 - Saying that they feel ill in the morning
 - Decreased involvement in school work
 - Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
 - Missing possessions
 - Missing dinner money
 - Asking for extra money or stealing
 - Cuts or bruises
 - Lack of appetite
 - Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
 - Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
 - Lack of eye contact
 - Becoming short tempered
 - Change in behaviour and attitude at home
- 8.2. 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.
- 8.3. Students who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.
- 8.4. In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:
- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the pupil becoming aggravated
 - They have been the victim of domestic abuse
 - Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed
- 8.5. If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's Head of Progress, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

9. Cyber Bullying

- 9.1. The school has a Cyber Bullying Policy in place, which outlines the school's zero tolerance approach to cyber bullying.
- 9.2. The school views cyber bullying in the same light as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in Section 11 of this policy if they become aware of any incidents.
- 9.3. The school will support students who have been victims of cyber bullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the student about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with Sections 12 & 13 of this policy.
- 9.4. In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from students' 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.

If an electronic device is seized by a member of staff, and there is reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, the device must be given to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable.

If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteachers and/or DSL will decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of the relevant policies. The school's processes for searching, screening and confiscation (See Behaviour for Learning Policy, Appendix 3) will be followed at all times.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. Furze Platt Senior School recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. Furze Platt will Senior School treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying policy.

10. Procedures

- 10.1. Minor incidents are reported to the victim's Pastoral Manager or Head of Progress, who investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and, where relevant, inform SLT/DSL, in writing, of the incident and outcome.
- 10.2. When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:
 - The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed separately
 - Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students being interviewed, including electronic communication
 - If a student is injured, members of staff take the student immediately to the Medical Officer for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
 - A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
 - A witness is used for serious incidents
 - If appropriate, the alleged bully, the victim and witnesses, are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
 - Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage

- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
- All concerned students are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils

10.3. Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic, sexual, etc bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

11. Sanctions

11.1. If a member of SLT is satisfied that bullying did take place, the student will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.

11.2. The student will be informed of the type of sanction to be used in this instance (detentions, service-based activities, etc.) and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

11.3. If possible, reconciliation will be attempted and a genuine apology from the bully will be obtained. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.

11.4. The perpetrator is made to realise, by speaking with their form tutor as follow-up to any incident, that some students do not appreciate the distress they are causing, and that they should change their behaviour.

11.5. Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

11.6. The Head of Progress informally monitors the pupils involved over the next few weeks.

12. Support

12.1. If the student visits the Medical Officer, they will informally check whether the bullying has stopped.

For a month after the initial complaint of bullying, the form tutor /Pastoral Manager holds an informal discussion, on a weekly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped.

12.2. The Head of Progress holds a formal meeting, on a monthly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped – these formal meetings will continue to take place until the Head of Progress and victim are confident the bullying has stopped.

12.3. If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.

12.4. The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

12.5. The victim is encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or afterschool club or activity.

12.6. The school, particularly the Head of Progress & form tutor, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

12.7. The school realises that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. Perpetrators will be required to attend a mandatory counselling session, to assist with any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing issues.

12.8. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

13. Follow-Up Support

13.1. The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by their Head of Progress & form tutor.

13.2. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and bully are progressing may be appropriate.

13.3. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents one month after the incident.

13.4. Students who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their Head of Progress or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate

13.5. Students who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

13.6. Students who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

In exceptional cases where the effects of bullying are so severe that the student cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers / DSL will look to transfer the pupil to another mainstream school.

If a child has developed such complex needs that alternative provision is required, the student who has been the victim of bullying, their parents, the Headteacher and Deputy Headteachers / DSL will meet to discuss the use of alternative provision.

14. Bullying Outside School

14.1. The Headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline students for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Headteacher the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

14.2. Teachers have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

14.3. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it is investigated and acted on.

14.4. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the student on school premises, or elsewhere when the student is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The Deputy Headteachers / DSL are responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police, or social services, of the action taken against a student.

14.5. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police are always informed.

15. Monitoring & Review

This policy is reviewed every three years by the headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes).

The scheduled review date for this policy is May 2028.