

Elmfield Rudolf Steiner School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Policy Statement

Elmfield is committed to ensuring that all members of the School community, pupils and staff, are able to work and learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, free from fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour which affects everyone and is unacceptable. It will not be tolerated. The School prevents bullying, in so far as reasonably practicable, by the implementation of this policy.

This policy recognises the DfE guidance of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023) as well as the advice issued by the DfE on Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017).

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 provide that the proprietor of an Academy or other independent school ensures that bullying at the school is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy. A key provision in The Equality Act 2010 is the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which came into force on 5 April 2011 and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (generally known as the protected characteristics). The Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, Elmfield staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to the local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 of KCSIE (2023). However, support can be given to pupils whether or not it is deemed a child protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Policy aims and objectives

The aims and objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a safe and caring environment for the whole School community
- To demonstrate that the School takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated
- To take appropriate measures to prevent all forms of bullying both in School and during off site activities
- To support everyone who identifies bullying and to protect those who might be bullied
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and well-being of every member of the Elmfield community is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying
- To promote an environment where it is not an offence to report cases of bullying
- To make it easy to report bullying, including cyber bullying and bullying outside school
- Records are kept and the effectiveness of approaches are evaluated and patterns are identified

To protect the rights of all children to have a safe and secure learning environment, Elmfield will continuously work towards preventing acts of bullying, harassment, and other forms of aggression and violence, as these behaviours are unacceptable and interfere with both our school's ability to educate children and a child's ability to learn. If such a case arises, the staff at Elmfield will follow the anti-bullying guidelines laid out in this policy. This will enable staff to:

- Identify children displaying unacceptable behaviour and know how to support them, in order that they develop the necessary skills to participate in the school community effectively and positively
- Keep all other children safe, happy and confident
- Identify signs that indicate that a pupil may be experiencing bullying but is not reporting it

Clarification of terms

Definition of bullying

Bullying is defined as **repeated negative behaviour that is intended to make others feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe.**

Forms of bullying

- **Physical:** Deliberately hurting particular children on a regular basis
- **Verbal:** Deliberately hurting feelings through name-calling, etc.
- **Ostracising:** Making someone feel left out and different by deliberately setting out to exclude them

There are many different kinds of bullying including:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs
- Bullying related to appearance or health
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children, or related to home problems
- Sexist or sexual bullying
- Cyber bullying

Definition of cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is the use of technology such as mobile phones, email, chat rooms or social media sites (such as Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, Facebook or Twitter) to harass, threaten, embarrass, intimidate or target a child. Unlike physical bullying, cyber-bullying can often be difficult to track as the cyber-bully (the person responsible for the acts of cyber-bullying) can remain anonymous when threatening others online, encouraging them to behave more aggressively than they might face-to face.

Types of cyber-bullying

- **Flaming:** Online fights usually through emails, instant messaging or chat rooms where angry and rude comments are exchanged
- **Denigration:** Putting mean online messages through email, instant messaging, chat rooms, or websites set up to make fun of someone
- **Exclusion:** Intentionally leaving someone out of a group such as instant messaging, friend sites or other online group activities
- **Outing:** Sharing secrets about someone online including private information, pictures, and videos
- **Trickery:** Tricking someone into revealing personal information then sharing it with others.
- **Impersonation:** Pretending to be someone else when sending or posting mean or false messages online
- **Harassment:** Repeatedly sending malicious messages to someone online.
- **Cyber-stalking:** Continuous harassment and denigration including threats of physical harm

Actions NOT considered to be bullying

All children have upsets and squabbles; these are not classed as bullying and are dealt with through the Behaviour Policy. Actions not considered to be bullying are:

- Not liking someone
- Being excluded (unintentionally) such as sitting on own at lunch, etc
- Accidentally bumping into someone
- Making other children play things a certain way
- A single act of telling a joke about someone
- Arguments
- Expression of unpleasant thoughts or feelings regarding others
- Isolated acts of harassment, aggressive behaviour, intimidation, or meanness

Reasons for bullying

Some reasons why children might bully someone include:

- They think it's fun, or that it makes them popular or cool
- They feel more powerful or important, or they want to get their own way all the time
- They feel insecure or lack confidence or are trying to fit in with a group
- They are fearful of other children's differences
- They are jealous of another child
- They are unhappy
- They are copying what they have seen others do before, or what has been done to them

The signs and effects of bullying

All forms of bullying cause psychological, emotional and physical stress. Each child's response to being bullied is unique, however some signs that may point to a bullying problem are:

- Depression and anxiety
- Increased feelings of sadness, helplessness, decreased self-esteem and loneliness
- Loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy
- Unexplainable injuries
- Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewellery
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or faking illness
- Changes in eating habits, like suddenly skipping meals or binge eating.
- Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Declining grades, loss of interest in schoolwork, or not wanting to go to school
- Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations
- Self-destructive behaviours such as running away from home, harming themselves, or talking about suicide.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Education Act 2002, Education and Inspections Act 2006, Education (Independent School Standard) Regulations 2014 and Equalities Act 2010 all make reference to a school's legal responsibility to prevent and tackle bullying. This means staff must act to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school.

Elmfield has also developed this Anti-Bullying Policy, a copy of which is on the school website for parents, staff and pupils to access when and as they wish.

Every member of staff has a responsibility to protect the pupils and other members of staff from acts of bullying. They must know and understand the policy and procedures, be vigilant and alert to any indications of bullying, and be scrupulous in dealing with and reporting any incident in accordance with the policy. However, in addition, there are key people with specific responsibilities for anti-bullying.

The School Lead

The School Lead is responsible to the Council of Trustees for the effectiveness of Elmfield's anti-bullying policy, strategies and procedures. This is covered in his annual report to the Council on Safeguarding Children. In addition, he will:

- Determine the strategies and procedures for preventing or countering incidents of bullying
- Ensure that all members of staff involved with a case of bullying have the opportunity to discuss strategies and review them
- Discuss development of the strategies with the School Leadership Team
- Ensure appropriate training is available, and that staff know their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that the School's anti-bullying procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Education Manager, Mrs Elaine Sheppard, is the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead with responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the Anti-Bullying policy, strategies and procedures.

She will:

- Be responsible for the day-to-day management of the School's Anti-Bullying policy
- Ensure that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the bullied and those involved in bullying behaviour
- Keep the School Lead informed of any incidents
- Work with Class Teachers / Class Guardians to ensure that any allegations of bullying are appropriately dealt with, in a timely manner
- Arrange staff training to raise awareness in order to reduce the risk of bullying at times and

- in places where it is most likely
- Determine how best to involve parents in the resolution of individual problems
- Ensure detailed records are logged on MyConcern to see patterns and to evaluate the effectiveness of approaches adopted to deal with bullying
- Follow up proven cases to check that bullying has not returned
- Bring in specialised help when required
- Ensure all pupils know how to report bullying

Where an alleged incident meets or appears to meet the threshold for significant harm, then the Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy will apply and be invoked.

Where there are concerns about pupils using the internet inappropriately, including for cyberbullying, the Education Manager will work with the IT Network Manager to monitor the situation.

Class Teachers / Class Guardians

These colleagues are responsible for monitoring their respective Classes for any signs of bullying and also for responding to any allegations of bullying. They will follow the protocol outlined in Section 7, Dealing with incidents; they are also responsible for keeping the Education Manager informed of each allegation and subsequent actions.

The role of trustees

The Council of Trustees supports the School Lead in all attempts to eliminate bullying from the school. The Council will not condone any bullying at all, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The Council monitors incidents of bullying that do occur and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The Council require the School Lead/Education Manager to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategies.

A parent/carer who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can make a complaint to the Chair of Council. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the complaints policy which can be accessed from the school's website.

The role of the staff

Members of staff will do all that they can to eradicate bullying; they will ensure that they follow the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

All members of staff will undertake training that equips them to identify bullying and to follow school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management.

Staff will use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They will use drama, role-play, stories etc. within the curriculum, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. The successes of pupils will be highlighted, praised and rewarded; this helps create a positive atmosphere and environment, which also combats bullying.

Members of staff will keep a vigilant watch on suspected 'bullies'; any incidents will be handled carefully. It is important that the child responsible for initiating the bullying is dealt with appropriately. The person dealing with the incident will need to collect all the relevant information and log this on MyConcern, alerting the relevant Class Teacher/Guardian and the Education Manager. All cases are individual and various strategies will be employed to address the issue.

Teachers and support staff will do all they can to support a child who is being bullied.

Bullying in the workplace

Incidents, where it has been deemed that a member of staff has been bullying a child, will be taken very seriously. The School Lead, with the support of the Council, will deal with this; formal action will be taken where necessary. Such action will also be taken if it is deemed that a member of staff is bullying other members of staff.

In the event of the School Lead being involved in such incidents, reports will be given immediately to the Chair of Council who will also take formal action where necessary.

If a member of staff experiences bullying (by other adults or students), he/she should inform their line manager or a member of the School Leadership Team as soon as possible. Staff can contact the Council if they feel the situation is unresolved. For visitors to the school, any concerns should be directed to the School Lead or the Education Manager.

The role of parents/carers

Parents/carers, who are concerned that their daughter might be being bullied or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their daughter's Class Teacher immediately; further details are given in Section 7, Dealing with Incidents.

If parents/carers are not satisfied with the action taken after raising the allegation of bullying, they should contact the School Lead. If they remain dissatisfied, they can make a complaint to the Chair of Council. The complaint will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Policy which can be accessed from the school's website.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to support the school's Anti-Bullying Policy by actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school and this expectation of support is outlined in the parent contract.

The role of pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult they trust, such as a teacher/LSA, Class Teacher/Guardian or the Education Manager if they believe they are being bullied, and, if the bullying continues, they must continue to let people know.

Pupils are also encouraged to participate fully in activities that raise their awareness about bullying in order that they clearly understand what to do if they, or another child, are being bullied.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone else. This includes through the electronic use of email, SMS text messages, photographs or social networking sites. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the size of the audience, perceived anonymity, and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Cyber bullying is a form of bullying, although there are some particular features which set it apart from the general consideration of bullying.

- Impact - the scale and scope of cyber bullying can be greater than other types of bullying
- Targets and Perpetrators – those involved may have a different profile to those usually associated with more traditional cases of bullying
- Location – cyber bullying can take place anywhere and at any time of the day or night;
- Anonymity – through the very nature of how cyber bullying takes place, the perpetrator may choose, or be able, to remain anonymous
- Motivation – some perpetrators may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying
- Evidence - unlike other forms of bullying the target of the bullying will have evidence of its occurrence.

Examples of cyber bullying may include:

- Threats and intimidating messages sent via computers or mobile phones
- Cyber-stalking – the repeated sending of unwanted texts or instant messages
- Pupils who set up website pages and invite others to post derogatory comments about a pupil
- Pupils who film fights or assaults and circulate them via mobile phones
- Pupils who send insulting and vicious text messages or messages of a sexual nature ('sexting') which is an offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Pupils who post fake and/or obscene photographs of the victim on a social networking site
- Cyber bullying is a form of emotional abuse, which is dealt with fully in the School's
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy

Cyber bullying and the law

Although cyber bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment as well as threatening and menacing communications. The police will be contacted if there is evidence to suggest the law has been broken. Pupils are entitled to their freedom of expression and respect for their private lives but they must not infringe the rights of others. Infringement includes, amongst other things:

- Libel and slander
- Bullying
- Harassment and victimisation
- Incitement of hatred on racial, religious or homophobic grounds
- Breach of confidentiality;
- Breach of copyright

Criminal Law

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Dealing with incidents

Initial Actions

When bullying, including cyber bullying both in and out of School, is raised as an allegation, the appropriate Class Teacher/Guardian will investigate. Staff members must log this on MyConcern; this means that the Education Manager will be made aware of the allegation. In the event that there is a suspected safeguarding concern, the staff member must immediately contact the DSL, or a deputy DDSL.

The relevant Class Teacher/Guardian will, within 1-2 working school days, carry out the following actions:

- Contact the person who raised the allegation and confirm that there is enough evidence to view this as a possible bullying incident
- Interview the parties involved and log a record of these interviews on MyConcern
- Report the findings to the Education Manager and a recommendation of the actions and support that is needed to resolve the incident. If relevant, appropriate sanctions will be discussed and agreed. If this is deemed a bullying incident, the School Lead will be notified and briefed accordingly
- Inform the School Lead and Education Manager immediately, if the alleged bullying appears to be directed towards pupils with protected characteristics (pupils on the Learning Support register will also be monitored by the SENCO and SLT to ensure any issue is swiftly acted upon)
- In the case of cyber bullying, advise the victim or victims not to retaliate or return messages but to preserve and record all evidence of the cyber bullying abuse including: the saving of all phone messages; the recording or saving-and-printing of instant messenger conversations; the printing or production of a screen-grab of social network pages

The following chart demonstrates the procedures that will be followed:

Person raising the allegation	Initial Action	Subsequent Action	Following Actions	Final Actions
Parent	Information given to Class Teacher / Class Guardian	Class Teacher / Guardian gets in touch with the parent raising the concern and confirm that there is enough evidence to view this as a possible bullying incident.	Within 1-2 school days, the CT/CG will interview the parties involved and log a record of these interviews on MyConcern. The findings will be reported to the Education Manager, along with recommended actions and sanctions (if appropriate).	Sanctions (if relevant) will happen. Work will be done to ensure both the target of the bullying and the pupil accused of the bullying are supported. There will be a focus on ensuring this behaviour is not repeated.
Pupil	Information given to Class Teacher / Class Guardian	CT / CG gets in touch with the pupil raising the concern and	Within 1-2 school days, the CT/CG will interview the parties involved	Sanctions (if relevant) will happen. Work will be done to ensure

		confirms that there is enough evident to view this as a possible bullying incident	and log a record of these interviews on MyConcern. The findings will be reported to the Education Manager, along with recommended actions and sanctions (if appropriate).	both the target of the bullying and the pupil accused of the bullying are supported. There will be a focus on ensuring this behaviour is not repeated.
Staff Member	Log allegation of bullying on MyConcern and alert CT / CG	CT/CG speaks to the pupil(s) mentioned and confirms that there is enough evident to view this as a possible bullying incident	Within 1-2 school days, the CT/CG will interview the parties involved and log a record of these interviews on MyConcern. The findings will be reported to the Education Manager, along with recommended actions and sanctions (if appropriate).	Sanctions (if relevant) will happen. Work will be done to ensure both the target of the bullying and the pupil accused of the bullying are supported. There will be a focus on ensuring this behaviour is not repeated.

If there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer any significant harm, it must be treated as a Safeguarding issue. Full details of procedures are found in the Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy.

If images are involved, it is essential to determine whether they might be illegal or raise child protection concerns. If so, immediately conform to the instructions in Elmfield's Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy.

If the school suspects or believes that a crime may have been committed, either the School Lead or the Education Manager will inform the police.

Supporting Bullied Pupils

Members of staff who are involved with the day-to-day care of pupils who have been bullied must offer them reassurance as part of the plan of action that will have been devised to combat the bullying.

The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from a teacher that knows the pupil well, setting up support from the Class Teacher/Guardian, engaging with parents, referring to local authority children's services, completing a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

This plan of action will have been discussed with the pupil, in consultation with her parents and/or guardian.

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour

Changing the attitude and behaviour of those involved in bullying behaviour will form part of the strategy and plan of action implemented by the School. This plan will address counselling advice, behaviour management and general support. However, the School recognises that appropriate sanctions may also have to be used against those involved in bullying behaviour. Any of the School's formal punishments may be used against those involved in bullying behaviour as deemed appropriate. In serious cases, the School Lead may consider suspension or even permanent exclusion, if various other sanctions have been applied and there is no change in behaviour. Once the person responsible has been identified, it is important that sanctions are applied and that the perpetrator is supported in trying to understand the need to change their attitude and behaviour. This is particularly important when dealing with examples of cyber bullying, as the bully may not witness directly the effect their behaviour has had on the victim.

Pupils should also be made aware that, particularly in cases of cyber bullying, misconduct of this nature outside School will be subject to School discipline, if the welfare of other pupils, or the culture or reputation of the School, is placed at risk.

In cases of cyber bullying, the misuse of the School's IT resources is subject to the School's disciplinary regime. Sanctions may include confiscation of mobile phones or restrictions on the use of the internet. Where there are concerns that a criminal act has been committed or that a pupil has been subject to child abuse, the matter will be referred to the police and/or children's services.

Records of all incidents involving misuse of IT resources will be recorded either by the IT Network Manager (straight misuse) or the Education Manager (cases of bullying).

Strategies to reduce bullying

Elmfield has adopted a range of strategies to prevent and reduce bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and support victims and those displaying bullying behaviour. The promotion of respect between individual members of the School Community is incorporated within the Elmfield Code of Conduct. Bullying is specified as the first on the list of the activities which are strictly forbidden.

A discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language is encouraged. Education also ensures pupils are aware of their role when they find themselves as bystanders. Pupils are helped to understand what they may describe as 'banter' may in fact be bullying.

Specific strategies include:

- The consistent promotion of the school's code of behaviour which requires all pupils to respect the rights of others
- The reinforcement of the clear message that bullying has no place at Elmfield
- Effective recording on MyConcern of incidents
- Taking part in initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week training for all members of staff on anti-bullying policy and strategy
- External speakers to address the pupils
- Providing information to all parents on the symptoms of bullying and the steps to take if they suspect their child is being bullied
- A clear policy on mobile phones
- The celebration of all pupils' backgrounds and cultures
- During assemblies and PSHCEE, discuss and explore bullying issues with the children
- Raising awareness of cyber bullying and teaching children to safely use technology (including mobile phones, email, internet)
- Work with multi-agency teams including police and children's services as appropriate
- Contact the parents of both the child being bullied and the bully
- Challenge sexual content within verbal abuse, especially challenging the word 'gay' and other homophobic language.
- Never ignore any suspicion of bullying
- Do not make premature assumptions
- Listen carefully to all accounts
- Adopt a problem-solving approach

The Education Manager monitors CPOMS on a frequent basis and has regular meetings with Class Teachers / Guardians where any concerning issues are raised.

Other related School policies and procedures

- Safeguarding Children (Child Protection) Policy
- Expulsion and Removal Policy
- IT Policy (Pupils)
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Pupil Behaviour Policy
- Guidelines for the Use of Physical Restraint
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
- RSE Policy
- PSHCEE Policy

Useful websites for additional information

www.bullying.co.uk

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.youngminds.org.uk

www.youngstonewall.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

www.stoptextbully.com

www.beyondbullying.com

www.childnet-int.org

www.cyberbullying.org

www.chatdanger.com

www.thinkuknow.co.uk