



*Life, Love and Learning to the Full*

# **TEAM Multi Academy Trust**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

This Policy was adopted by the TEAM Multi Academy Trust  
on

Date: Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Signed (on behalf of the Board of Trustees): Paul Ginnings

Signed (Chief Executive Officer): Ian Thomas

Review Date: Monday 8<sup>th</sup> of September 2024



# TEAM Multi Academy Trust Anti-Bullying Policy

## **Statement of Intent**

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Schools in TEAM Multi-Academy Trust are **TELLING** schools. This means that **anyone** who knows that bullying is happening is expected to report it immediately to a staff member.

## **Objectives of this Policy**

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the TEAM Multi Academy Trust's policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- All our schools take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

## **What Is Bullying?**

Bullying is the repeated and intentional use of power to harm another person, physically, socially or emotionally over a period of time and often in a premeditated manner. Bullying can involve an individual or a group misusing their power, or perceived power over one or more persons who feel unable to stop it from happening. This is because the bully has an imbalance of power over the victim. The imbalance can be due to physical size, strength, popularity, social status, or other factors.

Bullying can be:

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| ➤ Emotional         | being unfriendly, isolating others, intimidating, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures) manipulation, coercion.  |
| ➤ Physical          | pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence  |
| ➤ Prejudice-related | derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their |

race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

- Sexual unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, threats.
- Online/Cyber posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion etc.

The victim of bullying may feel unable to stop it from happening because they are afraid of retaliation from the bully, or because they feel that no one will believe them or help them. This can make bullying very difficult to escape.

### **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

### **Behaviour often associated as bullying**

We recognise that bullying can take many forms and can affect any child. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs, or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities). Bullying can be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

However, we also recognise that incidents may occur between pupils, which **may not be deemed as 'bullying'** but still require support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as 'relational conflicts' or falling out. Relational conflict differs to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional). Usually, following a relational conflict incident, 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 our schools are aware occasionally some can, and we are mindful that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.

Although bullying and relational conflicts can take place between individuals, we recognise that it often takes place in front of others (either physically or virtually), pupils who witness these incidents/behaviours are often referred to as 'bystanders'.

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

incidents of bullying, to ensure that it does not continue and that all pupils feel supported (this will include the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders, and the wider school community).

## **Signs and Symptoms**

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to under perform in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home very hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- 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 a possibility and should be investigated

## **Procedures for Parents and Carers**

We understand that it can be very difficult for parents and carers to hear that their child is being bullied, whether they are the target, perpetrator, or witness. Bullying can have a profound impact on a child's mental health, and it is important to seek help if you are concerned.

We ask that if parents/carers are concerned that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, they contact a member of school staff. In the first instance we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher to discuss their concerns. The teacher will take a note of the concerns and may ask to organise a meeting to discuss the matter in more detail. Following the report and/or meeting, the teacher will make a formal record of the incident on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be notified. If the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk, the member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Additional staff members may become involved if required at any point of the process.

1. Report bullying incidents to staff

2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on CPOMs
3. Parents will be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
5. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
6. A no blame meeting will be held to give parties the opportunity to understand the consequences of their actions. We will always encourage respect and forgiveness.

We ask that parents come directly to the school with their concerns about bullying. Discussing concerns with other members of the school community or online can spread misinformation and rumours, and it may not be the most effective way to resolve the issue.

Our schools remain 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 make every effort to keep all parties informed of progress and any developments. However, we must also comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which may mean that we are not able to share all the information or updates. We will always strive to be as transparent as possible, while also protecting the privacy of those involved.

### **The Role of Staff Members**

Staff at our schools take all forms of bullying seriously and are committed to preventing it from happening. We believe that our school values are essential to creating a safe and supportive environment for all students. We refer to our values in assemblies, PSHE, RHSE, RE and when dealing with any inappropriate behaviour in school. We also display our values throughout the school to remind students of the importance of treating each other with kindness and respect. Through the PSHE curriculum and all other areas of the curriculum, including Anti-bullying week, staff support each pupil's learning about how to make and maintain friendships, and how to mend damaged friendships. Staff, through their professional responsibilities, model positive behaviour and actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property.

Our staff work closely with 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.

Our staff use a contextual approach to safeguarding, which means that we will tailor our response to each individual incident. Some of the things we may do include, but are not 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 victim/s
- Implement appropriate sanctions in accordance with the Trust's Behaviour Policy. These sanctions will be graded according to the severity of the incident and will send out a clear message that bullying is unacceptable.
- Should it be deemed appropriate, work with external agencies and organisations and make referrals when necessary.
- Work with the school community if bullying is occurring off the school premises.
- Continue to communicate with the individual who report the incident to inform them that action has been taken. Due regard for GDPR will be shown.
- Implement a range of follow-up support and interventions linked to the Trust's Learning Champions programme that are appropriate to the situation. This could include:
  - Providing emotional support to the victim of the bullying. This could involve talking to them about their experience, helping them to cope with their emotions, and providing them with resources to help them stay safe.
  - Educating pupils about bullying and how to prevent it: This could involve teaching them about the different types of bullying, how to identify it, and how to intervene safely.
  - Creating a safe and supportive school environment: This will involve reinforcing the clear rules set against bullying and also providing further training for staff on how to handle bullying incidents.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- Staff members will liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there are safeguarding concerns. The DSL may then refer to MASH.

NB: For more information cyberbullying incidents please see Appendix A on page 8

## **Repairing and Restoring after Bullying Incidents**

We recognise the importance for children and our school community of repairing the damage done when children have acted in ways outside of the normal behaviour expectations. Furthermore, we recognise that the concept of repair gives a child the opportunity to restore their place in the community and gives the community a chance to forgive and welcome the child back. These concepts require us to act using cognitive skills that are not accessible to us when dysregulated and so should always be enacted after a child has experienced co-regulation and is truly calm and supported.

We will support children to **resolve conflict** by;

- Listening to and understanding their views and the things that are important to them
- providing them with the language, understanding and support to see others views and know the impact their actions have on others in order to repair these relationships.
- explicitly use language of repair rather than of shame and blame
- Where children do not have the skills to reflect on their actions we will use the **WINE** model to reflect these to the child

**W – I wonder if... I – I image that was... because N – I noticed that... E- Empathy, that must have felt...**

Adults will help children to identify the impact/consequences of their actions. We recognise that **consequences** should relate directly to the action or behaviour for example not completing your work results in work that still needs completing, being unkind to another damages that relationship and make the friendship uncertain, throwing things causes damage or mess. It is these 'real' consequences that we will help children to address and **repair**. This might be:

- To apologies or make amends to a person affected by your actions
- Completing unfinished work
- Tidying or repairing an area or damaged item

To avoid further trauma to the child we will focus on the language of repair and fixing things that went wrong.

Adults will support the child to **make longer term changes** to their behaviour by:

- Continuing to know they are valued, cared for and we believe in them to do the right thing.
- Helping them to see they are able to fix, repair and change circumstances – situations are nether fixed nor hopeless.
- Acknowledging and accepting a child's feeling attuning and validating their experience without judgment
- Reflecting to them the impact of others and real consequences of their behaviours
- Supporting their emotional growth and understanding through co-regulation until they are able to regulate without support.
- Continuing to use both the PLACE and WINE models throughout these difficult interactions.
- Working with the bully to understand why they are bullying and to help them change their behaviour: This could include individual counselling, group work or family-based activities.

## **Prevention**

We will use a range of approaches for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Reviewing the school rules and showing that there is a united response towards anti-bullying.
- Reinforcing our belief that behaviour is learned and can be changed and help the bully to change their behaviour. Implement strategies to help change this.
- School council. Digital Champions & Ethos Ambassadors with representatives from each year group.
- Ensuring that all Trust schools are proactive in promoting the celebration of diversity and difference through their collective worship/assembly action planning.
- Robust PSHE/RSE Jigsaw curriculum in all year groups.
- Taking part in local and national events like Anti-Bullying week which is held annually in November.
- Finding opportunities within the Big Event curriculum for specific inputs linked to cyberbullying/online safety.
- Pupil surveys to be used during the academic year so that the children's opinions are considered.

- Specific Learning Champions initiatives/interventions for identified children. E.g. Apple Tree Farm, The Wave Project, CEET residential.
- Anti-bullying page on each school website & literature to be shared with parents.
- Staff training (Including MTA's) linked to bullying.
- Visits from external agencies like the NSPCC.

### **Vulnerable groups**

As a Trust we are acutely aware that some children in each school community may be vulnerable to bullying because of their perceived differences. These differences could be due to various reasons: learning difficulties, disability, EAL, colour of skin, communication difficulties, social circumstances and gender. We are committed to creating a safe and supportive environment for all students, regardless of their background. To achieve this our schools, provide children the opportunities to celebrate diversity and gain a better understanding of different cultures and faiths. Our PSHE curriculum also ensures that children are provided with opportunities to learn in depth about the different family groupings that exist. Our Trust SLT, SEND and Pastoral teams work in partnership with each school to identify vulnerable children who may be linked to the groups listed above. If problems arise, additional support will be provided when deemed appropriate.

### **Links with other policies**

- TEAM Positive Behaviour and Relational Policy
- TEAM Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- TEAM E-Safety Policy
- TEAM Equality Policy
- TEAM PSHE/ RSHE Policy
- TEAM Complaints Policy

## Appendix A

### Cyberbullying

- When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:
  - Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
  - Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
  - Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
  - Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible.

This may include:

- looking at use of the school systems;
- identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
- Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation.

This may include:

- Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school searching and confiscation policy. (We will access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully)
- Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online.

This may include:

- advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
- providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
- helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.