

LONG MEAD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY



Policy name	Anti-bullying Policy
Date written	Nov 2024
Date agreed by Governing Body	Dec 2024
Date of renewal	November 2025
Senior member of staff with oversight	Headteacher

Introduction

At Long Mead Community Primary School we aim to provide a supportive, caring, and friendly environment which allows all our pupils to learn in an atmosphere which is focussed on improving their life chances and helping them to maximise their potential.

We expect our pupils to act safely, and feel safe, in and outside of school – we do not tolerate any form of bullying and we are committed to preventing and tackling it. We recognise that as children learn and grow together, they may experience fallouts with their peers, but we are committed to supporting our pupils to resolve these ‘relational conflicts’ and stop them from progressing to bullying behaviours.

If an incident of bullying does occur, we believe our pupils, parents/carers and staff should feel confident in reporting it and know that that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Bullying will never be tolerated at our school.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates 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; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

At Long Mead Community Primary School we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice and we celebrate diversity. Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is *‘reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm’*. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their safeguarding team.

This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, ICT and Acceptable Use Policy, PSHE Policy and the School’s Vision and Values.

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (September 2024). It was written in consultation with the whole school community with input from staff, Governors, parents and carers, children and other partners such as NSPCC and The Anti-bullying Alliance.

Principles

All students have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, harass, degrade or abuse them. There is no justification whatsoever for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form. Differences of age, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation and ability are absolutely repudiated as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the bully and the victim and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways which provide opportunities for growth and development for the bully and victim alike. This policy embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

The four guiding principles of the Early Years Foundation Stage underpin our Anti-Bullying Policy from the moment a pupil enters our school and throughout their time at Long Mead Community Primary School. They are:

- every pupil is a unique pupil, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- pupils learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships;
- pupils learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers
- pupils develop and learn in different ways and at different rates including pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve school staff, parents/carers and other professionals involved with students who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying behaviour. It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention and management of bullying with staff receiving advice, training and support to manage it with confidence.

Best outcomes follow when the school can work with parents to address concerns about bullying behaviour and victimisation.

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- The headteacher to communicate this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.
- Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including: governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- Pupils to abide by the policy.

What Is Bullying?

At Long Mead Community Primary School, we discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, with all children through assemblies, Computing lessons, PSHE lessons and circle time activities. We agree that: bullying is repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological aggressive behaviour by a person or group, directed towards a person or group over a period that is intended to cause harm, distress or fear.

It is therefore:

1. Repeated & sustained;
2. One-way (i.e. from one student/group towards another passive student/group);
3. Intended to hurt either physically or emotionally;
4. Often aimed at certain groups e.g. because of race, religion, culture, class, gender or sexual orientation.

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

It takes many forms and can include:

- Teasing;
- Alienating friends by spreading rumours / untruths;
- Physical assault;
- Making verbal threats;
- Stealing personal belongings;
- Name calling;
- Cyberbullying – bullying via a mobile device or online (e.g. email, social networks, instant messaging);
- Enticing others to do any of the above on behalf of another person.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality;
- Homophobic name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing because of a person's sexuality;
- Cyber bullying using the internet or electronic devices, such as email, internet chat room misuse, text messaging or the misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

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.

Long Mead has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of the 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 school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises;
- As a school, we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should feel safe to report bullying and should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported;
- All pupils and parents should know what action will be taken as a consequence of bullying;
- All stakeholders including pupils understand that bullying will not be tolerated.

Scope

The school is legally responsible only for incidents of bullying which occur on the school premises or within the school's official remit as described below:

A student is deemed to be in school, and therefore under the guidance of the school Behavioural Policy and this policy, when they are on the school site, walking to and from school and on all official school visits.

The school is however concerned about students' conduct and welfare outside school and will actively work with the appropriate agencies to address issues that come to light from other sources.

If there are more general concerns about a students' safety outside of school, then the local police will be contacted and their help sought.

If information is received that a student is being bullied by a sibling outside the school, this will initially be discussed with the parents. If concerns persist then the matter will be referred to the appropriate agency.

If students are being bullied by students of another school the Headteacher of that School will be informed and invited to deal with the matter.

Matters of social media or online games bullying out of school hours, for example when the students are at home, **do not** fall under the school's remit. In these cases, the appropriate agencies should be contacted. However, the school will continue to support and work with both parties and their parents and carers.

Prevention

The school has a zero-tolerance attitude to bullying. It is best prevented through the development of a school ethos based on mutual respect, fairness and equality and our school's behaviour policy. All staff have a responsibility for dealing with this problem. Pupils' will be informed of the school's expectations about the unacceptability of bullying and what to do if they experience or are aware of bullying by others.

The issue of bullying will be raised with students in a number of different ways including:

- Whole-school assemblies when pupils will be informed of the school's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place;
- In PSHE and RSE lessons;
- Discussions during circle time activities
- Posters and displays;
- Guest speakers;
- Normal curriculum lessons;
- Anti-bullying week activities
- Online safety lessons

The school recognises that there are particular times when students may be more vulnerable to bullying, such as lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Arrangements will be made to ensure that at such times there is adequate supervision available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents.

If pupils think they or others may have been a victim of bullying, they will be encouraged to talk to staff about their experience. In these circumstances, staff will respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously and ensure that the matter is fully investigated.

If parents believe their child is bullying others, this information should be shared with school so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed to prevent further incidents and the bullying pupil helped to change his/her behaviour.

All of these preventative strategies operate within a school ethos founded on equality, fairness and respect for others in which individual differences are celebrated and seen as a source of enrichment. In order to help pupils learn and develop appropriate responses to others all staff, at all times, will treat each other (and pupils, parents and carers) with courtesy and respect and will model appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

Parental Involvement

The school recognises the important part parents/carers play in supporting their children and promoting change. The school welcomes the active involvement of parents (of both victim and bully) in bringing this problem under control. Parents/carers will be kept informed of any concerns the school has about their children in relation to this issue.

Implementation

All staff are responsible for the rigorous application of this policy and ensuring that the incidents falling within the school's definition are properly recorded.

All pupils need to be aware that staff want to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

The school can only act effectively when incidents are reported accurately and quickly. Incidents become more difficult to solve when important information is not reported immediately or withheld.

Bullying inside the School

Our student surveys always indicate that the vast majority of students feel safe and free from bullying at the school. However, if it occurs, bullying can be very distressing.

Friendship issues become bullying when they continue over a period and involve extreme name-calling. Issues involving physical threat, violence or extortion are dealt with immediately through the school's Behaviour Policy.

If you are concerned a student is being bullied, contact either the pupil's teacher or Headteacher immediately. All pupils will be interviewed about what they have been doing to ascertain the nature of the interactions. They will have explained to them the impact it is having on the alleged victim. The pupils will be given an opportunity to resolve their issues with the victim, or cease their poor behaviour immediately. If they continue to behave in the same way following this intervention and through the investigation and it is deemed to be bullying, this will be treated very seriously and will be dealt with through the school's Behaviour Policy.

Bullying outside the School

Where bullying is taking place outside of the school's remit, parents should contact the Police. If a pupil is being intimidated through electronic means, parents need to make sure the messages are printed out and made available to the Police. Online bullying is a criminal offence and will be treated seriously by the appropriate authorities.

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

Long Mead Community Primary 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. We will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti-bullying policy and our behaviour policy.

Post Incident Responses for the Victim

Protection, sympathy/empathy/counselling and advice on how to avoid future incidents, mediation (where appropriate) and support will be provided. More detail is given below.

The school will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to students who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular pupil's individual needs and may include:

- immediate action to stop the incident and secure the pupil's safety;
- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do;
- reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully;
- strategies to prevent further incidents;
- sympathy and empathy;
- counselling;
- befriending;
- support;
- assertiveness training;
- extra supervision/monitoring;
- creation of a support group;
- peer mediation/peer mentoring;
- informing/involving parents;
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
- involvement of external agencies;
- arrangements to review progress.

Post Incident Responses for the Bully

The school will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern, the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary, they will be applied consistently and fairly. The following options will be considered and may be applied:

- immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress;
- engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of school rules and is unacceptable;
- loss of lunch/break-times;
- use of internal exclusions;
- removal from class/group;
- withholding participation in sports or out of school activities (if not essential part of curriculum);
- parents informed;
- behaviour management lessons;
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim);
- involvement of external agencies;
- fixed period exclusion;
- permanent exclusion (in extreme cases);
- rewards/positive reinforcement for pupils in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control;
- being educated at a different educational establishment (in extreme cases).

Procedures

If an incident of bullying is reported, action should be taken, immediately. The most important step is to assure the victim of support. All incidents should be logged on Edukey. Even minor incidents may add up to a pattern of harassment.

If a major problem has occurred, person statements will be collected from as many witnesses as possible. The victim and the aggressor will be kept separate to enable this to happen.

A short-term action plan will be devised and implemented. If deemed appropriate, parents will be informed of the situation. If a disciplinary consequence is applied, it must be made clear to the bully why this action has been taken.

There is much evidence to suggest that peer counselling/restorative justice is an effective way of educating bullies. Where this is felt possible, the bully and victim may be brought together, the latter explains how it feels to be bullied and the former explains why s/he is behaving in this way.

Repeated bullying should be brought to the attention of the appropriate teacher. If this intervention does not stop the bullying, the situation should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher and finally to the Governing Body.

Monitoring/Evaluation

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring incidents of bullying and reporting to the Governors. The Headteacher and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any ongoing concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers, students and other interested stakeholders.

Useful Documents / Additional Reading and Support:

www.bullying.co.uk

www.childline.org.uk

<https://www.kidscape.org.uk>

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

www.gov.uk (search for 'safe to learn')

Don't Suffer in Silence – a HELP sheet for pupils

If you are being bullied

- try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- tell an adult what has happened straight away

After you have been bullied

- tell a teacher or another adult in your school
- tell your family
- if you are scared to tell an adult by yourself, ask a friend to come with you
- keep speaking up until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying
- record when the bullying happened, how it happened and by who
- don't blame yourself for what has happened

When you are talking to an adult about bullying, be clear about

- what has happened to you
- how often it has happened
- who was involved
- where it happened
- when it happened
- what you have done about it already

If you find it difficult to talk to anyone at School or at home, ring ChildLine, Freephone 0800 1111 or visit www.childline.co.uk. The phone call is free. It is a confidential helpline.

Do not Suffer in Silence – a HELP sheet for parents and families

Every school is likely to have some problem with bullying at one time or another. Long Mead Community Primary School must by law have an anti-bullying policy, and use it to reduce and prevent bullying.

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping schools deal with bullying.

First, discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show how to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.

Second, ask to see the school's anti-bullying policy. Each school must have an antibullying policy, which sets out how it deals with incidents of bullying.

Third, watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect symptoms of bullying, though sometimes school nurses or doctors may first suspect that a child has been bullied. Common symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability. It can be helpful to ask questions about progress and friends at school; how break times and lunchtimes are spent; and whether your child is facing problems or difficulties at School. Do not dismiss negative signs. Contact the school immediately if you are worried.

If you child has been bullied

- calmly talk to your child about it;
- make a note of what your child says – particularly who was said to be involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what has happened;
- reassure your child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do;
- explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately;
- make an appointment to see your child's teacher; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing;
- do not make contact with the bully or his/her parents.

Talking to teachers about bullying

- try and stay calm – bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident;
- be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened – give dates, places and names of other children involved;
- make a note of what action the school intends to take;
- ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school;
- stay in touch with the school – let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue;

If you think your concerns are not being addressed

- check the school anti-bullying policy to see if agreed procedures are being followed;
- make an appointment to meet your child's teacher, keeping a record of the meeting;
- if this does not help, contact the Head teacher explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happen;
- if this does not help, write to the Chair of Governors explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happen;
- contact local or national parent support groups for advice;

If your child is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware. Children sometimes bully others because:

- they do not know it is wrong;
- they are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family they admire;
- they have not learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends;
- their friends encourage them to bully;
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings;

To stop your child bullying others

- talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy;
- discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggressions or force to get what they want;
- show your child how to join in with other children without bullying;
- make an appointment to see your child's class teacher; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop them bullying others;
- regularly check with your child how things are going at School;
- give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people;

Resources for parents and families about bullying

ALEXANDER J Your child bullying: Practical and easy to follow advice

Elements Books 1998

ELLIOTT M 101 Ways to deal with bullying – A guide for parents

Hodder and Stoughton 1997

KIDSCAPE Keeping safe: A practical guide to talking with children

Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH 1990

LAWSON S Helping children cope with bullying

Sheldon Press 1994