



# Anti-bullying Policy

***Believe \* Achieve \* Succeed***



Updated: September 2024

Review: September 2025

## Statement of Intent

The pupils, staff, parents, trustees and governors of BASE Academy Trust believe that:

- ❖ Bullying is undesirable and unacceptable.
- ❖ Bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found.
- ❖ Seeking help and openness are regarded as signs of strength not weakness.
- ❖ All members of our community will be listened to and taken seriously.
- ❖ Everyone has the right to enjoy and achieve in an atmosphere that is free from fear.
- ❖ All of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others.
- ❖ Children and young people should talk to an adult if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously.
- ❖ Children and young people should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them.
- ❖ We all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse.

*We believe in tackling bullying by encouraging an environment where individuality is celebrated and individuals can develop without fear.*

## Aims and Objectives

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending any school within the Trust is a positive experience for all members of our community.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable.
- To enable everyone to feel safe while at school and encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying.
- To deal with each incident of bullying as effectively as possible, taking into consideration the needs of all parties and of our community, and, as a result, to reduce the incidents of bullying.
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- To help and support children/young people displaying bullying behaviour to change their attitudes and understand why it needs to change.
- To liaise with parents and other appropriate members of the school community.
- To ensure all members of our community feel responsible for helping to reduce bullying
- To maintain and develop effective listening systems for children and young people.
- To involve all staff in dealing with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly
- To equip all staff with the skills and information necessary to deal with incidents of bullying
- To involve the wider school community (e.g. midday supervisors, part-time staff/volunteers/ trainee teachers) in dealing effectively with, and if necessary referring, bullying incidents.
- To communicate with parents and the wider school community effectively on the subject of bullying.
- To acknowledge the key role of every staff member in dealing with incidents of bullying.
- To ensure that all incidents of bullying are recorded and appropriate use is made of the information, where appropriate sharing it with relevant organisations.
- To promote emotional health and wellbeing across the whole school and for all members of our community to role-model this in all situations

## What is Bullying?

In general terms, we define bullying as *'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.'* At BASE Academy Trust we recognise that there are groups of pupils who may be more vulnerable to experiencing bullying. These include but are not exclusive to:

- Looked After pupils
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils
- Pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Pupils from ethnic minorities
- Pupils entitled to Free School Meals
- Pupils for whom English is an Additional Language
- LGBT (Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) children

Each school within the Trust recognises that there are different forms of bullying. As a result of this, this policy does not stand in isolation but is also closely related to other policies including but not exclusively; Online safety, Equality scheme, SEN policy, EAL policy, transgender policy.

### Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in and outside school. Cyber-bullying has a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people share content. Despite age guidelines and restrictions on social media platforms, many of which are at least age 13, staff within the Trust acknowledge that social media is a significant area of vulnerability for children and young people.

### Racist Bullying

This refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that make the person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity culture, faith community, national origin or national status.

### Homophobic Bullying

This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people. Heterosexism is any prejudice and discrimination against individuals and groups who are lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) or are perceived to be so. It is based on the assumption that everyone is or should be heterosexual. Expressions of dislike, contempt or fear based on heterosexism are usually known as homophobia, although lesophobia and biphobia are also coming into use.

### Transgender Bullying

This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against a transgender individual. The term gender includes boys, girls, men and women, and transgender/transsexual people.

What is the difference between sex and gender?

- Sex refers to biological status as male or female. It includes physical attributes such as sex chromosomes, sex hormones, internal reproductive structures and external genitalia.
- Gender is a term that is often used to refer to ways that people act, interact, or feel about themselves, which are associated with boys/men and girls/women.

## Signs of Bullying

Staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues including:

- *Physical:* unexplained bruised, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.
- *Emotional:* losing interest in school, withdrawn, secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.
- *Behavioural:* asking to be taken to school, taking longer to get home, asking for more money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

## Practice – Preventing Bullying

Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential to keeping incidents to a minimum. Through assemblies as well as PSHCE lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, such as two friends falling out, or a one-off argument. Pupils are taught to tell an adult in school if they are concerned that they or someone else is being bullied. Everyone involved in the life of each school takes responsibility for promoting a common anti-bullying approach. The curriculum, this work and ethos is also underpinned by the School core values which include kindness, respect and tolerance. As part of practice, staff, pupils, parents and governors will:

- be supportive of each other
- provide positive role models
- convey a clear understanding that we disapprove of unacceptable behaviour
- be clear that we all follow the rules of each school
- be fully involved in the development of the anti-bullying policy and support anti-bullying practice
- support each other in the implementation of this policy

Although work promoting positive relationships and friendships permeates throughout each school's practice and curriculum, in addition to this each school holds a focus week each year entitled 'Friendship week' which provides dedicated time to revisit themes and issues within the context of friendship and bullying. This is supported by outside agencies also.

All members of the school community are expected to report incidents of bullying. All Staff have a vital role to play as they are at the forefront of behaviour management and supporting pupil's sense of well-being. They have the closest knowledge of the children in their care, and should build up a relationship involving mutual support, trust and respect.

Staff will:

- Provide children with a framework of behaviour including rules, rights and responsibilities which support the whole school policy for behaviour.
- Emphasise and behave in a respectful and caring manner to children and colleagues, to set a good tone and help create a positive atmosphere.
- Raise awareness of bullying through activities, stories, role-play, discussion, peer support, school council, PSHCE, SEALs, P4C etc
- Educate pupils about E-safety; including age restrictions, reporting inappropriate content and how to stay safe online
- Through the Head of School and Senior Leadership Team, keep the governing body well informed regarding issues concerning behaviour management and bullying.

## Responding to Bullying

All cases of alleged bullying should be reported to the Head of School or in their absence a senior member of staff. In any case of alleged bullying, either the class teacher, the Head of School, or a senior member of staff should first establish the facts, and build an accurate picture of events over time, through speaking to the alleged perpetrator(s), victim(s) and adult witnesses, as well as parents and pupil witnesses if necessary and appropriate.

Whenever a bullying incident is discovered or an allegation is raised, the school will go through a number of steps. The exact nature of each step will be adapted to suit the nature and severity of the incident, and the response of those involved. In order to gain evidence and a full understanding of the situation an investigation will be carried out.

1. The school community need to be made aware that when a bullying incident has come to the attention of adults in the school, it has been taken seriously and action has resulted. School expects to support all involved by:
  - Carrying out a thorough investigation
  - Talking the incident through with all parties involved
  - Supporting the person who has been bullied to express their feelings
  - Supporting the person displaying the bullying behaviour to express their feelings
  - Discussing which rule(s) have been broken
  - Discussing strategies for making amends (using the Peaceful Problem Solving structure in SEALs)
  
2. Measures taken to address incidents of bullying will be determined on a case by case basis. Actions will be in line with the school's behaviour and policy, and may include:
  - Explanation why the inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable
  - Reparation of damaged relationships (restorative justice)
  - Meeting with staff, parent and child
  - Formal letter home from the Head of School/ Executive Headteacher
  - Time out from the classroom
  - Lunch and breaktime adjustments
  - Pastoral support plan
  - Fixed term exclusion
  - Permanent exclusion
  
3. Safeguarding procedures will be followed when child protection concerns arise (this may include cyber bullying)

## Recording

All incidents, including those out of class will be recorded by the school. A senior member of staff will take responsibility for ensuring that the incident is properly recorded and that the record is updated as necessary throughout an investigation.

Parents of all children/young people involved will be informed of what has happened, that an investigation will take place and ultimately the outcomes of the situation. All discussions and actions relating to the incident/investigation will be documented and added to the incident log. Figures relating to bullying are reported to the Local Governing Board termly as well as records of 'discriminatory incidents' which may include one off incidents of name calling.

## **Bullying towards Members of Staff**

At BASE Academy Trust, any form of bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents or colleagues, is unacceptable. As highlighted by the DfE 2014,<sup>1</sup> evidence indicates that one in five teachers have reported having derogatory comments posted about them on social media sites from both parents and children. BASE Academy Trust has statutory and common law duties to look after the physical and mental health of their employees. This includes seeking to protect staff from cyberbullying by pupils, parents and other members of staff and supporting them if it happens.

The Professional Online Safety Helpline is a free service for professionals and volunteers working with children and young people, delivered by the UK Safer Internet Centre. The helpline provides signposting, advice and mediation to resolve the e-safety issues which staff face, such as protecting professional identity, online harassment, or problems affecting young people; for example cyberbullying or sexting issues.

Any member of staff who experiences any form of bullying should report it to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If the concern relates to a member of the SLT then either the Head of School, Executive Headteacher or the Chair of Governors should be contacted (in line with the Whistleblowing policy).

### **Review of policy**

This policy will be reviewed annually. It may also be reviewed and amended, in consultation with all stakeholders, in the light of events or experience. The Stakeholders of this policy are children and young people, staff, parents and carers, governors and people from other organisations involved with the life of each school within the Trust.

Data from the monitoring and recording of incidents (including 'nil' returns) will also inform policy review and will be reviewed termly by Local Governors through the Head of School's report to the Local Governing Board.

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<sup>1</sup> DfE 2014- Cyberbullying advice for headteachers and staff, Ref: DFE-00652-2014