

# Preventing and responding to bullying policy

To be considered in conjunction with our **behaviour, safeguarding, equalities, e-safety** policies

## **INTRODUCTION**

We aim to provide a positive, safe and caring learning environment for all pupils, staff and visitors to our school. To achieve this, we support and encourage everybody to be respectful of each other (this includes pupils, staff and visitors) and to report incidents of bullying that they either witness or experience themselves.

- We view all forms of bullying as completely unacceptable
- Acts of bullying will be responded to in line with our behaviour policy (as well as the specific guidance below)
- Bullying is explored throughout curriculum
- Where applicable, managing electronic bullying (eg. cyber-bullying) will also need to be considered alongside our e-safety policy
- Our equality policy, with a particular focus on the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010, is also an important consideration in managing and analysing incidents of bullying.

**IT IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO AIM TO PREVENT OCCURRENCES OF BULLYING AND TO DEAL WITH INCIDENTS QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY.**

## **WHAT IS BULLYING?**

Bullying can take many forms. We take the view that any behaviour or action that is deliberately hurtful, repeated several times and is difficult for the victim to defend him/herself, constitutes bullying. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which can cast a shadow over a child's life or a series of incidents. The following list is not exhaustive:

### **Physical**

Violent, aggressive and/or threatening behaviour (fighting, hitting, shoving, tripping up, spitting, kicking, slapping etc.), invading personal space, sexual assault.

### **Verbal**

Name-calling (including racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic name-calling and insults about disabilities or religion), insulting family members and others or making offensive remarks; shouting; causing embarrassment by insulting, humiliating or disciplining in public.

### **Indirect (including all forms of electronic and 'cyber' bullying)**

Spreading malicious, nasty rumours about a person, excluding someone from a group, cyberbullying (for example sending malicious or threatening e-mails or messages via social network sites), text messages or voice messages by mobile phone or writing and passing notes that are meant to ridicule and/or intimidate the recipient.

## **WHAT ARE WE DOING TO PREVENT & REDUCE BULLYING?**

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies are used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. These include:

- **Clear, agreed expectations** which are highly visible in the school and referred to in lessons and assemblies as part of our approach to promoting positive behaviour
- Our **values curriculum** which focuses on relationships, respect, dealing with conflict, trust, British values and which permeates our curriculum
- Taking part in **national anti-bullying week** each year
- Awareness through regular, relevant assemblies
- Drama/role play activities
- The following of the school's behaviour policy, which includes focusing on praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour (including peer relationships, being respectful of each other etc.)
- Ongoing staff training to recognise and deal with bullying, including on specific areas such as homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, religious diversity, Islamophobia, disability discrimination and racism
- Encouraging the whole-school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another
- Displaying Childline/NSPCC/Stonewall posters around the school.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE ROLE OF PARENTS & CARERS BE?**

Parents have an important part to play in preventing and responding to bullying. We ask parents to look out for unusual behaviour in their child – for example not wanting to attend school, regularly feeling ill, being overly quiet, isolating themselves.

We ask that caregivers always take an active role in their child's education, enquire how their day has gone and who they have spent time with. If a parent or carer feels their child may be a victim of bullying they must inform the schools. This information will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.

If as a parent or carer you feel another child has bullied your child, we ask that you do not approach that child or their family. Instead, **please inform the head of centre immediately.**

- **It is important that parents/carers do not advise their child to fight back or to repeat the bully's behaviour as this can make the situation worse.**
- **It is important to never tell a child it is their fault they are being bullied.**

- It is hugely helpful for parents & carers to support children in asking for help.

## **HOW SHOULD BULLYING BE REPORTED AND WHAT PROCEDURES WILL WE FOLLOW WHEN RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS?**

Allegations and incidents of bullying at Infiniti School will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All of those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will support all pupils involved whilst the allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved.

The following robust, but flexible, procedures are always followed:

1. **Incidents of reported bullying need to be reported to a senior leader.** This will usually be via a teacher, TA or member of support staff.
2. **Depending on the incident, an appropriate member of staff will speak to all pupils involved about the incident separately or if appropriate as a group.** This will be reported to the head of centre
3. The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested, which may include:
  - **mediation**
  - **restorative justice**
  - **drama activities which will move pupils on from having them justify their behaviour**
  - **asking the bully/bullies to genuinely apologise**
  - **supporting the bully/bullies, through their key worker/key therapist, to understand and change their behaviour**
  - **consequences, including exclusion, as per our behaviour policy.**
4. **In the unlikely event the bullying continues, or in more serious cases of bullying, families will be invited into the school for a meeting to discuss the problem** and in very rare cases, mediation/restorative justice meetings with both families and pupils present may be used to resolve the issues.

All incidents of bullying are logged by category and analysed in leadership team meetings.

Actions from this analysis (eg. staff training, timetable changes, specific support plans, etc) are then implemented as appropriate to reduce, eradicate or prevent further cases of bullying.

## **THE EQUALITY ACT 2010**

This policy, alongside complementary policies as identified on the cover page, ensures that the curriculum and systems for managing behaviour pay regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 which include age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership/pregnancy/maternity.

## **LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER RIGHTS**

Lessons will be taught to students in line with British Values which also promote equal opportunities and an understanding of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights.

Assembly topics will be carefully chosen to ensure students understand the facts about sexuality and gender identity, as well as understand the damage and prejudice that stereotypes can cause.

At Infiniti School we believe that eradicating homophobic language has a clear link to school improvement. If gay young people don't hear the use of homophobic language, they not only feel happier but perform better too.

Homophobic language, even when used unconsciously and without hurtful intent, should always be addressed by staff.

### **ALLEGATIONS FROM PUPILS AGAINST OTHER PUPILS**

In most instances, negative conduct of pupils towards each other will be covered by this policy and our behaviour policy. However, some allegations may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns. Allegations made against another pupil may include **physical abuse** (for example violence, particularly pre-planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), **emotional abuse** (for example blackmail, extortion, threats, intimidation), **sexual abuse** (for example indecent exposure, touching, sexual assault, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography) and/or **sexual exploitation** (for example photographing or videoing indecent acts).

**In this case, the allegation must be referred to using our 'cause for concern' system and will be dealt with as a safeguarding concern by our designated safeguarding lead. Further guidance on this area can be found in our safeguarding and child protection policy.**

### **POLICY REVIEW CYCLE**

This policy and all policies at Infiniti School will be reviewed and updated by the leadership team and governing body as per our policy review cycle.