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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Approved by: SLT

Approved date: September 2025

To be reviewed by: SLT

Review date: September 2026

Accessibility: Available on the school website and paper copy on request

Scope: Ashbridge Independent School and Nursery, Ashbridge-on-Ribble Nursery, Ashbridge Nursery at Maxy Farm, The Fledglings Nursery

The aim of this anti-bullying strategy, within the framework of the Ashbridge Safeguarding Policy, is to ensure that children may learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied, and ensure that bullying, which is a type of child on child abuse is prevented in so far as is reasonably practicable. It is shared with all staff to ensure we have a clear understanding throughout the school and

nursery of bullying incidents and how to record them. It is on the website for parents to access easily. Copies are available in every school classroom and school children are aware of the contents too. This policy is implemented in conjunction with the Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Management Policy and Procedures, Exclusion Policy and the Technology and Online Safety Policy. When updating this policy, the guidance provided in the government document "Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017" and Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff 2014" was considered and used where appropriate.

All staff and adults who work with children are made aware of this policy through induction procedures and training in order that they are alert to the signs of bullying, act promptly and firmly against it and are supported by the SLT and outside agencies where appropriate, in identifying ways to reduce the risks. Staff are also made aware of their legal responsibilities relating to protecting children and promoting their welfare, during induction and ongoing Safeguarding training. Children are made aware of their role if they find themselves a bystander of bullying. The ethos of the school and nursery and the expectations and attitudes of staff promote an environment of appropriate behaviour and respect. This expectation of appropriate behaviour and respect extends beyond the classroom and into the playground, dining hall and out of school, both on and offline. Anti-Bullying Week is also highlighted by the school in November.

As bullying is a form of child on child abuse it is always treated as a safeguarding issue. It is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Ashbridge. We define bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over a period of time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms; it may occur either directly or through technology, known as cyberbullying. Bullying can be discriminatory and/or motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of any of the protected characteristics, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Staff appreciate that whilst they should be aware of the possibility of <u>any</u> child being bullied, that some children may be more likely to be a target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours of some young people towards those who are different from themselves. Incidents of bullying on these grounds will be treated particularly seriously. Through our PDP programme children are taught about the concept of tolerance and develop an understanding of the importance of respecting others without prejudice so they do not form negative or restricted views about others. The 4 Rights reflect this and older pupils are taught about the protected characteristics and the Equality Act 2010.

Abusive comments should never be passed off as mere 'banter', 'just having a laugh', or 'part of growing up'. The school recognises that bullying in all its forms may take place here and actively seeks to eradicate it. Staff must be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, including perceived low-level disruption which may be part of a larger bullying concern or can develop into bullying. Staff also have a key role to play in developing a kind and tolerant culture in the school and nursery and acting promptly for every occurrence of unacceptable behaviour, ensuring that bullying behaviours do not become normalised.

Bullying can be:

- physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft)
- verbal (e.g. repeated name calling, offensive comments based on someone's differences)
- Indirect (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups)
- Cyber (e.g. through social media, WhatsApp/text, photos and video, and online gaming)
- Prejudice-based or discriminatory (e.g. targeting a person due to a protected characteristic)

Children who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or fear of coming to school. Bullying is a serious issue and being a victim of bullying may cause short and long term mental health issues.

Pupils are taught about bullying specifically during anti-bullying week every year but also through PDP topics based around friendships and positive relationships. This includes analysing scenarios to recognise what is and is not bullying, discussing the impact of bullying and, considering what might lead to a child bullying their peers and also how behaviour can be changed to become more positive.

At Ashbridge, children have an understanding of what bullying is and know how to report it. They are expected to report anything they think is bullying straight away to any member of staff, including incidents which may have occurred outside of school. Children are made aware of appropriate ways to behave and the consequences of their actions through being aware of the behaviour policy and being taught within the curriculum in the Personal Development Programme, assemblies, projects, drama and subject areas as appropriate. Parents have access to and are made aware of the behaviour and anti-bullying policies and also have a responsibility to ensure children understand their role in preventing bullying and to pass any concerns they have about a child onto the school.

In order to train the team and raise staff awareness of bullying, the teaching team discuss forms of bullying in preparation for anti-bullying week and discussions are held in weekly team meetings where appropriate. We have an open culture where all team members feel confident to raise concerns and ask questions to any of the management team in both school and nursery.

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident is dealt with immediately by a member of staff and reported verbally to a member of the SLT who then refers to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate and formally record the incident including any sanctions issued which will reflect the seriousness of the incident. The incidents and follow up actions/sanctions are recorded in the Serious Incidents Log which is kept by the Headteacher and monitored by the Senior Leadership Team including the proprietor.
- Sanctions could include loss of playtimes, the implementation of a positive behaviour plan or other relevant sanctions. Parents would also be contacted in the case of bullying.
- In the case of severe or persistent bullying, exclusion may be necessary, in line with DfE guidance and our Exclusion Policy.

- When we become or are made aware of an incidence of bullying outside school or nursery we follow the same procedures and work with families to resolve the issues.
- Relevant school and nursery staff are kept informed of the investigation and outcome and are involved in monitoring children involved.
- Parents/Carers are fully involved whilst incidents are being resolved.
- The serious incidents and behaviour logs are regularly reviewed and analysed by the SLT and further action is taken if necessary, such as in the case of recurring incidents with the same child, family or member of staff.

A referral will always be made to Children's Social Care if we have a concern about the welfare or safety of a child, as set out in local guidance and Keeping Children Safe in Education. In the event of an incidence of bullying being considered a criminal act, the Police will be informed.

Specific guidance for dealing with sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and videos (youth-produced sexual imagery):

- Sharing of youth-produced sexual imagery is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit message, image or video and is illegal. Pressuring someone into sending sexual images of themselves can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, culture, gender or sexual preference.
- We will refer to guidance by the UK Council for Child Safety 'Sexting in Schools and Colleges: responding to incidents and safeguarding young people' (2016) in dealing with all cases where it becomes aware of an incident of this nature.
- If a member of staff becomes aware that images or videos of a sexual nature have been shared they should act in line with the school's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy and inform the Lead DSL immediately who will follow usual procedures.
- At any point in the process if there is a concern a young person has been harmed or is at risk of harm a referral should be made to children's social care and/or the Police immediately.
- Images or videos should never be viewed by staff members or other children. Staff or children must not further share the imagery or delete the imagery from their device if they have already been sent it.

<u>Supporting those who have been involved in bullying</u>

Children who have been bullied are supported by staff who:

- reassure the child, support them and make appropriate provision for their needs
- offer an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher or member of staff of their choice
- seek to ensure self-esteem and confidence are restored
- treat the incident as a Child Protection concern in cases where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm
- refer the child and/or family to relevant external agencies when appropriate

Children who have bullied may be helped by:

- being given the opportunity to discuss what happened
- determining why they became involved
- being encouraged to establish what was wrong with and the need to change their behaviour immediately
- informing parents/carers to help change the attitude or behaviour of the child
- refer the child and/or family to relevant external agencies when appropriate

Any pupils who have been a victim of bullying are monitored by their teacher and wider support network and have regular opportunities to discuss how they are feeling and if they have any other concerns or worries.

We recognise that some children identified with SEND or those who have been otherwise identified as being more vulnerable may find expressing their feelings or reporting bullying to be more difficult. The staff team have good understanding of usual behaviours for all children in their care and show extra vigilance to ensure that any change in behaviour, however slight, is noticed and acted upon.

Staff who are bullied

Bullying of school and nursery staff members whether by pupils, parents or colleagues is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at Ashbridge School and Nursery. If any form of bullying of staff members occurs, either within school and nursery or outside the classroom and place of work, the incident will be dealt with swiftly in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.