

Anti - Bullying Strategy

This policy is promoted and implemented throughout the school and nursery and is made available to parents. It is reviewed annually in order to assess its implementation and effectiveness.

The aim of this anti-bullying strategy, within the framework of the Company 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 is prevented in so far as is reasonably practicable. It is shared with all staff to ensure we have a clear picture throughout the school and nursery of bullying incidents and how to record them. It is on the school website for parents to access easily. Copies are available in every classroom and children are aware of the contents too. This policy is implemented in conjunction with the 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 SMT 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 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 suitable behaviour and respect extends beyond the classroom and into the playground, dining hall and out of school.** Anti-Bullying Week is also highlighted by the school in November.

Bullying is a form of peer-on-peer abuse and as such is always treated as a safeguarding issue. It is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it 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 cyber technology (text messages, social media, gaming including use of images or video).** Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender, special education needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. **Staff are aware that whilst they should be aware of the possibility of any child being bullied, that some children may be more likely to be a target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.**

Abusive comments should never be passed off as mere ‘banter’, ‘horseplay’ 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.**

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)**

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 or nursery. Bullying is a serious issue and being a victim of bullying may cause **short** and long term **mental health issues.**

Here at Ashbridge, children are expected to report bullying **straight away to any member of staff, including bullying which may have occurred outside of school.** Children made aware of appropriate ways to behave and the consequences of their actions through general guidance and within the curriculum through inclusion in PSHEE, assemblies, projects, drama and subject areas as appropriate. Parents 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 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 SMT who then refers to the Headteacher who 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.
- 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 work with families and refer issues to children's social care or the police when necessary. A referral will always be made if we have a concern about the welfare or safety of a child, as set out in local guidance.
- Teachers and Nursery staff are kept informed of the outcome and are involved in monitoring the situation.
- Parents/Carers are fully involved whilst incidents are being resolved.
- The serious incidents and behaviour logs are regularly reviewed and analysed by the SMT and further action is taken if necessary, such as in the case of recurring incidents with the same child, family or member of staff.
- **In the event of an incidence of bullying being considered a criminal act, the Police will be informed.**

Specific guidance for dealing with sexting

- Sexting is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit **message**, image or video. Pressuring someone into sending **sexual images of themselves** can happen in any relationship and to anyone, whatever their age, **culture**, gender or sexual preference.
- The school 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 a sexting incident.
- If a member of staff becomes aware of a sexting incident they should act in line with the school's Safeguarding Children and Child Protection policy and inform the 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.

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
- 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
- discover 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**

Staff who are bullied:

Bullying of school 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 or outside the classroom, the incident will be dealt with swiftly taking advice from the relevant government guidance.