

How school deals with allegations of bullying

This document outlines what bullying is and how we deal with it in school. We take any allegations of bullying seriously and make sure there is effective investigation, action, monitoring, review and pastoral support in place. Some parts of this document read in a formal way due to the nature of the guidance for schools. Please be reassured that we dovetail pastoral support to ensure a rounded approach.

'Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood.'

'By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, schools can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.'

(Preventing and tackling bullying: advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies)

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

(Preventing and tackling bullying: advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies)

There is no legal definition of bullying.

However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:

- *repeated*
- *intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally*

(Bullying at school: Bullying - a definition)

How we deal with any allegations of bullying at school

If a parent raises an issue or a perceived issue:

Whoever the parent raises the concern with will log it on our central system (CPOMS). This ensures that the Behaviour Lead, Phase Lead and Headteacher all have access to this information. If the word 'bullying' has been used, then the school will record this (at this time) as 'alleged bullying'. This is not to say that school does not believe the allegation to be bullying, this is just how the initial log is labelled.

Sometimes the word 'bullied' or 'bullying' is used incorrectly at this stage, however school will always take the information shared seriously.

The Behaviour Lead will contact the parent to discuss school's approach. Often this will start with a statement being taken from the child.

If the issue raised is not bullying (for example, it is a one off issue), the Behaviour Lead will ensure the correct action is in place and monitor the situation. This will be noted in weekly meetings with the Behaviour Lead and Headteacher. An update will be shared with the parent.

If it is deemed the situation could be bullying...

... the Behaviour Lead will then plan further action – at all points liaising with the parent. This will usually start with statements from other children, using our 'W's sheet' which ensures there are no leading questions.

The next step is making a written action plan, which outlines actions that will be taken – again gaining parental input, but also gaining input from the child. This will include support from the pastoral team.

Any specific information for the perpetrator (including pastoral support), will not be noted in this plan.

A clear review date will be written in and the situation will be monitored weekly by the Behaviour Lead and daily by staff working with the children.

Logs of statements, discussions with parents and the action plan will all be put onto CPOMS, with the tab of 'Bullying'.

If a child raises an issue or a perceived issue:

The same process is followed, however it is likely the child's initial discussion will count as the statement and then the process will follow the same from that point.

If a child raises that they feel another child is being bullied:

Again, the same process would be followed, starting with a statement from the child who was raising the concern.

If a member of the teaching staff has concerns:

These will always be logged directly on CPOMS. Sometimes, these may be an initial observation of something that isn't quite right – or noting there has been a build-up of several situations. This would raise awareness to the Behaviour Lead and also the Phase Lead. Our Pastoral Team will also be copied into these logs where appropriate.

The headteacher holds weekly meetings with school's Behaviour Leads. Any situations being monitored or formally overseen are discussed in these. These are not the only items discussed in the meeting, but do form part of the weekly discussions.

