



Anti-Bullying Policy

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This policy applies to all schools and operations of the Vale Academy Trust

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IN THIS DOCUMENT:

- ‘the Trust’, ‘we’ and ‘our’ means the [Vale Academy Trust](#)
- ‘parent’ means parent, carer or other legal guardian, registered as such at a school in the Trust.

INTRODUCTION

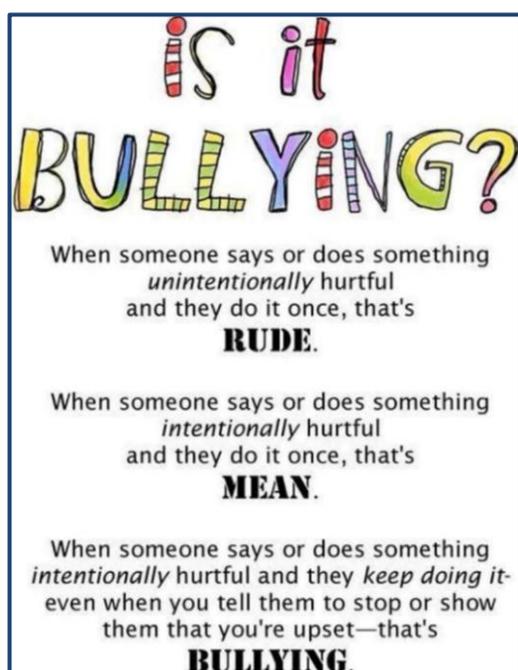
The Trust and its schools have a ‘duty of care’ towards our pupils. This duty includes protecting pupils from harm by bullying.

This policy takes full account of our legal obligations under the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) to ensure that all schools within the Trust have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the Trust’s behaviour policy and each school’s local behaviour procedures, which must be communicated to all staff, pupils and parents.

This policy has been prepared in accordance with:

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Respectful School Communities: Self Review and Signposting Tool](#) (a tool to support a whole school approach that promotes respect and discipline)
- [Behaviour and Discipline in Schools](#) (advice for schools, including advice for appropriate behaviour between pupils)
- [Equality Act 2010 and schools](#)
- [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years](#) (statutory guidance)
- [Mental Health and Behaviour in Schools](#) (advice for schools)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools](#) (advice for schools)

1.0 BULLYING DEFINITION & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



Source: *Psychology Today*

“Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face-to-face and online.”

Anti-Bullying Alliance

1.1 Factors that can make people vulnerable to bullying

When dealing with bullying-related incidents, Trust schools must refer to the [Equality Act 2010](#) and the 9 protected characteristics within it.

Pupils who are at most increased risk of being the victims or perpetrators of bullying can be those who:

- are in foster care or residential homes (Children We Care For)
- are understood to be at risk from a range of safeguarding or Child Protection issues – e.g., organised crime groups
- have specific special educational needs – e.g., Autism
- have a disability or impairment
- are from minority ethnic backgrounds
- are refugees or asylum seekers
- start school or an activity group mid term
- are, or are perceived to be, gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning of their sexuality or gender
- speak a first language other than English
- are young carers
- have suffered bereavement
- have suffered domestic violence
- have experienced physical or emotional trauma
- have a parent that was a victim of bullying
- experienced poverty or deprivation

1.2 Types of bullying: Bullying behaviours can include:

The negative **use of bodily contact** to intentionally hurt others.

- Physical harm – e.g., hitting, kicking, tripping up, spitting, sexualised touching, taking or damaging property, use of threat or force in any way, intimidation or demands for money or goods.

The negative **use of speech, sign language, or verbal gestures** to intentionally hurt others.

- Verbal harm – e.g. name calling, insulting, teasing, ‘jokes’/banter ([click here](#) to view the Anti-Bullying Alliance’s ‘Banter or Bullying?’ webpage), mocking, taunting, gossiping, secrets, sexualised comments, threats. Reference to upsetting events - e.g., bereavement, divorce, being in care.

The negative **use of actions, which are neither physical nor verbal**, to intentionally hurt others.

- Non-verbal harm – e.g., staring, body language, gestures.
- Indirect harm – e.g., excluding, ostracising, rumours and stories, emails, chat rooms, messaging phones, notes, inappropriate gestures.

The negative **use of technology as a medium** to intentionally hurt others.

- Cyber harm – e.g., text messaging, instant messaging, internet chat rooms, the misuse of social media applications, the misuse of camera or video facilities (including self-generated inappropriate images), offensive questions, sexualised content and nasty messages.

The negative treatment of another **incited by a parent**.

We acknowledge that some acts of bullying will constitute a criminal offence ([Bullying and the law – Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)). In these cases, we would seek advice from local services. For example, our Police Liaison Officer, the Local Authority’s Anti-Bullying Officer and the Locality and Community Support Services (LCSS).

1.3 Bullying outside of school

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated, whether it takes place inside or outside of school.

‘Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on.’

For more information, refer to the below Department for Education (DfE) publications:

- [Bullying outside school](#)
- [Preventing and Tackling Bullying](#) (advice for schools, including advice on cyberbullying)
- [Education and Inspections Act \(2006\)](#)

Bullying can take place on the way to and from school, before or after school hours, at the weekends, during the holidays and in the wider community. The nature of cyberbullying means that it can impact on pupils’ well-being beyond the school day. Trust school staff, parents and pupils must be vigilant to bullying outside of school and report it in the same way that they would if they witnessed bullying in school.

The same procedures (see 'Dealing with an Incident') apply when it becomes apparent that bullying outside of school is affecting members of our school community. However, if the individual or group causing harm to a member of our community does not attend one of our Trust schools, advice and guidance should be sought from local services (e.g., Schools, Police, Children's Social Care) to ensure action is initiated to address the bullying behaviour.

1.4 Possible indicators of bullying

We recognise that the following behaviours may suggest that someone is being bullied:

- disturbed sleep
- bed-wetting
- head and stomach aches
- problems with concentration
- changes in behaviour and attitude
- school refusal
- bullying other pupils
- damaged or missing clothes / money / property
- asking for more money than usual or stealing money
- withdrawn or changes in their usual behaviour patterns or attitude
- distressed or emotional and finds it hard to articulate their feelings
- changes in their eating patterns
- changes in their online activity
- shows evidence of self-harming or even for extreme cases potential suicide
- is unusually tired without a reasonable explanation
- has unexplained bruises or marks on their body - some may refuse to change for PE
- repeatedly comes to school without dinner money or a packed lunch
- seems afraid to be alone and requires more adult interaction
- This list is not exhaustive. In addition, these behaviours could also indicate other issues for which schools may refer to their Behaviour and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policies for guidance

2.0 STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a consistency of approach to hurtful behaviour and bullying within our Trust schools. While we must understand that we are all individuals, everybody has the right to feel safe, all of the time. No form of Bullying will be tolerated, and hurtful behaviour will be challenged.

While bullying and making mistakes is a fact of life, bullying will not be tolerated in or outside of our Trust schools.

The Trust and its schools 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 Trust schools will be listened to and taken seriously
- bullying prevents pupils achieving to their full potential and affects standards of achievement and aspirations
- everyone has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from fear
- all of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others
- pupils will be encouraged to seek support in school if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously
- pupils will 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.
- those who exhibit bullying behaviours will be supported to understand their impact and so change their behaviours

3.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To assist in creating an anti-bullying ethos in which attending a Trust school is a positive experience for all pupils
- 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 incidences of bullying
- To deal effectively with bullying
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to
- To help and support bullies to change their attitudes as well as their behaviours, and support them to understand why this change is needed
- To liaise with pupils, parents and other appropriate members of the school community
- To ensure all members of the school feel responsible for combating bullying
- To ensure consistency in practice within the Trust schools

4.0 INTENDED OUTCOMES

- That all pupils, staff and parents understand the anti-bullying policy
- That there are procedures within each Trust school for reporting and recording bullying
- That parents have a point of contact in school if they are concerned about their child
- That all staff have the necessary skills and confidence to deal with incidents of bullying effectively and promptly
- That no pupils educational opportunities and achievement is disadvantaged due to the experience of bullying
- That all staff are involved in dealing effectively with, reporting, recording, monitoring and, if necessary, referring bullying incidents
- That there is effective communication with parents and the wider school community on the subject of bullying
- That all incidents of bullying are monitored appropriately, and use is made of the information to demonstrate impact of the policy

Guidelines for how bullying may be dealt with can be found in Appendix 1

The guidelines are neither compulsory nor exhaustive but may be used as a framework by pupils, staff and parents to provide support; response to any incident will be tailored according to individual need.

5.0 RECORDING AND REPORTING

Each Trust school should develop consistent methods of monitoring bullying incidents to help evaluate the effectiveness and impact of their anti-bullying policy.

Recording of incidents may be in electronic form e.g., CPOMS. Recording systems should allow analysis of behaviours and prompt response to bullying incidents. Reflections sheets may be completed by pupils within the restorative school environment.

Safeguarding

When there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, school staff should discuss with the school's designated safeguarding lead and report their concerns to their local authority children's social care and work with them to take appropriate action.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Headteachers should take account of any contributing factors when dealing with incidents of bullying. Early intervention to address underlying causes of bullying behaviour should include an assessment of whether appropriate provision is in place to support any pupils with SEND. Under the Equality Act 2010, schools must not discriminate. For disabled children, this includes a duty to make reasonable adjustments to school policies and practices.

Should the behaviour of a pupil with SEND be causing significant harm to others and there is an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place, the school must request an emergency annual review.

Pupil Voice

Pupil voice is central to the culture and ethos of our Trust schools. Schools are encouraged to use pupil voice to evaluate how relevant their Anti-Bullying policy is to children's lives and ensuring they feel safe and able to learn.

6.0 SANCTIONS

Each school has set procedures in place which are followed when implementing sanctions regarding Bullying incidents. These sanctions are applied in appropriate proportion to the event. In the event of all other avenues being exhausted, or in particularly serious incidents, the sanction may involve exclusion.

7.0 CONFIDENTIALITY

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by pupils to support with a bullying incident. School staff must make this clear to pupils. Unless clearly inappropriate, pupils will always be encouraged to talk to their parent. Safeguarding procedures must always be followed when any disclosures are made.

An underlying principle in supporting pupils within Trust schools is that all children are listened to sensitively and objectively and all incidences of bullying will be taken seriously. Although the school cannot guarantee confidentiality, pupils will be informed of local and national services and help lines where appropriate.

8.0 MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be evaluated and updated annually. The views of pupils, parents and staff will be used to make changes and improvements to the policy on an ongoing basis. Each school will, on an annual basis, analyse the school's anti-bullying data, identify trends and evaluate the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies. Headteachers are responsible for reporting to the Local Governing Body (LGB) on how their school policy is being enforced and upheld. The governors are in turn responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy via the termly headteacher's report, school monitoring visits and focus groups with pupils. Should a parent wish to pursue a complaint regarding bullying, they should refer to the school's Complaints Procedure before making direct contact with the LGB.

APPENDIX 1 – GENERAL PROCEDURES AND DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

a) Role of pupils and staff in reporting and recording a bullying incident involving pupils

We take the view that everyone has a responsibility to report incidents of bullying or to share their concerns with a member of the school community. Trust schools follow their school procedures when reporting and dealing with bullying incidents.

Guidance for Pupils

If you are being bullied:

- Remember it is not your fault
- Try to remain calm
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and, if possible, tell them to stop and tell them how you feel.

After you have been bullied:

- All bullying is wrong, and you do not have to stay silent about it
- Tell an adult or somebody you trust about what has happened straight away. Adults in school have a responsibility to give you help and support around bullying
- If you are scared to tell a teacher or adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you
- Keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to prevent the bullying

When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about:

- What has happened to you
- How often it has happened
- Who was involved
- Who saw what was happening
- Where it happened
- What you have done about it already.

If you experience bullying by mobile phone, text messages or e-mail:

- Don't retaliate or reply
- Save the evidence; do not delete anything
- Make sure you tell an adult who you trust
- Contact your service provider or look at their website to see where to report incidents (ask an adult to support if you need help)
- Be careful who you give your mobile phone number or e-mail address to
- Make a note of exactly when a bullying / threatening message was sent.

b) Guidance for parents

If your child has been bullied:

- Calmly talk with your child about his/ her experiences
- Make a note of what your child says including who was involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what happened
- Reassure your child that he/ she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying
- Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur he/she should report them to an adult in school immediately
- Contact your child's class teacher to explain the problem

When talking with members of staff about bullying:

- Try to stay calm and bear in mind that the staff member may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened; give dates, places and names of other children involved
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school
- Stay in touch with the school and let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

If your child is displaying bullying behaviour towards others:

- Talk with your child and explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- Show your child how he/she can join in with other children without bullying
- Make an appointment to see your child's class/form teacher and explain the problems your child is experiencing as well as discussing how you can work together to stop him/ her bullying others
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he/she is co-operative or kind to other people.

If your child is experiencing any form of cyber bullying:

- Ensure your child is careful whom they give their mobile phone number and e-mail address to
- Check exactly when a threatening message was sent and keep evidence of offending e-mails, text messages or online conversations. Do not delete messages
- If the bullying involves a child from the school contact the school to report this.
- Contact the service provider to report the incidents
- If the cyber bullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed, you should contact the police as soon as is reasonably possible.

APPENDIX 2 – RESTORATIVE APPROACH TO DEALING WITH AN INCIDENT

The table below broadly describes the stages employed in the restorative approach to dealing with bullying incidents. This is an approach encouraged across the Trust. However, each school has its own procedures tailored to their setting, therefore how this guidance is used will depend on those procedures and the circumstances of the incident. The stages may not be followed in order for serious incidents. Formal Bullying Records must be kept for safeguarding purposes.

Stage	Further Information	Possible Approach
1	As it can be difficult to identify the bully and bullied in situations of conflict, once children are calm enough to engage in conversation, staff will work through the 5 restorative steps (which may be available on their lanyard) with any child involved in conflict/bullying.	<p>‘5 Steps of Restorative Practice’?</p> <p>Step 1: Tell the story - What has happened? Start from the beginning... What happened just before that?</p> <p>Step 2: Thoughts and Feelings - What were/are you thinking? What were/are you feeling? How do you think they are feeling?</p> <p>Step 3: Ripples of harm – Who has been harmed and how have they been harmed? What has been the most difficult thing for you?</p> <p>Step 4: Needs – What do you need in order to find closure? What do you need to move forward?</p> <p>Step 5: What next? What do you think will make things better? What needs to happen?</p> <p>Pupils may initially do the above on a reflection form, if emotions are running high, and then talk to staff.</p> <p>Appropriate next steps will be agreed (e.g., restorative meeting, letter of apology, etc.) and the class teacher and parents, of all pupils involved, will be notified. The incident will be recorded.</p>
2	<p>Pupils who continue to behave in a way that is hurtful to others.</p> <p>(For serious behaviour incidents, skip immediately to Stage 3)</p>	<p>Stage 1 will be repeated and the child causing harm will be treated in-line with the school's Behaviour Policy to safeguard any children who have been harmed by their behaviour. This may, for example, be a period of internal exclusion (1 or 2 days off the playground) and will be decided by the Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team. Staff will offer support to any children who have been harmed and take necessary action to make sure they feel safe and reassured – with the children's consent, this may involve a restorative meeting that produces a written agreement between all children involved.</p>

APPENDIX 2 cont.

Stage	Further information	Possible approach
3	When negative behaviours persist following Stage 2 intervention(s) or a serious behaviour incident.	<p>Pupil/Pupils causing harm will be placed on an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP). An ISP (see below) requires positive and negative behaviours to be identified by a relevant member of staff using a *QCA Behaviour Assessment. The pupils who have been harmed should be safeguarded from the harmer until the point a meeting can be arranged with the parents of the harmer. In a meeting involving school, parents and the child, the behaviours causing concern must be acknowledged, possible triggers identified, and a SMART action plan put in place. The ISP should be reviewed weekly with key adults in school.</p> <p>For any pupils who have suffered harm, we will assess their needs and, where possible, provide in-school welfare support. For significant cases and cases that constitute a criminal offence, pupils can be referred to <u>SAFE! Support for Young People Affected by Crime</u>, with the consent of their parent..</p>
4	Should negative behaviours persist following the implementation of an Inclusion Support Plan (ISP), the headteacher should seek advice* to further consider how to reduce the risk of recurrence as part of a risk assessment/safety plan and implement appropriate safeguards and support for the child.	<p>If a pupil reaches Stage 4, the school should also work with the parents to initiate an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and Team Around the Family (TAF) – multi-agency meeting - to consider what action is necessary, and in the pupil's best interests. Should the family refuse to engage with school in this process, the school will seek support from the Locality and Community Support Service (LCSS) to engage the family. TAF meetings should take place every 6 weeks. Progress against PSP goals should be reviewed as part of the TAF.</p> <p>* At Stage 4, the headteacher should also refer to the <u>Learner Engagement Team's Guide for school leaders and agencies supporting school-age children / young people at risk of exclusion from school.</u></p>
<p>In all of these cases, a multi-agency meeting should be arranged to reduce the risk of exclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If a child has an Education Health and Care Plan you must contact your SEN Officer to discuss the risk of exclusion ▪ If the child is a Looked After you must contact the Virtual School for Looked After Children ▪ If the child is open to social care (Child in Need or Child Protection) you must contact the social worker 		

[*QCA BEHAVIOUR ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE FROM OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL](#)