

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Anti-Bullying Policy

The purpose and scope of this policy

This policy sets out BeyondAutism Schools' procedures for dealing with bullying and is informed by *Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Department for Education (July 2017)*.

It also considers the DfE statutory guidance *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023*. This policy should also be read in conjunction with BeyondAutism School's Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Policy Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Our schools aim to promote a consistent approach and create an environment in which all types of bullying are considered unacceptable.

Some pupils may encounter significant challenges related to communication, social interaction, and empathy, which in turn can hinder their capacity to recognise the impact of their behaviour on others or to effectively self-manage their actions. These difficulties can mean that some pupils are less likely to intentionally bully others. It is possible for one pupil to develop an obsession with another, leading to potential distress or anxiety. These behaviours might manifest as a desire to be in close proximity to the "target" pupil, demonstrating an interest in physical contact, such as touching specific parts of their body, or engaging in potentially harmful actions like kicking, pinching, or throwing objects.

Staff have a duty to be vigilant and alert to these behaviours. For example, the pupil who is the target may show fear or anxiety when he/she sees the child/young person who targets him/her. This information must be shared amongst all members of the class team, and also shared with other members of staff as soon as possible.

BeyondAutism Schools aim to:

- involve parents, carers, pupils and staff in the prevention of bullying
- regularly update our approach to take account of developments in technology
- intervene wherever needed
- create an inclusive and safe environment in which differences which could motivate bullying are openly discussed
- use specialist organisations and resources for help whenever needed
- provide effective staff training involve the wider community such as the police and children's services whenever needed
- make it easy for pupils to highlight if they are being bullied or feel uncomfortable with the actions of others towards themselves.

What is Bullying?

- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Department for Education, (July 2017)* defines bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.
- Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings.
- This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Record keeping and reports

A report detailing pupil to pupil incidents is produced each month to monitor and track occurrences and to determine whether they are incidences of bullying. Appropriate actions come from these reports. All incidents of behaviours that challenge, including behaviour that involves pupil to pupil incidents are tracked on SchoolPod. A concern of bullying will be logged on CPOMS with the following criteria: When there has been 3 incidents of pupil-to-pupil in one month that are specially targeted at another pupil or when there has been 2 incidents in a 2 week period in which a pupil has been the victim of a targeted incident by one or more individuals.

The Targeted Child

It is important to support the target of bullying behaviour, particularly as he or she may have difficulty communicating their experiences. The pupil should be able to communicate in their preferred mode, e.g. PECS, Makaton, signing, speech or an AAC. Social skills training may help him or her to become more assertive, to show less anxiety, and say or sign, "No".

Prevention

In all work with children/young people, staff emphasise the importance of developing social skills, including good behaviour and respect for the feelings of others. Where children/young people have difficulties interacting appropriately with their peers or with adults, then staff aim to help them develop an awareness of why particular behaviours are valued socially and what is inappropriate. BeyondAutism Schools' Curriculum builds on this through activities which include PSHE, PE, Break Time and lunch time, clubs and group work to develop an ethos of co-operation and respect for everyone.

Staff are important role models for the pupils. The behaviour of adults towards each other and towards the pupils is a potentially highly effective tool for preventing and decreasing bullying behaviours in autistic pupils.

The schools will also involve parents in discussions about the prevention of bullying. Parents should feel confident in raising any concerns about bullying, as it will be taken seriously and will be resolved in a way that protects their child.

Intervention

The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. School staff will support all pupils who are being bullied. As autistic children can lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents, staff will remain alert to the potential bullying the pupils could face.

Last review: March 2024

Next review: March 2027

Review group: Full Governing Body