



## **Anti-Bullying Policy 2024-2025**

<b>Date Prepared</b>	<b>September 2024</b>
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<b>Date ratified</b>	
<b>Review date</b>	<b>September 2025</b>

## **Opening Statement:**

Veritas Multi Academy Trust has the following values: Inclusion, innovation and inspiration which are supported in each school and across the Trust as a whole. Our Trust mission of 'irresistible learning for all', encapsulates our relentless focus on the quality of learning and delivering the best outcomes for our young people.

As a Trust we expect our pupils to act safely, and feel safe, in and outside of all our schools – we do not tolerate bullying and we are committed to preventing and tackling it. We recognise that as children learn and grow together, they may experience fallouts with their peers, but we are committed to supporting our pupils to resolve these conflicts. At Veritas Multi Academy Trust we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. If an incident of bullying does occur, we believe our pupils, parents/carers and staff should feel confident in reporting it and know that that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Bullying will never be tolerated in our Trust.

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1st September 2024). This policy is reviewed throughout the academic year and updated annually.

## **Aims of the policy:**

- Ensure the whole school community has a shared understanding of what bullying is and the detrimental impact it can have on wellbeing and achievement
- Ensure staff, parents, carers, and pupils work together to ensure a safe learning environment for all and to safeguard pupils who experience bullying
- Prevent, de-escalate and or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- Ensure all bullying behaviours and prejudiced based incidents are taken seriously, recorded and responded to in a proportionate and consistent way
- Encourage shared solutions so that those reporting bullying have an appropriate say in what happens next
- Ensure those using bullying behaviour are supported to change their behaviour
- Outline the consequences for those who show bullying behaviour
- Ensure everyone is mutually valued and respected and that in line with the Equality Act 2010 we aim to eliminate discrimination based on sex, gender identity, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion and belief
- Encourage pupils to adopt agreed standards of behaviour and values in order to develop a sense of right and wrong and the ability to take responsibility for their own actions.

## What is bullying?

At Veritas Multi Academy Trust we have adopted the definition of bullying provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

“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 or online.”

Bullying can include (but is not limited to):

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly or exclusionary, tormenting. Demanding money, material goods or favours by means of threat.
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Racial</li><li>• Faith-based</li><li>• Gendered (sexist)</li><li>• Homophobia/biphobia</li><li>• Transphobia</li><li>• Disability-based</li></ul>	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

### Friendship issues, relational conflict and bullying behaviour

As a Trust we recognise that incidents may occur between pupils, which may not be deemed as 'bullying' but still require support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as 'relational conflicts' or falling out. They differ to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional). Not all conflicts or falling out leads to bullying, but our schools are aware occasionally some can. Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as 'relational conflict' or 'bullying', our schools will address the situation and support the pupils

to resolve any negative feelings. Our schools will challenge, address, and monitor any incidents of bullying, to ensure that it does not continue and that all pupils feel supported.

### **Where does bullying take place?**

At Veritas Multi Academy Trust we understand that bullying is not confined to our school's premises. Bullying can take place outside of school, on the journey to and from school and in the local community. Bullying may also take place online. We will offer support and guidance to pupils, parents/carers and families who have experienced any type of bullying whether this has taken place inside school, outside of school or online. We are committed to working with outside agencies where appropriate to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

## **Reporting**

### **Pupils, including bystanders/witnesses**

We ask that all pupils report concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of school staff. We talk about trusted adults regularly in our schools to remind our pupils of who they can report concerns to. We understand that some pupils may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional ways a child can communicate their concern e.g. a worry box.

### **Parents/carers**

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying. We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher to explain their concerns. We ask that parents/carers come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online. Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

### **School staff**

Our staff work closely with our pupils and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told. We ask that staff report their concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## Visitors

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to. We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about bullying behaviour that they have witnessed, or been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day.

## Procedures:

- Incidents of bullying are reported to a member of staff who will listen and make an initial note of the concern and discuss the next steps.
- The member of staff will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's Safeguard recording system and alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- All pupils involved in the reported incident will be spoken to
- Contact parents (of the target and/or the alleged perpetrator)
- Implement appropriate sanctions in accordance with our school's behaviour policy. These sanctions will relate to the seriousness of the incident, but will send out a message that bullying is unacceptable
- Discuss the report/incident/case with other agencies and organisations when appropriate and make referrals to those organisations when appropriate
- If appropriate, liaise with the wider community if the bullying is taking place off the school premises (e.g., the Police, District Council etc.)
- Keep in touch with the person who reported the incident/behaviour to inform them that action has been. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.
- Implement a range of follow-up support/interventions appropriate to the situation (this may include informal or formal restorative work with the target and alleged perpetrator, solution-focused meetings, individual or group work with the target, individual or group work with the alleged perpetrator, individual or group work with any witnesses/bystanders, group work with the wider-school community etc.)
- Monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and reassess/take more actions if appropriate
- Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.
- Staff alerted to any trends identified
- Head teachers will report bullying and prejudiced based incidents to the governing body

## Prevention

At Veritas Multi Academy Trust, we are committed to the safety and welfare of our pupils, and therefore we have developed the following strategies to promote friendly and positive behaviours and discourage bullying behaviours. Throughout the academic year, the effectiveness of these strategies is reviewed, and the variety of strategies may be expanded to address specific concerns or meet the needs of all members of our community. The strategies we use include, but are not limited to:

- Embedding our Trust and School's Values
- Active school council in each school that discusses any bullying issues
- Taking part in Anti-Bullying week annually
- Taking part in Safer Internet Day annually
- Robust PSHE curriculum for all year groups which develop understanding of bullying, its impact and ways to respond to bullying situations.
- PSHE education is also used to develop understanding of similarity and differences and the unacceptability of all forms of prejudice and bullying
- Specific curriculum inputs for online safety and cyberbullying
- Themed days to promote equality and tackle prejudice
- Opportunities for regular pupils' voice to share their opinions
- Inclusive curriculum throughout the school with a diverse range of authors, work, photographs etc.
- Inclusive toys and books throughout the school raising awareness of and celebrating differences
- Specific interventions for identified individuals or groups who need extra help to develop their social and emotional aspects of learning
- Parent events and training
- Regular staff training and development for all staff
- All staff model expected behaviour

## Breaches / Complaints

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body. If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

## Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at our schools are aware that children may bully other children, and that this can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. All staff understand the school's Anti-Bullying strategy and approach and know the important role that they each have in preventing and tackling bullying. The Head teacher has overall responsibility for Anti-Bullying at each of our schools. They are responsible for liaising with the Local Academy Committee,

parents/carers, the CEO, and outside agencies when appropriate. The Headteachers are also responsible for:

- Policy development and review
- Implementing the policy and monitoring/assessing its effectiveness
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Coordinating Anti-Bullying training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Monitoring the effectiveness of strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

## **Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy (Trust)
- Behaviour Policy (School)
- Attendance Policy (Trust)