

Reviewed March 2022  
Review due March 2024  
Kerry Sternstein



***‘Improving the quality of family life’***

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Background**

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

This policy should also be read in conjunction with Snowflake School’s Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

### **The Policy**

#### **Rationale - Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC)**

The nature of their disability means that pupils with ASC may not have sufficient understanding or awareness that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying. Similarly, children and young people with ASC who are the recipients of such behaviours may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to such behaviours or to tell adults. This means that all staff at our schools have a duty to not only be aware of such behaviours and of any pupil involved, but also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours.

#### **Ethos**

Snowflake Schools follow ABA/VB methodology, which is designed to approve desired behaviours rather than disapprove undesired behaviours. The curriculum is designed to emphasise teaching through positive reinforcement. The system uses the principles of positive reinforcement by identifying effective forms of reinforcement and the manipulation of intermittent and other schedules of reinforcement. The creation of pupil motivation is essential to the implementation of the principles of positive reinforcement. Our schools draw from a scientific research base to devise strategies to manage and reduce bullying behaviours and their effects.

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## 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.

Snowflake 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 take many forms (for instance, cyberbullying via text messages, social media, gaming or the internet, which can include the use of videos and images), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual or perceived differences between children. At Snowflake School, we believe and understand that **bullying can happen anywhere**.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways - it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone) derive from an intellectual imbalance or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying prevention focuses on the strategies for reducing bullying behaviour by blending Positive behaviour interventions and supports (PBIS) with explicit instruction and redefining the bullying construct. Teaching pupils to identify and respond effectively to the bullying and harmful behaviour of others needs to match the student's developmental level. The goal is the same – to reduce

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bullying behaviour – but the process may look different across communities and across schools.

**Bullying can be:**

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.
- Disability/SEN – because of, or focusing on a disability or special educational need.
- Home circumstance – targeting individuals who are looked after children or because of a particular home circumstance.

Bullying can therefore constitute any of the above activities within the context of the definition provided. Bullying may occur to anyone and this policy is inclusive of the bullying of school staff, whether by pupils, parents or other staff. (Members of the school workforce suffering from or concerned about bullying may also contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice).

Bullying can seriously damage a person's confidence and sense of self-worth, and they will often feel that they are at fault in some way. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be evidence in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. These signs and symptoms may indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

**Our Objectives**

To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.

To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.

To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support.

To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

**The Behaviours of Children and Young People with ASC and the Characteristics of Bullying Behaviours**

Pupils with ASC are likely to be unaware that certain behaviours have the characteristics of bullying and are socially unacceptable. It is possible that one pupil may develop an increased interest in another which may cause distress or anxiety. Such behaviours might include wanting to be near the 'target' pupil or having an interest in making physical contact with him/her, such as touching a particular part of his or her body or potentially harmful behaviours such as 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, particularly with those on duty during

playtimes and lunchtime.

### **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 in our incident report book.

### **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 (Augmentative and Alternative Communication). Social skills training may help him or her to become more assertive, to show less anxiety, and say or sign, "No".

### **Attention seeking behaviours**

Some pupils with ASC may seek attention. For them, to use a behaviour directed towards another pupil is a way of achieving this attention. Adult intervention could potentially reinforce this potential bullying behaviour.

In these circumstances, the strategy should be to break this cycle to eliminate the reinforcement of the behaviour. This could involve:

- Differential Reinforcement of Other Behaviour (DRO)
- Non-Contingent Reinforcement (NCR): providing the child with a thicker reinforcement schedule over playtime to prevent attention-seeking behaviour from occurring in the first place;
- Redirection: adults deliberately diverting the pupil's attention away from one behaviour to a new activity;
- Assigning a one-to-one adult to monitor the bullying pupil at playtime

Some pupils with ASC emit behaviours to receive sensory input. For example, a pupil may bite another because they are reinforced by the sensation of biting.

A tactic to decrease this behaviour could involve:

- Introducing the pupil to an activity that provides him/her with the same sensory input, e.g., biting into a stress ball, or the use of a chewy.
- Conditioning playground equipment: pairing positive reinforcement with using playground equipment so that the pupil learns to gain reinforcement from other activities.

### **Prevention**

## **Foundational Elements**

***There are four foundational elements of bullying prevention:***

### **School-Wide Expectations**

Everyone in school should know what it means to be respectful. They should know what it looks like and how it feels to be respected. On the other hand, they also should be able to identify if, when, and how someone else's behaviour is inappropriate.

### **Signals and Routines for Unwanted Behaviour**

Building on the school-wide foundation of expected behaviour, all pupils should know the signal and routine to let someone know their behaviour is unacceptable and needs to stop. The signal is something anyone can use anywhere, anytime. It is short, easy to remember, and easy to do.

### **Responses to the Stop Signal**

When a student signals a behaviour is unwanted and needs to stop, other pupils need to know how to respond. Pupils are taught appropriate responses that are calm and responsible.

### **Recruiting Help**

The last routine that we teach is how pupils can recruit help from an adult when they experience bullying, harassment, or intimidation.

- Bullying Prevention in a Tiered Framework

Not all pupils respond equally to bullying prevention strategies, for lots of reasons. Schools implementing PBIS will find it to be an effective framework for preventing and reducing bullying behaviour in schools.

#### **Tier 1**

All pupils and school personnel are taught directly and formally how to behave in safe, respectful, and responsible ways in every school setting. The emphasis is on teaching and encouraging positive social skills and character traits. At this tier, all pupils will also learn how to respond to the problem behaviour of others.

#### **Tier 2**

Pupils whose behaviours do not respond to Tier 1 supports receive additional preventative strategies involving:

- Targeted social skills instruction
- Increased adult supervision and positive attention (if functional assessment results say it's applicable)
- Specific, daily feedback on their behavioural progress (if applicable)
- Additional academic support, if necessary

#### **Tier 3**

Pupils who do not respond to Tiers 1 and 2 support receive intensive preventative strategies. This might include:

- Highly individualised academic and/or behaviour intervention planning to address the reduction of bullying behaviours
- More comprehensive, person-centered, function-based wraparound processes
- School-family-community mental health supports. (If applicable)

Teaching pupils' formal skills and routines for responding to the problem behaviour of others is more than *bullying* prevention. Even if bullying is not a targeted priority for our school, our school's Tier 1 PBIS systems will include:

1. A school-wide approach for identifying if, when and how the behaviour of others is

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- inappropriate by staff reports being monitored regularly
2. Specific routines for indicating someone's inappropriate behaviour should stop- by teaching all pupils the "Stop", "Walk", and "Talk strategy
  3. Formalized strategies pupils can use to get help from adults when aggression, intimidation or harassment continues- by teaching all pupils the "Stop", "Walk", and "Talk strategy

**Links to other Policies:**

[Equal Opportunities Policy.docx](#)

[Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy September 2022.docx](#)