



FIRST STEPS TOGETHER
SKILLS FOR LIFE

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Last Update: September 2024

Next Update: September 2027

Anti-Bullying Policy

As a school we celebrate differences and support each other so that everyone can reach their full potential regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The 2010 Equality Act makes it an offence to discriminate against a person due to the 9 protected characteristic(s). At First Steps Together no form of discrimination is tolerated and our pupils show respect for those who share the protected characteristics.

It is against the law to discriminate against someone because of:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The 9 Protected Characteristics are actively promoted in school through:

- Our school ethos statements, SIP, and SEF
- Our school core values
- Our school behaviour policy
- Conscious role modelling by all adults in the school community
- Active engagement and communication with parents and carers
- Assemblies
- British Values themes for a day, week/term
- Discussion within curriculum subjects, taking a cross-curricular approach
- Promoting articulation by building appropriate language and a coherent vocabulary
- Personal, Social, Health and Economic education (PSHE) sessions
- RSE lessons, LGBT discussions and Protected Characteristic talks
- Sporting, Art and Cultural Events
- Pupil Voice
- Educational visits
- Real-life learning outside the classroom
- Guest speakers
- Developing links with local, national and international communities
- Extra-curricular activities charity work and work within the local community

At First Steps Together we believe that all pupils have the right to learn and develop in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

Aims of the Policy

Through the operation of this policy we aim:

- To maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff throughout the school
- To prevent bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions and, if necessary, by expulsion

Scope

This policy applies to all pupils and staff at the school irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the school when or if bullying behaviour occurs. While this policy focuses mainly on the bullying of pupils by other pupils, it is recognised that other forms of bullying may occur.

Publication

This policy is provided to all parents and pupils on our website and a copy is available on request at the school office.

This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible format if required. This policy will also apply to bullying behaviour outside of the school of which the school becomes aware.

Anti-Bullying Policy

It is a statutory requirement that all schools have an anti-bullying policy. Bullying exists in all walks of life, not just schools or certain types of schools. It is wrong and results in pain and distress to the victim and can directly affect other people, not just bullies and victims.

At First Steps Together we have set out to create and follow a policy which has regard to the guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), Preventing and tackling bullying (2017) and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued from time to time.

A Definition of Bullying

There are a number of definitions of bullying. The school defines bullying as: Actions or words that are intended to hurt or humiliate another person. We recognise that, at times, students' behaviour can be thoughtless rather than deliberate. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions. A bully who does not respond appropriately to advice or sanctions would ultimately have to leave the school.

However bullying can also arise through the deliberate neglect or disregard for another's feelings or well-being.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can include a number of different behaviours, which include:

- Emotional: being actively unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any violence.
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually orientated comments
- Homophobic: because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, insulting or demanding money
- Cyber: by Internet misuse through offensive website postings, e-mail and instant messaging. Misuse of mobile phones through text messaging, camera and video facilities, etc. to deliberately upset someone else (see separate anti-bullying policy).
- Property: damage to or hiding one another's property
- SEND : name-calling, innuendo, negative stereotyping or excluding from activity based on disability or learning difficulties .

Raising Awareness-The Curriculum

Students at First Steps Together are encouraged to cooperate with each other, form positive relationships and question behaviour, which discriminates against others. They also learn to listen to others at the same time as demonstrating an appropriate degree of assertiveness. The First Steps Together curriculum seeks to promote awareness of individual responsibilities towards others. Citizenship, Philosophy lessons, PSHE lessons, Assemblies, Form Periods and talks given by outside speakers all offer particular opportunities for structured learning in this area. Through our philosophical education we seek to educate students about how to interact effectively and positively and we aim to produce a safe and secure environment where all students can learn without anxiety and where we minimise opportunities for bullying.

A number of other subjects also offer openings to examine questions of oppressive behaviour and equality. For example, through literature students may explore the emotional impact of isolation or abuse. History can enable students to understand intimidation and persecution and in Drama students can learn about human relationships through role-play. In educating the students at First Steps Together about bullying, emphasis is put on the fact that serious psychological damage can result from bullying and that although bullying is not a specifically criminal activity, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and a civil wrong known as a "tort" for which there can be legal consequences outside the school. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message, email, or social media post) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

Raising Awareness of Staff

We ensure all staff are aware of this policy and its contents and are trained to identify and respond to incidents of bullying. This takes place at the beginning of each academic year, at the same time that staff receive training on Child Protection.

Staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- celebrating achievement
- anticipating problems and providing support
- disciplining fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the pupil and the needs of vulnerable pupils
- making opportunities to listen to pupils
- acting as advocates of pupils.

Procedures to follow (in preventing and dealing with bullying incidents)

At First Steps Together we seek to prevent bullying by promoting a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. Research suggests that one of the most effective deterrents of bullying is peer attitudes and responses. Students are encouraged to remove themselves from situations and to report incidents in which they are concerned that bullying behaviour is occurring to a member of staff.

In responding to concerns over bullying, our first response will always be to gather the relevant information in a calm and objective manner before deciding, from an informed position, the best intervention(s) to secure the desired outcomes.

All incidents of bullying are recorded on a Bullying Incident Report Sheet which can be found on the MIS System (IRIS), which is then passed immediately to the senior leadership team representative who oversees the situation from then on. Equal importance is given to the education of the perpetrator as to the support of the victim. We believe that the effectiveness of this system is illustrated by the fact that to date, very few incidents of bullying have recurred.

When disciplining a perpetrator of bullying the Headteacher will, in the first instance, issue a Red Card/detention (see Behaviour Policy). However, were the perpetrator to continue bullying, the Headteacher may invite the parents into school to discuss their behaviour and probably issue an appropriate sanction. Severe and persistent bullying may result in exclusion from school on a temporary or permanent basis (see Behaviour & Discipline Policy).

Where bullying has been identified and intervened against, we will continue to monitor the situation for a suitable time period, enabling any patterns to be spotted. In some instances, it may be necessary to have regard to other related school policies such as Safeguarding or Behaviour and Discipline. It is the responsibility of the senior leadership representative to monitor the incidence and occurrence of bullying within the First Steps Together.

As part of an investigation into alleged incidents of bullying behaviour, we reserve the right to search belongings and confiscate items and materials perceived to be offensive. We also reserve the right to confiscate/ban individual students from using or carrying mobile phones and other media devices in school either as part of an investigation of an alleged bullying incident or as a response to an incident.

ICT - Acceptable Use, guidance and permissions

For information about the use of technology and devices in the classroom and beyond for all users, including staff and pupils please refer to the ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

Cyber Bullying

The school aims to educate, inform and assist pupils in the area of cyber bullying. This includes texting, email, social media and instant messaging etc. For more information, please refer to the Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy. If pupils are found to be involved in cyber bullying either by the school or by another means then the school will follow the steps laid out in the Anti Cyber Bullying Policy or the steps laid out directly in this policy. The school acknowledges that cyberbullying can take place both on and off the school premises and the school reserves the right to implement the Anti Bullying policy in either case.

The School Environment

The school's intention is to minimise areas of the site that might facilitate bullying behaviour. Open areas where there is high public visibility are an effective deterrent. All areas of the school site at First Steps Together and the location of reported incidents are checked and monitored regularly. Less visible or visited areas are covered by CCTV, mainly for the purpose of deterrence.

Investigations and Safeguarding Children and Young People

A bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, school staff will report their concerns in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Procedures. In such instances, the school may not investigate further before advice has been taken from the police and/or children's social care services.

Bullying Beyond the School

Schools are not directly responsible for bullying off their premises and this can be a difficult area to manage. However, students are encouraged not to suffer in silence. The bullying may be by pupils at the school, pupils at other schools, or people not at school at all. Where a pupil reports bullying off the school premises, there are a number of responses that may be appropriate:

- Contact with the local police
 - Contact the relevant transport provider about bullying on buses, trains.
 - Contact with Heads of other schools
 - Map safe routes to School and tell students about them.
 - Talk to students about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises.
 - If the bullying is by pupils at the school, this policy will be applied in its entirety
- The Role of Parents It is clearly helpful where parents are able to support the values and measures represented within this policy and to discuss relationships, incidents and

concerns in the same light. Parents, who are concerned that their child may be being bullied, or may be a perpetrator of bullying, should contact the headteacher immediately. We advise against contacting other parents to sort out matters. If parents are not satisfied with the response they should contact the governing body.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can follow the Concerns and Complaints policy.

The Role of Staff

This policy focuses mainly on the bullying of pupils by pupils although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying.

Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should refer to their line manager immediately.

Pupils and parents who feel that a member of staff is bullying should report this in accordance with the procedures set out above. Complaints against teachers will be dealt with in accordance with staff disciplinary procedures.