



Better Together
LEARNING TRUST

BETTER TOGETHER LEARNING TRUST

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

NON STATUTORY POLICY

Document Reference:	NS1
Date of Approval:	June 2024
Approved by:	Teaching & Learning Committee
Version No:	V. 2
Last Review Date	May 2024
Next Review Date:	April 2026
Policy Owner:	Executive Headteacher
Document History:	Version 1: April 2021 Version 2 : May 2024

Glossary

The term '**School**' is used as standard to mean the educational establishment that is adopting this policy.

The term '**Headteacher**' is used to refer to the person with overall day-to-day responsibility of the **School**.

Directors are the Trustees of the Board.

LGB is the Local Governing Body.

Policy

Better Together Learning Trust is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students and staff. We aim to promote positive individuality in our students and staff.

We recognise that in all organisations there can be those whose behaviour conflicts with these aims. This may take the form of bullying. Bullying is seen as physical or verbal abuse to another, which takes place on a number of occasions. It may involve bullying from one person or a few.

If bullying does occur, all students and staff should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening should tell a member of staff.

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Department for Education 2012

Bullying is the use of aggression (verbal and/or physical) with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Kidscape 2005

Aims of the Policy

The aim of this policy is to provide students with a safe and secure working environment and to produce a consistent response by the School to any bullying incidents that may take place.

Recognising the Signs of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately harmful behaviour over a period of time. Staff will watch out for the signs and symptoms of the following forms of bullying:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Indirect, e.g. spreading rumours or social exclusion
- Misuse of mobile 'phones, tablets or internet message boards and chat rooms

- **Generative artificial intelligence (AI)**
- Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.
- Better Together Learning Trust recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.
- Better Together Learning Trust will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our anti bullying policy.

The School recognises that any student can be bullied but certain factors that can make bullying more likely are:

- A lack of close friends in the school
- Shyness
- Race, religion, sexual orientation or social class
- A disability or some other obvious difference, e.g. stammering or acne

Staff may suspect bullying is occurring if a student:

- Becomes withdrawn and anxious
- Shows a deterioration in his or her work
- Starts to attend school erratically
- Has spurious illnesses
- Persistently arrives late at school
- Prefers to stay with adults

Dealing with Bullying Incidents

Any incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. Staff will do all they can to support the victims of bullying and make it clear to the bully that this behaviour is not acceptable.

In dealing with bullying, school staff will:

- Not ignore it
- Not make premature assumptions
- Listen to all accounts of the incidents
- Adopt a restorative practice, problem-solving approach that encourages students to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves.
- Make regular follow-up checks to ensure that bullying has not resumed.
- Involve parents/carers in a way which supports positive outcomes for all.

How Does The School Tackle Bullying Incidents?

The School promotes the belief that it is not only the responsibility of the victim to inform the adults of the situation but also adults and other young people who may know of or witness bullying.

We ask that where any member of our School community suspects bullying, it should be reported. This could be via any of the following:

- Directly to a member of staff.
- To a parent or carer or sibling who will then alert school.

According to the nature of the bullying, various strategies will be employed. The Class Teacher, Key Stage Leader or member of Senior Leadership Team will seek to resolve the situation.

In the case of sexual bullying, a Designated Child Protection Teacher will be immediately informed and the statutory protocols and procedures will be followed.

The Headteacher will become involved, if the behaviour of the perpetrator was likely to result in a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Strategies Used to Resolve Bullying Issues

The strategies used will vary according to the nature of the incidents and the dynamics of the students involved. We will take a restorative practices approach to issues of bullying in school.

Below are a selection of approaches:

- The bully may be asked to apologise.
- The bully may be required to sign a behaviour contract.
- The victim and/or bully referred to a meeting for individual mentoring.

Each case will be monitored by the Class Teacher / Key Stage Leader or Leadership Team to ensure that repeated bullying does not take place.

If a Student is Bullied

Staff who receive a report of a bullying incident from a student will:

- Listen to the student's account of the incident.
- Reassure the student that reporting the bullying incident was the right thing to do.
- Make it clear to the student that he or she is not to blame for what has happened.
- Make a note of what the student says.

Explain that the student should report any further incidents to a teacher or other member of staff immediately.

Staff will ask the student:

- What has happened.
- How often it has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Where it happened.
- Who saw what happened.
- What he or she has done about it already.

Advice To Students

The school will advise students who are caught up in bullying incidents to:

- Stay calm and look as confident as possible.
- Be firm and clear, look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Immediately tell an adult what has happened.
- Contact Peer Support Services.
- Retain copies of any online communication which involves bullying.
- Not respond to any such communication.

Staff will report all students involved in bullying incidents on Arbor, and inform the Headteacher and / or Deputy Headteacher, who will in turn liaise with the relevant Key Stage Leader and Class Teacher.

Action that may then be taken may include:-

- Be-friending
- Circle of friends
- Support groups
- Mediation by adults
- Mediation by peers
- Assertiveness training groups

Students within the child's class can also be involved in discussions about how they might support the student being bullied and what they should do if they suspect that bullying is taking place.

Helping the Bullies to Change

Staff will spend time to help students who have bullied others to change their behaviour. If a student is bullying others, staff will:

- Talk to the student and explain that bullying is wrong and makes others unhappy.
- Discuss with the student how to join in with others without bullying.
- Talk to the student about how things are going at school, his or her progress and friends.
- Give the student praise and encouragement when he or she is being kind and considerate to others.

Other Outcomes (more serious incidents)

If the bullying is very serious or sustained and interventions have proved unsuccessful, the following may be implemented:

- The bully may be placed on a Behaviour Support Plan (BSP).
- A risk assessment may be carried out on the bully.
- Police involvement regarding the bullying behaviour.
- *It should be noted that where serious cases of online or text based bullying occurs, the School may seek to involve specialist police officers in an educational role.*
- The bully may be suspended for a fixed term, or in very serious cases, permanently excluded.

Better Together Learning Trust recognises it has a responsibility to protect children within its vicinity, including areas immediately outside the School and on School transport. Events occurring in the home area should be tackled by parents and carers through the usual community channels.

Preventing Bullying

Better Together Learning Trust will take every opportunity to demonstrate to students, through the curriculum and by example, that it is totally opposed to bullying.

Staff will not ignore bullying or suspected bullying. All School staff will, wherever possible, intervene to prevent bullying incidents from taking place.

The School will encourage students to report any incidents of bullying to a teacher or other adult at school. Students will be told that they may bring a friend with them if they wish.

The School will ensure that all staff, students, parents and carers are aware of the school's antibullying policy.

Staff will praise and encourage students when they show kindness and consideration to others. We will use a range of formal and informal teaching opportunities to prevent bullying. These will include:

- Formal assemblies
- PSHCE time
- Anti-bullying conferences
- Support groups organised by and in conjunction with expert outside agencies
- Posters around school
- Use of mentors
- Communication home

The strategies contained within this policy document will be discussed with students.

Dealing with Serious Bullying

If the preventative measures and peer support strategies do not succeed, serious bullying will be dealt with under the School's discipline policy. The bully may:

- Attend a meeting of the Headteacher and Governors' discipline committee.
- Be removed from a form or teaching group.
- Lose any break or lunchtime privileges.
- Lose Tablet computer privileges and/or have internet access removed.
- Be put in detention and miss enrichment activities
- Be banned from a school trip or sports event where these are not an essential part of the curriculum.
- Be suspended for a fixed period.

In the most serious cases, permanent exclusion could be used as a sanction if the bullying:

- Involves serious actual or threatened violence against another student.
- Amounts to persistent and defiant misbehaviour.

Recording Incidents

All incidents of bullying and discussions with the students involved will be recorded, along with the School's response. These will be reviewed by the Deputy Head Teacher at least termly.

Co-operating with Parents/Carers

The School will work with parents/carers in dealing with bullying. Bullying in school is everyone's problem. All staff, students and parents should be aware that bullying exists and share a commitment to combat it and to make the school a happier place for everyone.

The School will ensure that parents are aware of the School's anti-bullying policy via the website. Parents, carers and families are often the first to detect signs of bullying. Common physical symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability.

The School will encourage parents who suspect that a child is bullying or being bullied to immediately contact the School and make an appointment to see the child's class teacher as soon as possible.

Parents/carers will be informed of incidents and involved in discussions. The School will discuss with parents how they can work together to stop the bullying.

Where bullying has occurred via social networking sites, texts or other electronic media, parents are asked to retain copies for evidence and not to respond directly in any way.

Help Organisations

Telephone numbers of Childline and other helpful supporting agencies are:-

- Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) - 0808 800 5793
- Parentline Plus - 0808 800 2222
- Children's Legal Centre - 0845 345 4345
- Youth Access - 020 8772 9900
- Childline - www.childline.org.uk - 0800 1111 (Free)
- Bullying Online - help@bullying.co.uk www.bullying.co.uk
- Kidscape - www.kidscape.org.uk - 0207 730 3300
- The Samaritans - www.samaritans.org.uk - 08457 90 90 90
- Connexions Direct - www.connexionsdirect.com - 08000 688 336

Monitoring and Review

This policy is regularly monitored by the Headteacher and Governing Body to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible.

Policy Availability

A copy of this policy is available in the Trust's Sharepoint. It can also be downloaded from the Trust website.

Has This Policy Been Successful?

The following questions will be asked by the reviewing group to ascertain the success of the policy:

- How many incidents of bullying have been recorded in the past 12 months?
- Is there any evidence of actions resulting from students reporting incidents of bullying?
- Have the actions been effective, i.e. has the behaviour desisted?
- When talking to students in the school, is there an awareness of what bullying is and what to do if they encounter it?