# Anti-Bullying Policy

## The Inspire Multi Academy Trust (South West)

## March 2026

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**Anti-Bullying Policy**

At TIMAT, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour Policy, our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and the School's Vision, Aims and Values.

**Are Healthy**

- feel safe, secure and cared for
- take responsibility for having a healthy lifestyle
- respect and celebrate the differences between people
- develop warm and happy memories

**Stay Safe**

- in a school that is well looked after
- in a caring community
- know how to keep safe
- know who to talk to

**Achieve Economic Well Being**

- value our achievements
- take responsibility for our school
- work together to fund projects and give to those in need

**Make a Positive Contribution**

- value myself and others
- play my part at school and in the community
- take responsibility for my behaviour, communication and relationships
- express my views and listen to those of others

**Enjoy and Achieve**

- achieve excellence
- celebrate success
- share joy, laughter and excitement
- strive to learn and try new things
- in a rich and stimulating environment
- with a broad exciting curriculum
- in the way that is best for me

We aim to challenge and prevent bullying through fostering an inclusive and open environment in which difference is celebrated and appreciated. We will not tolerate incidents of bullying or harassment within our school. We aim for all pupils to reach their potential academically, socially and personally through learning and playing in a safe and secure environment.

***Bullying will always be taken seriously. Bullying will never be tolerated.***

**Definition of Bullying:**

The Government defines bullying as:
*'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.'*

The term 'bullying' refers to a range of harmful behaviour, both physical and psychological. Bullying behaviour usually has the following four features:

- It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, for it can be experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating.
- It is intentionally harmful – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all of those who are responsible;
- It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it;
- It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

TIMAT School's child friendly definition is based on the STOP principal; **'Several Times On Purpose'**

The school also recognises that some incidents between pupils may not meet the definition of bullying but may still require support or intervention from staff. These incidents may be described as *relational conflict* or a *falling out* between pupils.
Relational conflict typically occurs between individuals or groups of similar power or status, where there is no clear imbalance of power. Such incidents may happen occasionally rather than repeatedly, and the behaviour may not be intended to cause harm.
Following a relational conflict, pupils will often show remorse and demonstrate a willingness to resolve the situation and repair relationships. While relational conflict does not necessarily lead to bullying, the school recognises that unresolved disagreements or negative feelings can sometimes develop into patterns of behaviour that may cause harm or distress. For this reason, the school takes relational conflict seriously and will support pupils to resolve disagreements constructively and prevent situations from escalating into bullying behaviour.

**<u>Types of Bullying:</u>**

Bullying may take various forms, including:

**Physical**

- Kicking or hitting
- Prodding, pushing or spitting
- Other physical assault
- Intimidating behaviour
- Interference with personal property
- Deliberate targeted exclusion from peer-group activities
- Extortion (e.g. of pocket-money or items in packed lunch)

**Verbal/Psychological**

- Threats or taunts
- Shunning / ostracism
- Name calling / verbal abuse
- The refusal to acknowledge the cultural/ racial/ familial background of an individual
- The refusal to acknowledge/ respect the sexuality or gender identity of an individual
- Innuendo
- Spreading of rumours
- Making inappropriate comments in relation to appearance
- Prejudice-related bullying (e.g. racist, homophobic, disablist, sexist)
- Any of the above examples may be experienced within prejudice-related bullying

Further, more specific examples may include:

- Physical, verbal, written, on-line or text abuse or ridicule based on differences of the protected characteristics that are protected by the Equality Act 2010 (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership

(in employment only), pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (whether relating to the object of the bullying or relating to a member of their family or a friend)
- Refusal to co-operate with others on the basis of any of the above
- Negative stereotyping on the basis of any of the above
- Promoting offensive materials such as racist or homophobic leaflets, posters, graffiti, magazines or computer software on school premises
- Failing to actively discourage such material from within the school community
- Refusing to use ones chosen moniker or personal pronoun
- Continued association of a word/ term that is primarily used to connote a minority group with negativity or aggression

***The specific unacceptability of prejudice-related bullying should be explicitly discussed in the classroom on a termly basis.***

**Sexual:**
- Unwanted/inappropriate physical contact
- Sexual innuendo
- Suggestive propositioning
- Exposure to age-inappropriate themes or material
- Distribution/display of pornographic material aimed at an individual
- Graffiti with sexual content aimed at an individual

***Sexual bullying can spring from, or be expressed within, prejudice-related attitudes and motivations (e.g. sexism, homophobia, transphobia).***

**More Able & Talented:**
- Name calling, innuendo or negative peer pressure based on high levels of ability or effort
- Ostracism resulting from perceptions of high levels of ability
- The above categories of bullying are not mutually exclusive.

**Cyber-Bullying**

An increasing amount of bullying by school age pupils is that which can be described as cyber-bullying. Cyber bullying is a way of carrying out bullying as detailed in the categories above. Hence, it is not a kind of bullying itself but a method.

Such incidents can include:

- Abuse on-line or via text message
- Interfering with electronic files
- Deliberate exclusion from online groups, forums or networks
- Undisclosed covert filming or photography of an individual
- Setting up or promoting inappropriate websites
- Inappropriate sharing of images from webcams / mobile phones etc.
- Interfering with e-mail accounts

At TIMAT, we aim to deal quickly and efficiently with incidents of Cyber-bullying. Children will be encouraged to report any incidents to staff, and will be taught not to delete any messages. The ICT Technician is able to monitor all e-mail accounts and saved files. This allows us to check for inappropriate activity. We filter internet access and websites to which the children can gain access.

**The Effects of Bullying:**

The impact and severity of bullying may vary. It is generally perceived as a way of exploiting and manipulating one's own perception of difference. Bullying always makes the victim feel hurt and destroys self-esteem. Bullying has an equally serious impact on the bullies themselves and is often indicative of anxiety or trauma in the history or presentation of the person who bullies.

We understand that it is imperative for bullying to be dealt with in its initial stages. This is because we recognise the potential for serious harm that can occur if bullying is allowed to escalate. Children who have been bullied are at a significantly higher risk of self-harm and suicide. We know that bullying impacts seriously upon school attendance.

**Links to Other Policies:**

This policy impacts upon and should be used in conjunction with the following complimentary policies:

- Teaching and Learning policies
- Equality and Diversity
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Health and Safety policy
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

The various strategies of our Positive Behaviour Policy aim to encourage good behaviour and consideration towards others. If the Positive Behaviour Policy is implemented effectively, within an inclusive educational and pastoral environment, there will be few incidents of bullying. At TIMAT, we recognise that no school is ever completely devoid of bullying incidents and our aim is for there to be a minimum of such occurrences which are swiftly and effectively dealt with.

Our Positive Behaviour Policy promotes a positive whole school approach to behaviour.

This is done by:

- enhancing the self-esteem of all members of the school community
- clearly stating the boundaries of acceptable behaviour (rules)
- reinforcing positive habits (rewards)
- encouraging personal responsibility
- developing interpersonal skills
- responding promptly, firmly and consistently to pupils who test those boundaries (sanctions)
- striving to understand that children understand and experience the world in different ways.

**Strategies for the Prevention of Bullying:**

A proactive approach to teaching and learning will help to engage children in learning, build self-esteem and make children part of the school learning team. We shall consider different learning styles and provide a curriculum that aims to be of interest to all pupils.

We recognise that the example that is set by adults in their relationships with other adults and with children will have a great effect on the way that children behave towards others. We raise an awareness of bullying and its effects both on the victim and on the bully through circle time, assemblies, role play, stories and discussion with individuals. We aim to build an anti-bullying ethos. This may include direct exploration of bullying related issues as well as diversity awareness raising work.

Such work must be regularly embedded in the general curriculum, in order that such messages are not forgotten, and we do not see a repeat of previously demonstrated behaviours.

By raising awareness, we aim;

- to create a culture where bullying is not accepted and does not happen
- to encourage those who are bullied to tell an appropriate person
- to help individuals cope with bullying
- to help individuals to respond to bullying

All of those strategies which are set out in our Positive Behaviour Policy to promote good behaviour will help to prevent bullying. Co-operative behaviour is encouraged e.g. through circle time, group work, a strong school identity. The development of a caring, supportive and trusting relationship between adults and children at TIMAT will help to prevent incidents of bullying. Members of the school community need to feel confident that reported incidents will be appropriately responded to and will be taken seriously.

Other people within the school also have an important role to play in the prevention of bullying:

- any person may act to prevent situations which they see arising. Members of the school will be made aware of the important role and responsibilities that they have in spotting inappropriate behaviour or language and in reporting to key members of staff.
- Children will be taught to report and support individuals who may be being bullied.
- playground buddies may be appointed to work with a named child, encourage good play or intervene where children are being unkind or when a child needs a friend.
- relevant access to outside agencies and support will be provided where necessary and certain helpline numbers (e.g. Childline) will be constantly available throughout the school.

We appreciate that some children find it very difficult to maintain and build appropriate friendships, and we will endeavour to teach such individuals these vital skills. We will continually evaluate our provision at playtime, in order to encourage appropriate behaviour and build positive relationships during unstructured times.

**Circle Time/Pastoral Discussions:**

Circle time/pastoral discussions are an important part of preventing and coping with bullying at TIMAT. This time takes place regularly within classes. It:

- builds teams
- creates a safe place to explore issues of concern
- explores the handling of relationships
- enhances communication, both speaking and listening
- encourages understanding of the views of others
- develops tolerance
- encourages a problem solving approach to problems
- affirms the strengths and enhances the self-esteem of each member

**Reporting and Recording Bullying:**

- Children will be made aware that they must report incidents of bullying towards themselves or others to an adult. Parents will be reminded to report any concerns that they have.
- Support staff will be encouraged to refer incidents of bullying to a teacher or the Headteacher.
- Reports of bullying among staff should be promptly reported to the Headteacher who will act or offer advice accordingly.
- Children and parents will be reminded that all reports of bullying will be listened to, investigated and, if necessary, acted on.
- All reports of bullying will be listened to, investigated and, if necessary, acted on according to our policy.
- It is essential that all bullying incidents of a phobic/racist/disablist nature are recorded in writing immediately in accordance with guidance provided by the Equality and Diversity Service. A copy of any such report must be given to the Head of School.
- We record all incidents of bullying via CPOMs.

**Responding to Bullying – Children Who Exhibit Bullying Behaviour:**

If bullying does occur, all children exhibiting such behaviour will be made aware that bullying will not be tolerated.

Key points in our response to bullying will be:

- never to ignore reported or suspected bullying
- not to make assumptions or come across towards a victim as judgemental
- to listen carefully to all accounts (sometimes a written account will be more revealing)
- to adopt a problem solving, pro-active approach
- to follow up repeatedly

The response will depend on the severity of the incident. The response may include:

- discussion between adult and children involved
- questioning of all individuals involved, including any possible witnesses to try and establish an objective viewpoint of what has happened
- note taking and record keeping where appropriate
- a problem solving approach, where children find their own solution through discussion with a teacher present, if this is considered appropriate by the victim
- class discussion in Circle Time (no names)

We believe that all children, regardless of the apparent actions, have the right to be heard and to explain their 'side of the story' without any kind of pre-judgement. Therefore, it is vital that staff do not make judgements of any kind about children until an appropriate process has been undertaken and as many facts established as possible.

If bullying persists further strategies will be adopted:

- sanctions as those listed in our behaviour policy
- discussion with parents, both to inform parents and to find a way forward together
- involvement of external agencies
- part time or temporary exclusion
- permanent exclusion (as a last resort, after all other routes have failed or as a response to an incident of extreme severity)

We must remember that for a child who uses bullying behaviour this can often be the only identity in which they feel comfortable and secure. Such children can often wish to be more socially acceptable models, but can find it is increasingly difficult to step away from their position as 'the bully'.

We must ensure that this myth of identity is not perpetuated by staff or by children. When incidents of bullying have occurred, we must support all those involved. This should include allowing each child ways in which to adopt a more successful and purposeful role and identity within the school community.

**Responding to Bullying – Supporting children who experience bullying:**

Children must be made aware that they will be supported and taken seriously if they report bullying. The slogan 'Don't Suffer in Silence' will make this idea more memorable.

Children should be made aware that they do not 'deserve' to be bullied. We will endeavour to teach the children a variety of anti-bullying techniques which they can use in key situations and to reinforce the individual self-esteem and self-worth of children at all times.

**Bullying Amongst Staff:**

We recognise the seriousness of bullying in the workplace and the impact that this can have on whole-school relationships, morale and productivity. We cannot best support the children, if the staff team is not working together as a team. We aim to support individuals who may be experiencing such bullying at work, and would endeavour to help them find ways to tackle bullying behaviour. This may include additional training, removal of staff from certain environments, or re-assertion of job descriptions and roles. Bullying among the staff body

should be immediately reported to the Headteacher. If informal resolutions are unsuccessful, the formal disciplinary procedures will be put in place.

We recognise that such bullying among adults often manifests as seemingly negligible, low-level psychological incidents, rather than more overt, physical bullying. We would encourage staff to remember that such repeated incidents do constitute bullying and should be dealt with, even if they appear comparatively minor.

It is important that we clearly give the message that anyone can be a victim of bullying and that our school is one that treasures and embraces all differences and abilities.

**Roles and Responsibilities:**

- Adults at school all have a part to play in preventing and responding to bullying.
- All staff are made aware of this policy through their induction and should subscribe to it.
- If adults become aware of bullying they must respond or refer the matter on to a teacher or the Headteacher, Executive Headteacher or the Chair of Governors, who will respond.
- Children must be made aware that they should report all incidents of bullying to an adult. This is their part of the responsibility to confront bullying together.
- Adults at school must also be vigilant for signs of bullying that has not been reported. The victim may show signs including absence, anxiety, pains and sadness.

**Involving Outside Agencies:**

When strategies within school have little effect, or when additional support would be beneficial, outside agencies may be involved. This may also be used to raise awareness of general bullying issues or to gain specific input on prejudice or phobic/ racist bullying. Such groups will also be approached to provide staff training as necessary.

**Bullying Outside of the School Premises:**

The school is not directly responsible for bullying outside of the school premises; however we do have a responsibility to do all within our power to ensure that children are safe on the journey to and from school. We aim to influence children's attitudes to help to decrease incidents of bullying outside of school.

Pupils will be encouraged to tell an adult, family member or teacher, if they are bullied outside of school. Steps taken might include:

- discussion with parents of bully or victim
- talking to the local police/PCSO
- talking to pupils about how to handle bullying outside of the school's premises

**Implementing the Policy:**

The response to bullying needs to be consistent as set out in this policy. Everyone needs to be aware that:

- bullying will not be tolerated
- bullying should be reported
- bullying will be responded to.

Staff and pupils will need regular reminders of the policy over time to ensure that it is remembered.

**Monitoring, Evaluating and Reviewing the Policy:**

The implementation of this policy must be monitored to ensure that it is being followed and that it is effective. This will be by staff through staff questionnaires and by children through the Pupil Parliament and through discussion.

***The policy will be reviewed and if necessary updated annually.***

**Bibliography**

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