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1. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is 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 and can occur face-to-face or online.

2. STATEMENT OF INTENT

Place Partnership is committed to providing a safe, calm and supportive environment within which pupils can learn and achieve without being subject to bullying behaviours. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at a Place Partnership Academy.

The Education and Inspection Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour/ Rewards and Consequences Policy which is on the Academy website. The policy also works alongside other key Place Partnership policies including the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, RSHE Policy and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy.

This policy outlines the procedures taken to prevent bullying from occurring, and the prompt action taken if it does.

3. AIMS

Within the Place Partnership, we endeavour to:

- Ensure all staff, the Academy Education Committee, pupils and parents/carers have an understanding of bullying and its consequences; and the knowledge that it is not acceptable in any Place Partnership Academy.
- Create an atmosphere of trust between staff and pupils, where pupils feel they are listened to and are willing to tell an adult if they are being bullied.
- Ensure that there are clear procedures and systems for reporting and recording bullying, which are understood and followed consistently by all staff.
- Closely monitor pupils who have reported bullying and to ensure pupils and staff learn to keep themselves and others safe.
- Teach pupils to respect the differences between groups of people within the Academy's community.
- Offer support and education to those pupils who are both the victims and perpetrators of bullying, providing them with a range of strategies which they can use if they are at risk of bullying others or are being bullied themselves.
- The academy promotes an 'upstander' culture in which pupils are encouraged to safely challenge bullying through reporting concerns, seeking adult assistance, and showing support for victims. Pupils are not expected to physically intervene and should always prioritise their own safety and the safety of others
- Support and train all staff members in identifying bullying incidents and in dealing with them confidently and effectively.

4. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- Malicious Communications Act 1988.
- Public Order Act 1986.
- Communications Act 2003.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Education Act 2011.
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'.
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'.
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education 2026'.
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'.
- Behaviour in Schools (2024).
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2022, updated where applicable) – this is the guidance governing mobile phone searches rather than relying only on the Education Act.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

5. STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The Academy understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is

grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.

- Other forms of bullying, which are illegal and should be reported to the police, include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.
- Using Artificial Intelligence to produce indecent images of children or to digitally alter an image, including what are sometimes described as 'deepfakes' or 'deep nudes'.

In addition to the duties in relation to pupils with disabilities under the Equality Act, schools also have duties under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to ensure that pupils with Special Educational Needs engage in the activities of the school together with children who do not have Special Educational Needs.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees is responsible for ensuring Anti-Bullying policies and procedures are in place and adhered to across the Trust. It ensures that the Trust creates a culture of inclusion, with the aim of minimising instances of bullying.

The Board of Trustees, through the Scheme of Delegation, delegates the day-to-day management and implementation of Anti-Bullying to the Academy Education Committee and Principals of each Academy within the Trust.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CEO)

The CEO will ensure that procedures are in place to monitor that Anti-Bullying policies and procedures are in place and adhered to across the Trust.

THE ACADEMY EDUCATION COMMITTEE (AEC)

In line with the Trust Scheme of Delegation, the AEC ensures that the Academy:

- Fosters a culture where the inclusion of all pupils is paramount;
- They are fully informed about Anti-Bullying issues, so that they can play a major part in Academy self-review.

THE HEAD OF ACADEMY/EXECUTIVE PRINCIPAL

Ensures that the Anti-Bullying Policy is implemented and followed by all staff.

- Allocates sufficient time, training, support and resources to enable the Anti-Bullying procedures to be carried out effectively.
- Ensures induction and training of all staff.
- Ensures that pupils are provided with opportunities throughout the curriculum to learn about bullying, its effects, and what to do if they, or someone they know, is being bullied.
- Monitors and reports to the AEC about the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy and related procedures and outcomes.

The Head of Academy/Executive Principal may delegate this role to a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team.

ALL STAFF

Staff are responsible for following the guidance in this policy and as provided by the Academy.

PARENTS

Parents/Carers are responsible for reporting any suspicion they have that their child is being bullied to the Academy as soon as possible. They are also responsible for encouraging good behaviour and helping the Academy to be proactive in preventing bullying occurring.

PUPILS

The academy promotes an 'upstander' culture in which pupils are encouraged to safely challenge bullying through reporting concerns, seeking adult assistance, and showing support for victims. Pupils are not expected to physically intervene and should always prioritise their own safety and the safety of others. There is an expectation that pupils show good behaviour at all times.

7. TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can take place online and/or offline and usually takes one, or a combination of, the following forms:

- Verbal – including name calling and making use of written material.
- Physical – including bodily assault, unwanted physical contact which may be aggressive in nature and sexual touching.
- Emotional – including intimidation, ostracisation and the spreading of rumours.
- Negative peer group pressure, e.g., a person being made to do something he/she does not want to do.
- Sexual harassment, e.g. unwanted or unwelcome physical contact, abusive comments, abusive behaviour.
- Online (cyberbullying)- see below.

Bullying could also take a targeted form in terms of being racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual, ableist and/or be seen as prejudicial and relational.

Cyberbullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside the Academy. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages.

- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips, including through the use of Artificial Intelligence.
 - Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress.
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- Silent or abusive phone calls.
 - Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible.
 - Threatening or bullying emails possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name.
 - Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom.
 - Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging.
 - Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Principal, that staff member can examine data or files and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all Academies and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the Academy rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of Academy discipline.

8. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies offer significant benefits in education. However, the rise of innovations such as AI also brings potential negative impacts. AI and other technologies can be misused to harass or bully pupils, causing emotional distress and reputational damage. Ways in which AI has the potential to increase the negative impact of bullying include:

- Deepfake Creation: AI can generate fake social media profiles and realistic but fake images, videos, or audio files of pupils, which can be used to embarrass, harass, or defame them.
- Automated Harassment: AI-powered bots can send repeated, harmful messages to pupils, overwhelming them with abusive content and/or mass-report pupils to digital platforms for fake wrongdoing.
- Algorithmic Amplification: AI algorithms can amplify harmful content, making it more visible and widespread, thus increasing the impact of bullying.
- Social Exclusion: AI can be used to manipulate social media interactions, excluding certain pupils from online groups or conversations.
- Exploitation of Personal Data: AI can analyse personal data to create targeted bullying campaigns, exploiting vulnerabilities or sensitive information.
- Sextortion: AI can generate explicit content and use it to blackmail or extort pupils for money and/or real intimate images, causing severe emotional distress.
- Revenge Porn: AI can create and distribute fake explicit images or videos of pupils as a form of revenge or harassment.

Schools have a critical duty to prevent such misuse by implementing robust policies, educating pupils about the ethical use of AI, and fostering a culture of digital responsibility. This includes teaching pupils to recognise and report AI-generated content, promoting digital literacy, and ensuring that all members of the school community understand the serious consequences of using AI for harmful purposes. By proactively addressing these challenges, schools can harness the positive potential of AI while safeguarding pupils from its potential harms.

9. VULNERABLE PUPILS

Certain pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying due to specific characteristics or personal circumstances. These include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils from different racial or ethnic backgrounds.
- Pupils identifying as LGBTQ+ or perceived as such.
- Pupils with a social worker or in care.
- Pupils with mental health needs.
- Pupils with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

The Academy recognises the increased risks these groups may face and is committed to promoting equality, inclusion and respect across all aspects of school life. Staff will be trained to identify and respond appropriately to the needs of vulnerable pupils and ensure that anti-bullying strategies are tailored to support them effectively.

Where necessary, the Academy will work closely with parents/carers and external agencies to provide additional support. Staff will be proactive in monitoring, safeguarding, and promoting the wellbeing of these pupils.

10. CHILD ON CHILD ABUSE

Bullying is considered to be an aspect of child-on-child abuse as outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education and is comprehensively referenced in each Place Partnership Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, which can be found on the Academy websites.

11. BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL

Academy staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the Academy premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that an Academy's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on Academy premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of Academy staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the Academy to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the Academy premises, such as on Academy or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside the Academy is reported to staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Principal should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their Local Authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

While Academy staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside the Academy, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the

Academy premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of Academy staff, for instance on an Educational Visit.

The guidance document 'Behaviour in Schools – advice for headteachers and school staff' (2024) states that:

Subject to the Behaviour Policy, teachers may sanction pupils for:

- Misbehaviour when the pupil is:
- Taking part in any Academy-organised or Academy-related activity.
- Travelling to or from an Academy.
- When wearing Academy uniform.
- When in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the Academy.
- OR misbehaviour at any time, whether or not the conditions above apply, that:
- Could have repercussions for the orderly running of the Academy.
- Poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public or
- Could adversely affect the reputation of the Academy.

Place Partnership will apply Academy sanctions and follow behaviour policies, including in cases of bullying. More detailed advice on teachers' powers to sanction, including their power to sanction pupils for misbehaviour that occurs outside the Academy, is included in 'Behaviour in Schools – advice for headteachers and school staff' (2024).

12. SIGNS OF BULLYING

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school.
- Unwillingness to attend school.
- Repeated or persistent absence from school.
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence.
- Saying that they feel ill on repeated occasions.
- Decreased involvement in school work.
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions.
- Missing possessions.
- Missing money and/or asking for extra money or stealing.
- Cuts or bruises.
- Lack of appetite.
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices.
- Lack of eye contact.
- Becoming short tempered.
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home.

This list is not exhaustive.

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues and will still be investigated, particularly if there are numerous indicators of concern. Place Partnership staff employ professional curiosity, maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' and liaise closely with safeguarding personnel.

13. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

Place Partnership Academies aim to prevent bullying from occurring and to take a zero-tolerance approach when it does occur. We aim to achieve this through:

- **Relationship Education:** It is vital to teach pupils, in an age-appropriate way, about healthy relationships at each developmental stage. This includes understanding consent, respect, and boundaries.
- **Empathy and Respect:** Lessons are incorporated throughout the curriculum which foster empathy, respect, and kindness. These are focused on helping pupils understand the impact of their actions and develop positive relationships.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Age-appropriate conflict resolution skills are taught, both through the curriculum and through the Trust pastoral support offer, to help pupils handle and resolve disputes peacefully and constructively.
- **Creation of a Positive School Climate:** Place Partnership Academies foster an inclusive environment where diversity is celebrated, and every pupil feels valued and respected. This is developed through the rewards programmes, rules, culture and ethos of the schools.
- **Clear Policies:** Place Partnership Academies have well established and clearly communicated anti-bullying policies and procedures. These ensure that pupils, staff, and parents/carers understand the standards and expectations which are set by being a member of the school community.
- **Consistent Enforcement:** Policies, rules and expectations are consistently enforced to maintain a safe and supportive school environment.
- **Parental Involvement:** Place Partnership Academies involve parents/carers in bullying prevention efforts by providing them with resources and training on how to support their children.
- **Community Partnerships:** Place Partnership Academies engage positively with community organisations to extend bullying prevention efforts beyond the school and reinforce key messages where required.
- **Regular Pupil Voice:** Place Partnership academies conduct regular samples of pupil voice to gather data on the prevalence and nature of bullying in the school. Use this data to inform and adjust prevention strategies.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** All Place Partnership Academies have mechanisms in place for pupils to report bullying anonymously and provide feedback on the effectiveness of anti-bullying initiatives.
- **Preventing Cyberbullying:** Place Partnership Academies mitigate the risks presented to pupils by cyber and AI-based bullying by taking a range of proactive steps. These are intended to educate parents/carers and pupils about the risks these technologies present. By adopting these strategies, Academies can create a safer and more inclusive atmosphere for all pupils, ensuring that the benefits of technology are harnessed while its potential harms are minimised. The approaches used vary and evolve constantly but may include:
- **Workshops and Discussion:** Place Partnership Academies implement regular workshops and seminars to educate pupils about the risks of cyber-bullying and AI technologies, including the signs to look out for, how deepfakes are created and their potential misuse and how to get help when it is needed.
- **Teaching Critical Thinking Skills:** Pupils within Place Partnership academies are taught to critically evaluate online content, recognise deepfakes and AI generated content, and understand the importance of verifying information before sharing.

- **Safe Online Practices:** The Place Partnership curriculum offer includes safe online practices, including how pupils can protect their personal information and report suspicious activities.
- **Positive use of Technology:** Relationships and e-safety sessions with Place Partnership Academies include an emphasis on the safe and ethical use of technology, emphasising that technology can be used for positive purposes and the negative consequences of harmful use of technology, for example, the creation and distribution of harmful material such as AI-generated content.
- **Parent/Community Education:** Place Partnership Academies conduct workshops for parents/carers and regularly communicate both with the parent body and wider community to educate and inform them about online safety and emerging technologies such as AI and how to support their children in using technology responsibly.
- **Dealing with Bullying Incidents/Allegations:** Academies within the Place Partnership should apply sanctions for pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. These must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably, taking account of any Special Educational Needs and Disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying may need support themselves.

Where a pupil reports/alleges a bullying incident to an adult, or an adult witnesses an incident, the following are agreed procedures:

- Staff will prioritise ensuring the immediate safety of all other pupils, staff and property. In exceptional circumstances where there is a risk of injury to an individual, a member of staff may physically intervene, following the Academy's Positive Handling Policy.
- Any injured pupil or member of staff will receive appropriate medical attention as soon as is practicable.
- Staff will inform the appropriate staff members as soon as possible.
- The appropriate staff member will interview both the target(s) and bullying pupil(s) separately and in private to establish the facts without apportioning blame and ascertain any bystanders, who may in turn be spoken to.
- A decision will be taken regarding whether to contact the parents/carers of both the target(s) and bullying pupil(s). Parents/carers of the victim(s) will be informed if there is any injury or the young person is at risk of significant harm.
- Copies of any paperwork will be retained for filing in the behaviour file and/or on CPOMS for all pupils involved. Where necessary records will also be kept in the Behaviour log and/or CPOMS. When it is technically possible, incidents will be recorded on Bromcom.
- Appropriate sanctions and support will be discussed and agreed upon. The Pastoral Manager will take the targeted pupil's wishes into account when deciding how to deal with the bullying pupil, but incidents will always be dealt with in line with the Academy's Behaviour Policy. The incident will be recorded either in the behaviour file, detailing the bullying pupil's actions and sanctions and/or on CPOMS.
- Both the targeted pupil and the bullying pupil will be offered the opportunity to meet and talk about their experiences.
- After initial investigation by relevant staff, if the incident is deemed to be bullying under the definitions above, the pupils will be informed that notes will be taken of the conversation and both will agree at the end that what has been written is a true record. Confidentiality will not be promised.

14. SUPPORT, EDUCATION AND CONSEQUENCES FOR BULLYING

Place Partnership treats bullying with the up most seriousness and sanctions are applied with consistency and equity in all Place Partnership Academies. Sanctions can vary depending on the situation/seriousness of the incident(s) but bullying should always carry a consequence and must not be ignored. However, it should not be forgotten that bullying behaviours often arise because of a child's own difficulties/circumstances. In these cases, support will be given to the pupil as well as consequence.

The Behaviour Policy outlines Academy specific support and consequences for unacceptable behaviour, including bullying.

15. WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS WHEN BULLYING OCCURS

Place Partnership appreciates that there will be occasions when the parents/carers of one or both sets of pupils involved will feel that the Academy has not sanctioned appropriately. Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to share their concerns and if appropriate, staff will discuss the decisions to impose the particular sanction(s) with them.

Where a parent/carer is dissatisfied with the Academy's handling of a situation, then the Principal will seek to resolve the situation informally. In the event of a formal complaint, then the agreed complaints procedure for the Trust will be invoked.

Place Partnership actively encourages and welcomes comments, questions and suggestions regarding our Anti-Bullying Policy, and would be pleased to receive feedback from parents/carers.

Further resources can be found on the Safeguarding page on the website, located within the Parent and Carers section.