Every Child Matters Academy Trust
Children at the heart

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY 2026–2027

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Approved by Chair of Trustees:	W. Ward
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1. Aims and principles

The Every Child Matters Academy Trust is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it. Our academies aim to develop a culture of respect and understanding where bullying can be acknowledged and dealt with in a way that is seen by all to be fair and reasonable.

This policy is written in accordance with The Education and Inspections Act 2006, Independent School Standard Regulations 2010 and The Equality Act 2010.

It should be read alongside the following policies:

- Behaviour
- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality

The Every Child Matters Academy Trust believes that:

- pupils have a right to learn free from intimidation and fear
- adults have a right to work in an environment free from intimidation and fear
- everyone should feel confident they are coming into a safe place
- if bullying does take place, pupils needs will be paramount and they will be listened to
- reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

The repetitive intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face to face or through cyber space.

We recognise that bullying can take many forms and can affect any child. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs, or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities). Bullying can be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- **Physical –** pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- **Verbal –** name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling
- **Emotional –** isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion
- **Sexual –** unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- **Online / Cyber –** posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion etc.

Indirect bullying can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalization Prejudice-related – derogatory and

discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is, because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. We will challenge, address, and monitor any incidents of bullying, to ensure that it does not continue and that all pupils feel supported (this will include the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders, and the wider school community).

We also recognise that incidents may occur between pupils, which may not be deemed as 'bullying' but still require support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as 'relational conflicts' or falling out. Relational conflict differs to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional). Usually, following a relational conflict incident, pupils show remorse and there is a general willingness to make things right or to resolve the conflict.

Not all relational conflict or falling out leads to bullying, but we are aware that it occasionally can, and we are mindful that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.

Although bullying and relational conflicts can take place between individuals, we recognise that it often takes place in front of others (either physically or virtually), pupils who witness these incidents/behaviours are often referred to as 'bystanders.'

Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as 'relational conflict' or 'bullying', we will address the situation and support the pupils to resolve any negative feelings. We will monitor children following a relational conflict to ensure that the situation has been resolved and does not escalate to bullying.

2. Procedure for dealing with incidents /accusations of bullying

As part of our duty of care staff will:

- always intervene to defuse situations that they witness first hand
- investigate fully an accusation of bullying that they are made aware of at any time after an incident
- record witnessed and reported incidents on CPOMs for all children involved in incidents
- inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Headteacher that an incident has occurred or has been reported

- inform parents about the incident, how it has been investigated and the planned actions to prevent a reoccurrence of the behaviour
- alert other members of staff who may come in contact with the pupils concerned
- monitor the behaviour and review planned actions
- keep parents fully informed and communicate regularly until matters are resolved

Staff will consider the following strategies for investigating incidents:

- gather information, be sure and get the perpetrators account of the incident first, then ask
- the victim to describe their account of the event filling in any differences or information
- missing in the perpetrators account
- involve bystanders if necessary to get a clear picture of what has happened
- listen to all pupils involved in incidents
- encourage co-operation and positive actions
- together with the perpetrator and the victim decide upon appropriate actions/resolutions
- implement the interventions
- if the problem is not resolved, try another intervention and if not already involved, involve the PSA, member of the Senior Leadership Team and/or Head Teacher and may consider contacting an outside agency for support

Barnsley council have a support system in place to support any reports of bullying. Get help if you're being bullied (barnsley.gov.uk)

Our staff work closely with our pupils and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report of suspected of suspected bullying. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told. Designated Safeguarding Lead, Senior Leadership Team and Headteacher will;

- Monitor all reports of incidents/ alleged incidents of bullying and ensure appropriate actions are taken.
- Ensure information about incidents is shared with appropriate people (parents, chair of governors).
- Provide training for staff to deal effectively with incidents of bullying, racism, racial harassment, prejudice and stereotyping and to provide support to victims. – Monitor curriculum planning and delivery to ensure that bullying related issues are part of our teaching.
- Provide an environment and culture that is inclusive to all.
- Raise awareness of all members of the school community to the values of cultural diversity.
- Ensure that the school remains culturally inclusive and free from race discrimination and harassment.

- Take all accusations of bullying seriously and deal with them promptly.
- Understand the wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Teaching and non-teaching staff will;

- Build time within the curriculum to raise discussions on issues relating to bullying and why people bully and are bullied
- Build time within the curriculum to promote and enhance awareness, understanding and acceptance between cultural groups
- Acknowledge and celebrate the breadth of experience and intellectual resources that people from diverse backgrounds bring to the life of the school
- Develop children's social skills generally within the class
- Teach and encourage confidence-building and assertiveness
- Set a good example in and around school – modelling how to speak to others respectfully, being aware of the language and tone used
- Be aware and alert to signs of bullying
- Ensure e-safety is taught within school and children are encouraged to share any concerns they have online

3. Expectation of Pupils

We ask that all pupils report concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Head teacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our pupils of who they can report concerns to.

We ask our pupils to support each other by:

- refraining from becoming involved in any kind of bullying

- report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances
- being honest and giving as clear as an account of any incident as they can
- participating fully in attempts to resolve issues they may be involved in
- not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their suffering and that of other potential targets

4. Parents as Partners

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher (in person/via telephone call) to explain their concerns. The class teacher will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the teacher will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's safeguarding recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We ask that parents/carers come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online. ECM schools are committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns. We will endeavor to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

When an incident or allegation of bullying occurs;

- A member of staff will always inform parents of both the perpetrator(s)/alleged perpetrator(s) and the victim. Where appropriate, meetings will be organised to discuss the allegation/incident further
- Actions will be agreed at this meeting and parents will be given feedback as to the outcome

Parents are encouraged to make further contact if the difficulty does not appear to have been addressed or the behaviour is being repeated. We would always prefer that difficulties in relationships between children were sorted out in school and would discourage parents from intervening themselves.

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by;

- watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other pupils
- advising their children not to retaliate violently to any forms of bullying;
- being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken

- keep a written record of any reported instances of bullying
- inform the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved
- co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth
- attending any meeting required and participating in any planned actions to resolve issues

5. Visitors

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, trainee teacher, governor, external agency etc.). We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about bullying behaviour that they have witnessed, or been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead or a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will then be responsible for imparting the information to the DSL. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the bullying report on CPOMs and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The visitor should immediately alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

6. Signs of Bullying

We encourage children to report incidents of bullying either of themselves or of others. However, there are times when children will 'suffer in silence' out of fear of what might happen if the bullying is reported. Therefore, it is important that staff watch out for the following indicators in the behaviour of victims of bullying.

The victim might be;

- frightened or unwilling to come to school
- absent from school more than usual
- withdrawn and anxious
- starting to stammer
- running away from school
- crying at night or having nightmares
- performing less well at school
- coming home with damaged belongings or has possessions going missing
- asking for money or stealing money

- losing money on a regular basis
- suffering from unexplained cuts and bruises
- becoming more aggressive and bullying others
- losing appetite or complaining of being hungry

Children with specific special needs may be particularly vulnerable to bullying. Staff will be vigilant for any changes in their behaviour and should provide regular opportunities for them to discuss any worries they might have.

7. Bullying outside school premises

Where bullying is reported to school staff outside the school premises, it will be investigated following the procedure set out above. It is at the Headteacher's discretion whether to notify the police. If any allegations, are suspected of being of a criminal nature or poses a threat to a member of the public the police will always be informed.

8. Equality Statement

Every Child Matters Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that all pupils are treated with dignity, respect and fairness and are able to learn in an environment that is safe, inclusive and free from bullying, discrimination and harassment.

We recognise that bullying can affect any pupil and that some children and young people may be particularly vulnerable because of characteristics or circumstances such as disability or special educational needs, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or other individual circumstances. Bullying may also be directed towards pupils because of a perceived difference or because of their association with another person.

We recognise that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may experience increased vulnerability to bullying or may communicate or respond to incidents in different ways. Staff will take individual needs into account when responding to concerns, investigating incidents and providing support. Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate to ensure that pupils with SEND are able to report concerns, participate in discussions and access support.

There is no single profile of a pupil who bullies or a pupil who is targeted by bullying. Staff will therefore approach all allegations and concerns objectively, avoid assumptions and consider the individual circumstances and evidence available. Where there is insufficient evidence to establish what has happened, the school will continue to monitor the situation and provide appropriate support to all pupils involved.

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team will monitor bullying incidents and allegations across the school, including patterns relating to equality and SEND, and will review

the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. This monitoring will help the school to identify any emerging issues, ensure appropriate action is taken and make changes where necessary.

Our Governors endorse this policy and support the Trust's commitment to promoting equality, inclusion and respect and to preventing and addressing bullying in all its forms across our schools