Anti-bullying Policy

The John Ball Anti-Bullying Policy aims to capture the actions the school will take to deal with incidents of bullying.

Date agreed by Governors	February 2025
Signed on behalf of Governors	Nina Hodges Nina Hodges (Mar 11, 2025 13:12 GMT)
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In this policy you will find the following acronyms:

Acronym	Meaning
CPOMS	Child protection online management system
DSL	Designated safeguarding lead
LA	Local authority

The aims of this policy

This policy aims to set out the legal context of the policy, explain what John Ball School perceives to be bullying, including the nine protected characteristics being:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

that may also be the target of bullying, and the risk factors associated with bullying. In addition, it also sets out how the school will resolve and prevent bullying at both a whole school level and for individuals associated with bullying behavior.

This policy has been written in conjunction with the following policies:

- Safeguarding
- Learning and Teaching
- Learning Environment
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Inclusion Policy

1. National legislation influencing the policy

1.1 **Equality Act 2010**
This Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act, making the law easier to understand and strengthening protection in some situations. It sets out the different ways in which it's unlawful to treat someone.

1.2 **Equality Act (Sexual Orientation) Regulation 2007**
Schools must treat bullying on the basis of sexual orientation as seriously as that grounded in race, gender or disability. Organisations need to ensure that young people have full access to education, benefits, facilities or services, regardless of their sexual orientation or that of their parents/carers

1.3 **Racial and Religious Hatred Act 2006** (forms part of the Public Order Act 1986)
The Act makes it an arrestable offence to display threatening language, behaviour or written material in a public place, with the intention to threaten or stir up hatred.

1.4 **Childcare Act 2006**
An Act to make provision about the powers and duties of local authorities and other bodies in England in relation to the improvement of the well-being of young children.

1.5 **The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000**
Schools must tackle racial discrimination and promote equal opportunities and good relations among people from different racial groups. They must also set out how they will deal with racist incidents within a race equality policy.
Schools are required to provide reports to the local authority and their school governors about racist incidents that occur in the school.

1.6 **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)**
This protects children by setting out their basic human rights. These include children's right to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation and their right to participate.

1.7 **Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)**
School specific legislation

1.8 **Education and Inspection Act (EIA) 2006 (Amendment 2011)**
This Act states that head teachers must determine measures on behaviour and discipline that form the school's behaviour policy which include rules, rewards, sanctions and behaviour management strategies. The policy determined by the head teacher must include measures to be taken with a view to 'encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils'.

1.9 **Duty to Promote Community Cohesion**
Since September 2007 governing bodies have been required to promote community cohesion by ensuring that there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities, the diversity of people's backgrounds is appreciated and valued, similar life opportunities are available to all strong, positive relationships exist and are developed.

1.10 **Education Act 2005**
Schools are required to adopt safe practices and evaluate the extent to which learners feel safe, including whether students feel safe from bullying and racist incidents, and the extent to which they feel confident to talk to staff and others when they feel at risk.

1.11 **Education Act 2002**
Governing bodies have a duty to safeguard the welfare of students and will make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. All state schools must have a behaviour policy in place which includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. The policy is decided by the school. Staff, parents and pupils must be made aware of it.

1.12 **Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998**
This requires head teachers to take steps to encourage good behaviour and respect for others, and to prevent all forms of bullying between students.

2. What is bullying?

2.1 There is no legal definition of bullying, although the DFE states that:

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 (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups because of their protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

In addition, bullying may occur because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.[1]

2.2 Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship, which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

2.3 At John Ball School we view bullying as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- aimed at certain groups/person, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

In line with John Ball School's Behaviour Policy, bullying is not accepted as it can damage educational and personal development. The school aims to develop a culture where bullying is **not** tolerated.

[1] 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying', Department for Education, July 2017

2.4 It takes many forms and can include:

- **Emotional**
  Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, using threatening gestures)
- **Physical**
  Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist**
  Racial taunts, racial comments, gestures
- **Sexual**
  Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality i.e. homophobic behaviour
- **Verbal**
  Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber**
  All areas of online, such as email and internet chat room misuse. Threats by texts and calls. Misuse of associated technology i.e. camera and video facilities.
- **Prejudice**
  Targeting of certain individuals or groups on the basis of their protected characteristics– for example homophobic bullying, bullying of children with special educational needs and disabilities, bullying related to health conditions and allergies, bullying related to race and religion, bullying of children in care, bullying of children who care for their parents or their siblings (young carers), and gender-based bullying (e.g. transphobic, sexual and sexist bullying).
- **Appearance**
  Commenting on weight, height, disfigurements, hair, teeth, skin conditions, glasses and clothes.
- **Sexual bullying/exploitation**
  Behaviour with a sexual element that is harmful, non-consensual and repeated. This could include sexual comments, name-calling, spreading of sexual rumours, use of technology to spread sexual gossip, comments or images, exposing body parts and non-consensual touch (e.g. touching body parts, pulling bra straps, raising skirts, pulling down trousers). Sexual exploitation is a safeguarding issue and requires prompt, multi- agency working to address the issues.
- **Criminal exploitation**
  Behaviour that coerces children to become involved with criminal activities. Children may be pressured into doing things like stealing or carrying drugs or weapons, or joining a gang.

- **Indirect bullying**
  When rumours or stories start and spread amongst pupils; result in others being ignored or left out: deliberately excluding others.

2.5 There are times that bullying behaviour becomes criminal - but not all bullying behaviour is criminal. Some examples of bullying behaviour that could be considered criminal include:

- Threatening or actual physical or sexual assault.
- The use of technology to bully and harass.
- Theft.
- Coercing others to commit a crime.
- Hate crime (e.g. racism).

3. Risk factors of being bullied and bullying

3.1 In the study by Bentley, H. et al (2017) 'How safe are our children?', [2] the most comprehensive overview of child protection in the UK , the following risk factors were identified.

3.2 Children are more likely to suffer from bullying and may need additional support if they:

- Have a physical disability and/or learning difficulty.
- Have experienced abuse or neglect.
- Are, or have been, looked after by foster carers or the local authority.
- Have witnessed domestic violence.
- Are refugees or asylum seekers.
- Are members of faith communities (in particular, those who wear clothing that marks them out as members of their faith).
- Are members of the travelling community.
- Are lesbian, bisexual, gay, transgender, or those who are questioning their identity.
- Are young carers.
- Are overweight.
- Have other physical or linguistic characteristics that are perceived to be different from the norm.

[2]https://www.nspcc.org.uk/globalassets/documents/research-reports/how-safe-children-2017-report.pdf

- Have transferred schools, particularly mid-year transfers.
- Have had long periods of illness or spent extended time overseas.
- Have low self-esteem.
- Lack self-confidence.
- Are isolated or socially excluded.
- Live in families perceived as 'different' from the norm.

3.3 Risk factors for those associated with bullying behaviour include:

- Beliefs, values and prejudices.
- Emotional or behavioural disorders affected by personal and home circumstances including witnessing or being subject to abuse and/or neglect.
- Difficulty in using social and emotional skills, e.g. lack of empathy, low self-esteem.
- Underdeveloped ability to resolve conflict or problems through discussion.
- Family influences, e.g. parental modelling of bullying behaviour, parents.
- Encouraging their children to respond aggressively to conflict in an effort to prevent them from being bullied.

3.4 Risk Factors associated with offending behaviour of young people:

- **Individual**
  Hyperactivity and impulsive behaviour; early onset of aggressive and other problem behaviour.
- **Family**
  Poor parental supervision; harsh or erratic discipline; family conflict; parental criminality; low family income.
- **Peer**
  Delinquent peer group; high proportion of unsupervised time spent with peers.
- **School**
  Low attainment; low commitment/truancy; aggressive behaviour and bullying, exclusions, underdeveloped monitoring and/or communication systems; children with unmet needs.
- **Community**
  Poverty, disadvantage, neglected neighbourhood; little community.

4. Possible signs and symptoms of being bullied

4.1 A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. These are not exhaustive. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate

if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in academic work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has dinner or other money continually "lost"
- Has unexplained cuts and/or bruises
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been taken)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and/or suddenly stops looking when messages are received

4.2 These signs could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

5. A whole school approach to preventing bullying

5.1 At John Ball School we aim to develop safe and calm learning and play environments as low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can, in itself, have a significant impact if left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay. It can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

5.2 Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

5.3 We aim to develop a supportive culture where it is important to encourage all staff and young people to develop responsibility for themselves as well as respect and empathy for others. This develops resilience in John Ball staff and pupils, while at the same time ensuring that:

- Bullying is everyone's responsibility and that when reported it will be taken seriously and pupils will be safeguarded.
- Appropriate investigations will take place, regular updates on progress will be given.
- Support will be offered, as necessary, from within the organisation or via external agencies as required.

5.4 Within our restorative justice approach all children and adults should work together to create an environment where bullying is not tolerated. All adults should raise awareness of the need not to give the bully an audience and that bystanders can actively help the target and prevent bullying. One way this can be done is by reporting the bullying via the worry boxes and encouraging the victim to report the incident. In addition, each class has a 'Be Safe' board also known as 'The Hive' with photographs identifying all those familiar adults in school children can go to should they feel they need help. The Hive also outlines other mechanisms for reporting bullying or feeling unsafe including the Childline number.

5.5 Class-based staff should at all times be alert to their responsibilities to ensure the well-being and safety of their pupils. As such key policies such as the Behaviour for Learning policy alongside the curriculum map, including PSHE, will go a long way to creating positive relationships for everyone in the class and beyond.

5.6 Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through PSHE, assemblies and various subject areas, as appropriate, to promote tolerance and respect for others and to attempt to eradicate such behaviour. Additionally, John Ball raises awareness through displays, peer support and creating safe spaces for vulnerable children in school. Teachers strive to make classrooms safe and inviting spaces where pupils thrive.

5.7 We recognise that bullying can cause deep emotional distress and have in place systems which prevent it. For example:

- Our culture is one of zero tolerance to bullying.
- We encourage children to tell if they feel they are being bullied. They can tell either a friend, a member of staff or a parent (who must inform the school).
- There are regular (at least termly) assemblies which highlight issues about

bullying, including prejudice against protected characteristics, and what can be done about it. These include cyber bullying.

- Our Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) curriculum and Bullying Intervention Training (BIT) program addresses bullying.
- Pupil Leadership Team where representatives discuss issues of bullying, sometimes hearing directly from the victim and bully.
- Annual children's questionnaire with follow up of issues.
- All staff are constantly vigilant for signs of bullying e.g. children not included on playground games, children not wanting to come to school
- Friendship circles to specifically support children in the development of social skills and positive relationships.
- New children are given a 'buddy' to show them around and look after them.

5.8 Governors work together with the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team to communicate the Anti-Bullying Policy to the school community to remove all forms of bullying.

6. Dealing with bullying incidents

6.1 Procedures for bullying incidents:

- Any staff member who receives a report or sees bullying incident must report it on CPOMS and alert the appropriate Assistant Head teacher, the DSL team, Pastoral Care Manager and Deputy and Head teacher.)
- The DSL team will give advice about the best way to proceed and who is best to deal with the incident.
- An identified member of staff will talk to the targeted child and their parent.
- An identified member of staff will talk to bullying person/people and their parent.
- An identified member of staff will talk to any witnesses or bystanders.
- Staff will update the CPOMS incident log at each point of investigation.
- A full 360 degree picture of the incident issues should be established before making decisions on outcomes.

The process below outlines the steps that will be taken when an incident is reported where a pupil is targeted because of one of their protected characteristics:

Action	When	By who	Achieved
The adult who the incident is reported to will record it on CPOMS and name the specific protected characteristic in question, for example, record it as a racist or homophobic incident. The class teacher(s) and SLT will be notified via CPOMS. The case will then be considered to be open on CPOMS. At each step, the school-based adult will update the incident log on CPOMS.			
The class teacher will speak to all children involved to establish facts. This includes witnesses and bystanders. Where it is not possible for the teacher to carry this out, it will be done by a member of the leadership team or inclusion team.			
The teacher will explain to all those involved that the incident is a form of bullying targeting a protected characteristic such as race or gender.			
The teacher will give targeted child the opportunity to express how they feel about being bullied. These feelings should be acknowledged as valid by all those involved.			
The teacher will give the perpetrator an opportunity to account for their behaviour, to express the reasons why they targeted the individual(s) and what they understand about the impact of their words and, or actions.			
The teacher will inform all sets of parents of the incident and the sanctions applied.			
The teacher will ask all the parents of the children involved to speak to their child about the seriousness of the incident.			

Following this, a member of the leadership team will contact the perpetrator's parents to follow up on the outcomes of the conversation, ensuring it took place and that the perpetrator understood the seriousness of the incident as explained by their parent.			
The member of the leadership team will make a decision as to whether further support is required for the targeted child or perpetrator. If required, this will be organised in consultation with the parents.			
A member of the leadership team will speak to the targeted child's parents to summarise the impact of the sanction and the parental conversation with the perpetrator. The aim of this is to provide reassurance that the incident has been taken seriously, appropriately addressed, and understood by the perpetrator and their parents. This will reduce the possibility of an incident of prejudice against a protected characteristic recurring in the future.			
A member of the leadership team will support this with a restorative conversation and apology that is appropriately timed and genuine in nature.			
Lastly, this will be reported and closed as a case on CPOMS.			

6.2 If bullying or malicious or threatening comments are posted using technology either inside or outside of school time about a pupil or a member of staff:

1. Advise the child/adult not to respond to the message.
2. Secure and preserve any evidence.
3. Inform the sender's service provider and request the comments be removed.
4. Endeavour to trace the origin and inform police as appropriate.
5. Consider delivering a parent workshop for the school community.
6. Consider informing the police depending on the severity or repetitious nature of offence.
7. Inform the LA e-safety officer.

6.3 Checklist to support investigations:

- Who was involved?

- Who witnessed the incident?
- When and where did the incident take place?
- How did the incident start?
- What is alleged to have happened from the perspective of all involved?
- What was the response of the target(s)?
- In what way did the victim suffer?
- To what extent did the incident affect others?
- Who reported it and when?
- What does (do) the target(s) wish to see resulting from the investigation?

6.4 Possible outcomes:

The perpetrator(s) will receive a sanction as deemed appropriate by the school team according to our Behaviour for Learning policy and using our professional judgement. The severity of the consequence will depend on many aspects including:

- Age of those involved.
- Persistence/repetition of incidents.
- Knowledge of individuals past experiences, abilities and disabilities.
- Level of distress caused.
- Context of the incident.

In serious cases or persistent cases, this may include internal or external fixed term exclusion.

- The identified member of staff will contact all parents and carers involved, initially inform them and also subsequently report back outcomes and actions.
- If possible, and agreed by parents and carers, restorative justice will be used to reconcile the pupils. There might be occasions where restorative justice is required between parents before the children.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

6.5 A support plan for the target and bully may need to be agreed. In some cases in school support such as the Pastoral Care Manager or Counselling service may be considered as well as external referrals to courses such as 'ZAP' via Kidscape.

6.6 If the incident raises safeguarding concerns then this may need to be reported to Children social care and this will be done in line with our safeguarding policy.

6.7 If the incident raises concerns over a criminal nature, then we will work with parents on deciding the best route to report any such crime.

7. Practical support for children involved in bullying

7.1 Practical support should be focused on giving the young person a sense of control over the situation. This support might include:

- Helping a young person or parent/carer liaise with other organisations and/or the family.
- Enabling a supportive adult to attend meetings with the young person where the incident will be discussed.
- Making sure the young person has up to date information about the progress of the incident.
- Providing information about the legal or court process if necessary.
- Providing personal safety information, e.g. leaflets and advice.
- Referring the young person within the home organisation for additional support, e.g. mentoring, small group sessions focused on specific behaviour.
- Referring the young person to other agencies for specialist support.

7.2 Emotional support for children involved in bullying
Appropriate emotional support helps young people involved in bullying incidents to explore the options available to them, to identify strategies for dealing with the effects of being involved and to put any fears they may have concerning their emotional reaction to bullying into context. The support enables them to express their thoughts and feelings about how the bullying has affected them. Victims, perpetrators and bystanders may all need emotional support.

7.3 Emotional support includes:

- Allowing young people to tell their story in their own words and at their own pace.
- Active listening, to show the young person that they have been heard.
- Reflecting back what the young person says to show they have been understood.
- Helping the young person to work through any feelings of anger.
- Positively challenging guilt and self-blame, and expressing compassion, concern and empathy.

- Conveying a sense of positive regard towards the young person.
- Demonstrating respect and a non-judgmental approach to the person and their situation.
- Identifying, affirming and encouraging the young person's capacity to cope in the future.
- Helping the young person to build respect, self -esteem and confidence.
- Helping the young person to change their behaviour as necessary.

7.4 In some cases, a young person may need more in-depth support, which is beyond the skills of staff in the organisation to provide. In these cases a referral for specialist mental health support or other agency should be made. The Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion will ensure feedback to parents is received.

7.5 There are times when children and families perceive a case of bullying to exist where the evidence collected by the school lead the school to assess the situation as peer conflict. On these occasions, the Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion may be involved to explore whether there are underlying SEND such as, for example, social communication difficulties.Collecting, monitoring and analysing data

7.6 John Ball School will collect data on bullying incidents to enable frequent monitoring. We will consider this data so we can look for trends and patterns, use this information to plan and train staff appropriately not only to exemplify best practice but so we are able to use our conclusions to take both innovative and firm action to reduce further incidents.

7.7 This policy will be reviewed every two years by the Full Governing Body.

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