The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation

Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation acknowledge that pupils may be bullied in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing.

By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

2. Aims

The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

Our aim is that through the creation of an ethos of good behaviour, where children treat one another and the school staff with respect, incidents of bullying are minimised. If bullying does occur, incidents are seen as serious. This policy outlines The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

We believe that children being bullied should be supported and assistance should be given to uphold their right to play and live in a safe environment which allows their healthy development.

3. Legislation

This policy is written with reference to DFE advice 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (July 2017) and supporting documents.   It also considers:

- "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (2022)
- "Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges" (2017)
- 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff' (November 2014)
- Childnet's "Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools".

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Board

The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation Governing body is responsible for:

- reviewing this policy in conjunction with the Executive Head / Head of School;
- monitoring the policy's effectiveness; and
- holding the Executive Head / Head of School to account for its implementation.

4.2 The Executive Head / Head of School

The Executive / Head of School is responsible for:

approving and reviewing this policy in conjunction with the Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation Governing Body;

- ensuring that the school environment is an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others which is upheld by all;
- ensuring our pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy;
- supporting staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying;
- recognizing that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required;
- ensuring that staff deal effectively with any incidents of bullying;
- monitoring that the policy is implemented by staff consistently with all groups of pupils;
- ensuring that all staff support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly;
- ensuring this policy works alongside the safeguarding policy to offer pupils both sanctions and support when necessary;
- recognising the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages; and
- dealing with any complaints / grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy.

4.3 Teachers and Staff

Staff are responsible for:

- creating an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others;

- supporting, upholding and implementing this policy consistently;

- communicating the school's expectations, values and standards through teaching and in every interaction with pupils;

- supporting pupils create positive relationships to help prevent bullying;

- recognising that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required;

- ensuring pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy;

- challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers;

- identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly;

- providing a personalised approach to the specific behavioural needs of particular pupils and

- recognising the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.

4.4 Parents and Carers

Parents and carers, where possible, should:

- get to know the school's bullying policy and reinforce it at home where appropriate;

- support their child in adhering to the school's bullying policy;

- role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline;

- discuss any bulling concerns with the class teacher promptly; and

- take part in any pastoral work following any incidents of bullying.

The school will endeavour to build a positive relationship with parents and carers by keeping them informed about any incidents of bullying and, working in collaboration with them to tackle bullying issues.

4.5 Pupils

Pupils will be made aware of the following:

- what bulling is;
- the school's approach to bullying;
- the part they play in preventing bullying;
- the potential impact of bullying;
- how to express worries and anxieties about bullying;
- the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying; and
- the pastoral support that is available to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bully.

5. Definitions

The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation consider bullying to be

- 'behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally'. (DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying)
- bullying can include physical and emotional abuse such as name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, peer isolation (e.g. excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- The same unacceptable behaviours can be expressed online; this is sometimes called online bullying or cyberbullying. Specifically, this can include sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- bullying can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development.
- Bullying is recognised by The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation as being a form of child on child abuse; children can abuse other children.
  - abuse is abuse and it should never be tolerated or passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh" or "part of growing up".
  - we recognise that even if there are no reports of bullying, it does not mean it is not happening and it may be the case that it is just not being reported.
  - all victims will be taken seriously and offered appropriate support, regardless of where the abuse takes place.

6. Forms and Types of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying 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. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Many experts say that 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.

This policy covers all types of bullying including but not limited to:

- bullying related to physical appearance;
- bullying related to physical/mental health conditions;
- prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics) which may include:
    - bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith;
    - bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture;
    - bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND);
    - bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying);
    - gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying; and
    - bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act).
- bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances

This policy covers all forms of bullying including but not limited to:

- physical (e.g. pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc)
- emotional (e.g. sectarian/racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing and emotional torment through ridicule, humiliation and the continual ignoring of individuals)
- sexualised bullying / harassment (e.g. sexual comments and/or suggestions, unwanted physical contact)
- bullying via technology, known as online bullying or cyberbullying. See section 8.3.

6.1 Vulnerable Groups

- Bullying can happen to anyone; however, we recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:
- Looked After Children;
- children having caring responsibilities;
- gypsy, Roma and Traveller children;
- children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND);
- children from ethnic minorities;
- children entitled to Free School Meals;
- children for whom English is an Additional Language;
- children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual; or
- those suffering from health problems, including mental health.

6.2 Bullying Which Occurs Outside School Premises

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

7. Systems in Place Which Prevent Bullying

Our culture is one of zero tolerance to bullying. Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential in keeping incidents in our school to a minimum.

7.1 Environment

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse).
- Recognise the potential for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to be disproportionally impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Recognise that bullying may be affected and influenced by gender, age, ability and culture of those involved.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Constantly vigilant for signs of bullying e.g. children not included on playground games, children not wanting to come to school.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.

7.2 Policy and Practices

This policy outlines The Eliot Bank and Gordonbrock Schools Federation will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying. In addition, we will:

- Provide a range of approaches for pupils, staff and parents / carers to access support and report concerns.

- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying bought to the schools' attention, which involves or effects pupils, even when they are not on school premises; for example, when using school transport or online, etc.

- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable. See section 8.2.

- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully, and those who have been bullied.

- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.

Codes of Conduct are displayed throughout the school. Through pupils following these rules, and staff reinforcing them, bullying should be significantly reduced.

Our Behaviour Policy includes rewards and sanctions which are used consistently, alongside positive relationships, to prevent inappropriate behaviour, and promote positive behaviour.

7.3 Education and Training

The school will:

- Train all staff, including teaching staff, support staff (e.g. administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff, to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following the school's policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.

- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, the school/student council, etc.

- Collaborate with other local educational settings as appropriate, and during key times of the year, for example during transition.

- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year, reinforced through key opportunities such as anti-bullying week

- Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including building self-esteem.

7.4 Pupil Engagement and Involvement

The School will engage with all pupils to ensure that they understand what bullying is the school's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. In order to achieve this the school will:

- Provide regular opportunities for pupil to discuss what bullying is and how to prevent bullying. This will be done through:
  - The Curriculum: Within the curriculum we will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, Circle time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate
  - Assemblies: Regular (at least termly) assemblies which highlight issues about bullying and what can be done about it. These include cyber bullying.
  - Awareness Events: We take part in the national annual Anti bullying week during which children engage in discussions and activities about bullying, bullying prevention and support. We also take part in other awareness weeks such as Differences week which provide a chance for open discussions about differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Also, children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities
  - School Council: Our school council regularly discuss issues around bullying.
  - Our class buddy system provides opportunity for classes of different age groups to work together at regular times throughout the year. This helps to develop strong relationships and 'buddies' feel that they can join in playground activities and look out for one another.
  - Pupil Feedback: Annual children's questionnaire with follow up of issues.
  - Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying. We encourage children to tell if they feel they are being bullied. They can tell either a friend, a member of staff or their parent (who must inform the school). Every child has a 'trusted adult.'
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying. See section 8.2.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have. See section 8.1 and 8.2.

7.5 Parental Engagement and Involvement

The school will engage with all parents / carers so that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. We want our parents feel confident that we will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. We help parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home. In order to achieve this the school will:

- Make sure that key information about bullying (including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including:
    o school newsletters
    o information published on the school website (including policies and named points of contact)
    o information leaflets
    o parent / carer feedback questionnaires
- Ensure all parents / carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents / carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents / carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

7.6 Disciplinary Sanctions

See section 8.2.

8. Responding to Bullying Concerns

When a child and / or parent reports any incidents of bullying the
school will investigate the allegation through;

- o The headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another appropriate member of leadership staff will interview all parties involved to ascertain what form of the bullying has taken, when and where it has occurred and over what period of time;
- o talk with any named witnesses; and
- o talk with the alleged bully.

If the situation is confirmed as one of bullying the school will:

- Record a clear and precise account of bullying incidents in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.
- Speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- Inform the DSL of all bullying concerns, especially where there may be safeguarding issues.
- Provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate. See section 8.1.

- Ensure the appropriate sanctions and support, for example as identified within the school behavior policy and child protection policy, for the alleged bully. See section 8.2.
- Ensure parents/carers, of both the victim and alleged bully, are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentially policies. See sections 8.5.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, for example the police if a criminal offence has been committed or Early Help if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.
- Where the bullying of or by pupils takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated and responded to in line with this policy, our Online Safety Policy and the school behaviour policy. If required, the DSL will collaborate with DSLs at other settings.

8.1 Strategies to Support the Victim

The school will put in place the following strategies to support the victim:

- Ensure the victim knows that this is being taken very seriously, that they have done the right thing in letting an adult know and that it will be dealt with.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the DSL, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Reassuring the pupil and providing immediate pastoral support.
- Notify all relevant staff to ensure the situation is watched and to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to any further concerns.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Ask the victim to name a trusted adult who they will go to if there should be any reoccurrence. The school will then organise this.
- Ask the victim to name one or two trusted peers who will help to monitor the situation and support the victim. The school will organise this.
- Check that they feel happy about how the situation has been dealt with.
- Discuss with the victim's parents / carers. See section 8.5.
- Set review dates with the victim (and trusted adult or trusted peers) to ensure that there is no follow up action by the bully.
- Providing ongoing support, as appropriate. This may include working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.

8.2 Strategies to Deal with The Bully

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern, identifying the behaviours that are not acceptable and the need to change.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- Discussing the impact on the victim.
- Discuss with the victim's parents / carers. See section 8.5.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.

In addition, we will apply the appropriate sanctioning, in line with school behaviour/discipline policy. This may include:

- sanctions might include writing letter of apology,
- loss of playtimes
- internal exclusion
- in cases of severe bullying or if the bully persists, exclusion.

Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

We will 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.

8.3 Strategies to also be followed in the event of Cyber Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in and outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen beyond the school day into home and private space, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content.

Cyber bullying can take many forms for example:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages or e-mails, personally or anonymously;
- making insulting comments about someone on a website, social networking site; and
- making or sharing derogatory or embarrassing videos of someone via mobile phone or e-mail.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.

- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.

- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include:

  - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply.

  - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists.

  - helping those involved to consider and manage any private information they may have in the public domain.

- Secure and preserve any evidence: 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 headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:

  - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.

  - Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school searching and confiscation policy. (We will access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully).

  - Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.

- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:

  o looking at use of the school systems

  o identifying and interviewing possible witnesses

  o Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.

- Where an individual can be identified, the school will ensure that appropriate sanctions are implemented to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help or support they may need.

- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.

- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied, and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.

- Consider providing the school community (parents / carers and pupils) with information / a workshop on e-safety.

8.4 Conflict Resolution

If the victim feels comfortable a meeting will be arranged for the victim and the bully in which they will be supported in understanding each other's point of view. Circle of friends/ circle time will be organised in the relevant classes so that all children have the opportunity to discuss what has happened and support the resolution process.

8.5 The Involvement and Support of Parents / Carers

Involvement of parents is vital to this process whether the child is the victim or the alleged bully. Any incident of bullying will be discussed with the child/young person's parents / guardians. Discussions will include:

- Parents /Carers, of both parties, will be advised on policies and procedures in relation to bullying.
- Parent / Carers, of both parties, will be informed of the outcome of any investigations and the action that will be taken by the school. If the child is the perpetrator it is essential that the parent supports the school's actions and confirms to their child that bullying behaviour is unacceptable.
- Parent / Carers, of both parties, will be given advice on coping with bullying.

9. Support for Staff Who Are Bullied

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable. If such a situation arises then;

- A senior staff member will invite the person to a meeting to address their concerns, and if they have a reasonable complaint, to make sure they know how to raise this appropriately.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or colleague, the majority of cases can be dealt with most effectively through the school's own behaviour policy and / or discipline policy.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour policy and / or discipline policy.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the headteacher.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to future concerns.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

9.1 Cyberbullying of Staff

Staff are given guidance on cyber security and the use social media. Expectations are made clear in the Staff Code of Conduct. Staff should:

- Never respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents.
- Report incidents appropriately and seek support from your line manager or a senior member of staff.
- Save evidence of the abuse; take screen prints of messages or web pages and record the time and date.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be a current pupil or colleague, the majority of cases can be dealt with most effectively through the school's own mediation and disciplinary procedures.
- Where the perpetrator is known to be an adult, in nearly all cases, the first action should be for a senior staff member to invite the person to a meeting to address their concerns, and if they have a reasonable complaint, to make sure they know how to raise this appropriately. They can request that the person removes the offending comments.
- If they refuse, it will up to the school to decide what to do next – either the school or you could report the matter to the social networking site if it breaches their terms, or seek guidance from the local authority, legal advisers or support from other agencies for example, The UK Safer Internet Centre.
- If the comments are threatening or abusive, sexist, of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, you or a representative from the school may consider contacting the local police. Online harassment is a crime.

10. Recording and Reporting of Incidents of Bullying / Harassment

We believe that children / young people should know who will listen to and support them. Any advice and assistance should be given by an experienced member of staff.

The senior member of staff will use the school's incident form to record the incident and subsequent actions.

11. Links with Other Policies

- Equalities Policy
- PSHE Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SRE Policy
- SEN Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- E safety Policy