



## Parent Information Memo

**Subject:** Bullying and how we deal with it

### 1. What is bullying?

The most common definition of bullying is, "a repeated oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons." Bullying is different from aggression between people of equal power. Bullying takes many different forms including; physical threats or violence; name-calling and teasing; ostracism; and social attacks on someone's reputation. People can bully others directly, in person; indirectly, such as by gossiping or 'badmouthing' to others; or through any form of communication technology including talking on the phone, writing, texting, emailing, and recording.

### 2. What is the difference between bullying and normal conflict between peers?

Conflict is a normal part of most relationships because people have different perspectives and priorities. While children need adult supervision so that they learn how to deal with conflict constructively, **most upsetting behaviour between people is NOT bullying**. People can also be hurtful to each other because of thoughtlessness, annoyance, poor boundaries, and experimenting with negative uses of their power without realizing the impact. The good news is that the social-emotional skills that can prevent and stop most bullying and harassment are also important in building healthy relationships. Learning how to take charge of their own emotional and physical safety, how to act safely and respectfully towards others even if they feel frustrated or upset, how to set boundaries and respect the boundaries of others, and how to advocate effectively to help others empowers most people and gives them tools to better manage future conflicts and relationship issues (see more from <http://www.kidpower.org/library>)

### How do we deal with bullying?

Everyone has the capacity to be a bully. We don't think that some children are 'bad', therefore bullies and others 'good', therefore victims of bullying. We believe that through our strong ethos, taught through our Philosophy and Ethics curriculum, our values based behaviour management system, comprehensive safeguarding policy, and intention to be a **listening** organization, we have the tools to combat bullying - together.

*For children, this means:*

- That they are taught what bullying is and how it manifests in school and out of school contexts
- That they have a strong understanding of our school Golden Expectations and the consequences of positive and negative behaviour
- That they take responsibility for their actions and deal with the consequences
- That they have someone they trust to talk to should any incidents arise (at home, school, other context)
- That they know they will be listened to and that action will follow to (a) make them safe (b) improve their experience of school and (c) involve retribution and bully and bullied coming together in a safe and managed situation
- That we build their confidence and self-esteem and spiritual and intellectual ability to manage complex and difficult situations.

*For parents, this means:*

- There is a clear line of communication between school and home; from parent to teacher, escalating to senior leaders as necessary
- That their concerns will be taken seriously and will be investigated in a suitable way
- That their children will be kept safe
- That parents of all children involved will be contacted
- That parents take responsibility for their children's actions
- That the school will monitor the situation

*For staff, this means:*

- Being vigilant and aware of the dynamics in classes and groups of children
- Deal with situations, incidences and problems quickly and effectively
- Always giving time to listen to children, including those accused of bullying
- Upholding the values in our curriculum, ethos and behaviour management system
- Teaching children through modeling and through a well planned curriculum
- Communicating concerns quickly with parents

Our Behaviour Management System is called 'STAY ON GREEN'. We have 6 Golden Expectations based on our 7 values (Humility, Empathy, Self-discipline, Respect, Integrity, Courage, Gratitude).

## Golden Expectations

1. Be kind: think of others and help them
2. Be safe: look after yourself and others
3. Be respectful: listen carefully and act politely
4. Be honest: think before you speak or act
5. Be courageous: keep on trying your best
6. Be grateful: say 'thank you'

### **Process:**

If a child is bullying, they will meet with their class teacher and their behaviour identified in relation to the Golden Expectations. Clear expectations will be set so that they understand what the consequences of their behaviour are. The Inclusion Leader may be involved to explore what reasons there could be for such behaviour. Targets for changes in this behaviour may be set and monitored. Parents will be involved.

The child who was bullied will also meet with their class teacher or other significant adult mentor. Another child may be assigned to the child as a peer friendship buddy. The child will be heard and how they feel acknowledged. They will be assured that this is not acceptable and that the school and parents will work hard to resolve the issue.

The senior leaders and Head Teacher will be involved if the bullying continues or if the bullying was particularly serious. This will become a much more serious matter. We hope never to exclude a child from learning, although our policy makes it clear that such action could be considered.

Communication is the key to resolving incidences of bullying.

Each case is considered in its own right and dealt underpinned by these principles and our vision and ethos.