

AL-ZAHRA SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

To be read in conjunction with
**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND CHILD PROTECTION POLICY,
& E-SAFETY POLICY**

2024/25

School:	Al-Zahra School
Head Teacher:	Mrs Z Rizvi

Named Personnel with designated responsibility for Child Protection (Child Protection Committee)	
Designated Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs S Rizvi
Deputy Safeguarding Lead:	Mrs Z Rizvi, (KS3 and KS4), Mr M Bayati (KS3 and KS4), Mrs E Jaffri (KS2)

Policy Review Dates	
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school take seriously their responsibility under section 157 of the 'Education Act of 2002' to promote the welfare of children, and to provide safeguarding dedicated to the wellbeing and protection of those under the age of 16 years.

At Al-Zahra school we take bullying and its impact seriously. We hold steadfastly to the ethos that there should be an equitable learning experience for all pupils and as such foster high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this. Our Islamic values are based on mutual respect and consideration and subsequently the Proprietors of Al-Zahra school are committed to providing a safe and happy learning environment for all.

We do not tolerate bullying, harassment, victimisation, or discrimination of any kind and work hard to prevent these or to tackle them if they occur. Bullying is a whole school issue, and we take a whole school approach in response. Any member of the community may bully or be a victim of bullying: we regard all incidences of bullying equally seriously and in turn expect all staff, pupils and parents/ carers to play their part in preventing and tackling bullying. Al-Zahra school has a zero-tolerance stance on the use of homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language and bullying.

i. Policy Aims

To overcome bullying, we need to work together to ensure that Al-Zahra school continues to be a safe place for all our pupils, as such we need to:

- To ensure that all pupils and staff are valued in the school and that emphasis is placed on developing confidence and self esteem
- To provide a safe, secure and supportive learning environment for all pupils and staff
- To help pupils develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others
- To encourage respect for families, friends and others
- To create an atmosphere of trust where pupils feel that they can express their concerns and fears and where they can feel confident that these will be dealt with
- To make all pupils aware that bullying is never acceptable and to encourage them to speak out whenever it occurs
- To ensure all pupils are aware that homophobic, Trans-phobic, Cross-dresser phobic or any other gender related similar to race related phobias and bullying will not be tolerated

- To provide learning experiences for all so that they take responsibility for their own behaviour
- To provide alternative strategies for those who bully to enable them to work with other people
- To ensure that all members of staff have a high level of awareness of the problem and that they can use agreed strategies for dealing with it when it occurs

ii. **What do we mean by Bullying?**

The Department for Education defines bullying as 'behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:

- **PHYSICAL**
Any use of violence, a child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc. This could also be in the form of unwanted physical/sexual contact.
- **VERBAL**
Verbal abuse can take the form of racial taunts, sexually abusive comments, gestures, sarcasm, name-calling or the spreading of rumours. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, special educational needs, religion, culture, sex, or personality, etc.
- **EMOTIONAL**
A child can be bullied simply by being ignored, tormented or excluded from discussions or activities with those they believe to be their friends.
- **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT**
Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. The bully may use physical threats in order that the pupil hands over property to them such as demanding money/notes/other items from a pupil.
- **CYBER-BULLYING**
This is a method of bullying rather than a type of bullying. It includes bullying via text message, via instant messenger services and social network sites; via e-mail and via images or videos posted on the Internet; or spread via mobile phone.

iii. **Perpetrators and Victims**

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one pupil or persons over another. This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The mental cunning ability of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity of the individual – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc.

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community. Bullying hurts and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. It can cause great distress, unhappiness and psychological damage and at its worst lead to suicide. It can also be a criminal offence, for example if the behaviour amounts to harassment or threatening behaviour. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

2. Structures to Combat Bullying

At Al-Zahra school we strive to create an atmosphere where pupils who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and that any action taken will be sensitive and appropriate.

We must ensure that opportunities are provided to help pupils to develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour. Sometimes pupils can feel hurt or upset because they have been teased or have fallen out with a friend. It is important that all pupils know the difference between bullying and simply “falling out”.

i. Staff

Members of Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs (SEN) which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

Much bullying is performed in subtle ways, which are not easy to detect; a bully can use a simple look, word, or gesture to a victim to signal an intended threat or insult. Some pupils are adept at changing a bullying situation into an

apparently harmless one when an adult approaches. This makes it more important for the victim or another pupil to be able to come forward to report bullying, and for staff and parents/ carers to be alert to symptoms of bullying.

ii. **Signs and Symptoms**

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and as such needs to be investigated. Parents/ Carers should be aware of these possible signs and discuss possible bullying with the Pastoral director:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to 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 make less effort with school work than previously
- 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 monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- lack of eye contact
- is becoming short tempered
- has changed in his/her attitude to people at home.

All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the Pastoral director with close supervision of the Core safeguarding lead/ Child Protection Committee. Parents/Cares of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns that they may be having.

Members of staff should particularly watch for early signs of distress in pupils. These could include:

- A deterioration in work
- Spurious illness
- Isolation
- The desire to remain with adults
- Erratic attendance

(Whilst these may be symptomatic of other problems they could also indicate bullying.)

iii. Dealing with Bullying

Members of staff who becomes aware of an issue:

- Remain calm
- Listen to and offer support to the victim
- If appropriate, inform victim and bully that the matter will be passed on
- Make a written record of facts of the incident
- Refer to the Form Tutor/ Pastoral Director dealing with bullying

Form Tutor/ Pastoral Director who becomes aware of an issue:

- Interview victim and bully (bullies) separately to ascertain the facts
- Make the bully (bullies) aware of the situation
- Inform parents/ carers of both victim and bully (bullies), to inform them of the situation and of any action taken or contemplated
- Take disciplinary action if appropriate
- Give a written record of the names of those involved (victim and bully), the incident, resolution and action taken to the Core safeguarding team and subsequently the Head Teacher
- Check with the victim, number of times over the following days and weeks

Complaint or concerns from a parent/ carer to the Pastoral Director will be processed and the matter will be investigated and is later reported back to parent/ carer as soon as possible.

iv. Outcomes

1. The child displaying unacceptable behaviour may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding). Other consequences in Primary will include: Given verbal/written warning and break detention by class teacher (First Incident), Meeting with parents/ carers – given written and verbal warning (Second incident), Refer child to Head Teacher for appropriate action (Third Incident). Other consequences in Secondary will

include: a suspension and meeting with the parents/ carers. The length of suspension will be determined by the nature of bullying and how serious the bullying is. In cases of severe and persistent bullying the Exclusion may be permanent.

Parents/ Carers informed about their child's behaviour are requested to support the school with any sanctions that it takes or measures that it puts in place. In some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the school or family in dealing with a child continually demonstrating unacceptable behaviour towards others. e.g. police, counsellor, behaviour support worker, Brent Local Authority Designated Officer. In serious cases (this is defined as children displaying an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices) fixed or permanent exclusion will be considered.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will involve the Head Teacher and recorded in a Log and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. The Proprietors of Al-Zahra school will be informed of any serious incidents recorded in the Log, sanctions and reconciliation.

3. Prevention

Al-Zahra school based on the Islamic ethos, promotes a climate of openness, trust, and support. Our pupils have a right to expect that they will be listened to, have their concerns taken seriously, and that appropriate steps will be taken to put right any unpleasant situations or cases of bullying.

This policy is shared with all staff, pupils, and parents/ carers at their respective points of contact with the school. The school will ensure that members of staff, especially those in positions of responsibility, have received sufficient high-quality training to ensure that they are able to both identify cases of bullying, and then provide appropriate support for all parties. Crucially Al-Zahra school will continuously ensure that all our pupils are aware both of their rights and their responsibilities with respect to bullying. This will take place primarily through the following structures:

- The induction day
- PSCHE lessons
- The student council
- Peer Mentoring
- Display around the school
- School assemblies
- Anti-bullying week
- Children questionnaires

Al-Zahra school actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Staff will regularly discuss friendship and bullying, this will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other children's behaviour. All prefects are made aware to possible indicators of bullying. They are encouraged to report any matter of concern to the Form Tutor.

Children are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of school or class rules
- writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters that children who use unacceptable behaviour towards others are dealt with quickly