COWORTH FLEXLANDS
Prep School & Nursery
Inspiring Minds, Nurturing Spirit

Anti-Bullying

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1. Policy Statement

At Coworth Flexlands School we have a clearly stated policy that bullying in any form is unacceptable behaviour. As a school, we actively promote good behaviour and take steps to ensure that every person should feel a valued and worthwhile member of our community. We wish to promote a safe, secure, happy and supportive environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. We aim to do this by seeking to educate all pupils and staff about what bullying is and to help them to understand how they can play their part in preventing bullying. If they do suspect bullying is occurring in any shape or form, we ensure that they know who to tell in order to avoid it continuing and that there is a zero-tolerance commitment to bullying in our school.

Staff are aware that bullying can be extremely serious leading potentially to physiological and/or psychological damage. Any reported incident is taken seriously and investigated. Both parties are given the opportunity to speak their minds freely and may be brought together in the presence of a member of staff to talk through the problem if this is appropriate. Emphasis is placed on understanding the root of the problem and the parents of both parties will be informed. The single most important thing a school can do to prevent bullying is to have a clear policy to which pupils, staff, parents and Governors are committed.

The aim of this policy is to help members of our school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it. The policy has regard to relevant legislation and government advice. Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour that are relevant, and if staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police.

Serious sanctions will be applied as detailed in the formal sanctions section of the Behaviour and Discipline Policy and may ultimately include exclusion in cases of severe and persistent bullying. A record will be kept of any bullying allegations on CPOMS and reports can be generated termly from these by the Deputy Head or Head as needed.

This policy applies to all members of our school community, including those in our EYFS setting. In line with our Provision of Information Policy, this document is made available to all interested parties on our website, www.coworthflexlands.co.uk, and on request from the main school office. It should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection policy, the Behaviour and Discipline, E- Safety and Acceptable Use and Exclusion Policies.

The school will seek pupil voice through surveys, discussions and pastoral systems to monitor how safe pupils feel and to identify emerging concerns.

Coworth Flexlands School is fully committed to ensuring that the appliance of this Anti-Bullying policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). Coworth Flexlands School seeks to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documents:

- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusions, Expulsion and Removal Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Agreement
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy
- Supervision of Pupils Policy.

This policy has been drawn up with reference to the following statutory duties:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 – requirement for measures to prevent bullying (ISSR Part 3).
- Equality Act 2010 – duties relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026) – safeguarding context for bullying, including mental health impact.
- EYFS Statutory Framework, 2026

This policy has been drawn up with reference to the relevant non statutory guidance and other relevant information including:

- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: advice for headteachers, staff, and governing bodies (2017) DfE
- Advice for Parents and Carers on Cyber-bullying (2014) DfE
- Bullying at School (Gov.uk)
- Information from:
  - the Anti-Bullying Alliance
  - the UK Safer Internet Centre
  - Childnet

Parents/carers who are conceried about their child being bullied may wish to seek additional advice and support from resources such as:

- Childline
- Koram Kidscape

This document is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head or as events or legislation change requires.

2. Key Personnel

The Head, Nicola Cowell and the Deputy Head, Joe Yates, of Coworth Flexlands School are responsible for dealing with allegations of bullying in the Prep School and the EYFS setting. The Local Governing Body receives regular anonymised reports regarding bullying trends and patterns and monitors the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying measures.

3. What is bullying?

At Coworth Flexlands School bullying is defined as behaviour by an individual or group that is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time and which intentionally hurts, harms or distresses another individual or group, either physically, emotionally or socially. It may involve an imbalance of power, making it difficult for the targeted child to defend themselves, and it may be prejudice-based, including bullying related to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 (such as race, religion or belief, sex, secual orientation, disability or gender reassignment). Bullying may also be related to other forms of vulnerability, including special educational needs, socio-economic disadvantage, LGBTQ+ identity, young carers, or children who are adopted.

Pupils with SEND may be disproportionately affected by bulling incidents and reasonable adjustments will be made to support pupils with additional needs.

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Physical harm
- Verbal abuse, threats or intimidation
- Relational or social bullying (such as exclusion or manipulation)
- Cyberbullying, which takes place through digital technologies such as social media, messaging platforms, gaming environments, mobile phones, photographs, videos or email)

Bullying may occur in school, outside of school, online and can be carried out directly or indirectly.

Coworth Flexlands School distinguishes friendship issues from bullying as defined above. Where friendship issues are not deemed to have met the threshold to be classed as bullying, these will be dealt with in accordance to the School's Behaviour Policy.

The school recognises that some incidents between pupils may constitute child-on-child abuse rather than bullying. Allegations involving sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, coercive behaviour, intimate image abuse or other safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

The School will provide appropriate support for pupils who have experienced bullying. This may include pastoral support, restorative conversations, increased staff monitoring, wellbeing check-ins, communication with parents and referral to additional support where required.

The School recognises that pupils who display bullying behaviour may themselves require support. Interventions may include pastoral support, behaviour mentoring, restorative approaches, social skills programmes or external agency involvement where appropriate.

Bullying can take many different forms, which include:

Physical bullying should not be seen merely in terms of a pupil being physically threatened or assaulted. It can include damage done to the victim's property, clothing or schoolwork.

Verbal bullying includes name calling, sarcasm and persistent teasing.

Emotional bullying is when someone is tormented, ridiculed, or humiliated. Often the person who engages in this form of bullying does not consider it to be bullying but refers to it as a "joke". If this victim does not find teasing or taunting funny, then it is not a joke.

Indirect bullying involves spreading unpleasant stories about someone, excluding them from a social group or spreading nasty, malicious stories about them.

Racist, Religious, Cultural, Sexist, Homophobic or Transphobic bullying is when a pupil is targeted for representing a group; it is likely to hurt not only the victim but also other people in the same group; similarly, pupils who are targeted because they have a disability or a Special Educational Need, have been adopted or act as carers for a member of their family.

Sexual bullying is characterised by unwelcome remarks about appearance, inappropriate (and uninvited) touching and sexual innuendos and propositions. It can also be related to sexual orientation.

Cyber bullying is when one person or a group of people aim to threaten, tease or embarrass someone else by using a mobile phone, the internet or other technologies, such as social websites, text messages, photographs or email. Cyberbullying may include abuse through social media, messaging platforms, online gaming platforms, AI-generated content, image sharing or other digital technologies.

Bullying may occur directly or through cyber technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and e-mail) and prejudice-based bullying because of protected characteristics. We distinguish in our records any incidents of bullying which are based on protected characteristics, which enables us to monitor our success in meeting other standards such as instilling values of tolerance and respect and actively promoting the well-being of pupils. These incidents are taken particularly seriously.

Pupils who use the internet in ways that cause harm to others and bring the name of the School into disrepute, may be subject to disciplinary sanctions even if the behaviour takes place off School premises.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying makes the life of a victim a misery; it undermines confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of security. Bullying can impact on a victim's attendance and attainment at School, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide and causing psychological damage. The School will implement disciplinary sanctions that reflect the seriousness of an incident. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to "get away with it" can be detrimental to them as well as the victim. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If School staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they will seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

4. Possible signs of bullying

Signs of bullying may include but are not limited to:

- the recipient or another person confiding in a member of staff
- sudden change in demeanour/personality/academic achievement
- belongings going missing

- break-up of long-standing friendships
- frequent lateness to lessons/erratic attendance
- difficulty in sleeping/nightmares
- choosing to spend time with adults/avoiding going out to breaks
- attention seeking or aggressive behaviour
- unexplained 'illness' such as tummy-ache or parental concerns

There may be other causes for these symptoms but a combination or repetition of some of these symptoms should be investigated. The Form teacher is expected to take an active role in investigating any of the above with support from the Head or Deputy Head.

All staff have a duty to have an active awareness of behaviours that could have the potential to be Bullying behaviours, and to report these to the Head or Deputy Head.

5. Anti-bullying strategies

At Coworth Flexlands, we seek to prevent bullying from occurring by reducing the risk especially at times and in places when it is most likely to occur, at break times or in the corridors for example. Staff are present during break times and pupils are aware that they are not allowed to be inside the building so that they are outside with the duty staff who can monitor and assist them, thus reducing the risk of bullying.

We have a commitment to raising the awareness of our staff through training so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action defined to resolve and prevent problems, and the sources of support available. The school leadership team and staff promote an honest, open ethos and model positive relationships. We share a commitment to having clear policies communicated to parents, students and staff, and creating an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older students and regular celebrations of success.

The Form teacher has overall pastoral care for the pupils in his/her form class and should be kept informed of bullying/pastoral issues through the use of incident reports on CPOMs, weekly briefings and direct contact. Any bullying allegations are recorded on CPOMs and assigned to the Head or Deputy Head who will monitor these and identify any patterns of concern and intervene as needed. Parents of both the victims of bullying and those doing the bullying will be informed by the most appropriate member of staff. They will be told what has happened and the sanctions applied and may be invited in to discuss matters further.

The school uses the wider curriculum, including PSHE, RSE, RE, Citizenship, Circle Time, assemblies, projects, drama, stories, current affairs, historical events and class discussions to promote the anti-bullying message and an understanding of the differences between people and the need to avoid prejudice and prejudice-based language. We celebrate anti-bullying annually during National Anti-bullying week every November but also discuss and reinforce the messages throughout the school year.

Pupils are made aware on a regular basis of how to get help and of the various roles they may take in preventing or acceding to bullying, including that of the bystander. We also make sure that cyber bullying is discussed throughout the year and is reinforced whenever they are using computers in school. Pupils can share their views and concerns through Pupil Voice sessions, annual pupil surveys, and anonymous Worry Boxes (physical and digital).

Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously and is recorded both on CPOMs and in the bullying log with these highlighted as applicable.

6. Procedures

All incidents are to be investigated by the Form teacher in conjunction with support staff, playground staff and/or other adults involved as appropriate.

- All incidents are recorded on CPOMS – if a child or parent allege bullying or a teacher suspects bullying it should be recorded as "alleged bullying" on CPOMS.
- CPOMS is scrutinised regularly by the Deputy Head to ensure patterns of behaviour are not bullying.
- When bullying has been alleged by a pupil or a parent, staff must inform the Head or Deputy Head as soon as possible.
- All suspected incidents of bullying should be dealt with separately using the guidelines below, and the Head should be informed.

We accept that children may act in a way that is, or appears to be, abusive towards other children or another child. This will normally be dealt with via our Behaviour and Discipline policy, Child Protection or Exclusion, Expulsion and Removal Policies. It is important that both the victim and the pupil displaying bullying behaviour are given support and guidance to understand what has happened and to help them to avoid it happening again. The Deputy Head Wellbeing will monitor patterns of alleged bullying on CPOMS in order to ensure that repeated incidents are dealt with effectively.

However, where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm, the DSL will consult with the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) for advice. Where child-on-child abuse is suspected, the DSL will assess the concern and determine whether referral to Children's Services, the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, Police or other agencies is required. Likewise repeated racist incidents or a single serious incident may lead to consideration under Child Protection procedures. We keep a record of racist incidents in the Serious Misdemeanour Folder held by the Head.

When Incidents Happen

Meticulous records should be kept at each stage.

Stage 1 – Getting the facts straight

When incidents are witnessed by staff, the perpetrator(s) should be removed from the scene to ensure the victim's protection.

If it seems that there could have been more than one perpetrator, each should be interviewed individually to get the facts straight. Witnesses/bystanders should also be interviewed, and then the victim. The interviewer should take notes and record on CPOMS as **alleged bullying** as soon as possible. They should alert the Deputy Head wellbeing and the form teacher on CPOMS (sample questions are available as an appendix to this policy).

Stage 2 – Plan of Action

The Head or Deputy Head, will decide whether this is a case of bullying, in which case they will agree on a Plan of Action and discuss with the Head and Form teacher and other staff as appropriate.

Stage 3 – Contacting the Parents

The Head/Deputy Head/Form Teacher will contact the parents of both victim and perpetrator as quickly as possible, telling them of the actions taken.

Stage 4 – Keeping a Record

Each separate contact with the Parents should be recorded on CPOMS with the intention of home and school working together to change undesirable behaviour.

Stage 5 – Following up the Initial Interview

Staff should see the perpetrators and victim again. They should consider whether to see them separately or together. If the problem still remains, it is important to review and amend the Action Plan, have further parent meetings or impose further sanctions until you are sure the bullying has stopped and seems unlikely to start again. Every action and meeting or contact with parent should be recorded on CPOMS.

Stage 6- Reporting to an external agency

Where appropriate, the incident will be reported to the Police and or Children's Services where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm.

Coworth Flexlands acknowledges that whilst bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986, and that school will seek assistance from the police in cases where an offence may have been committed.

Sanctions

Disciplinary penalties are intended to impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable and is intended to act as a deterrent and clear signal to others.

Bullying by a member of staff will be dealt with by the staff disciplinary procedures.

Bullying by a parent will be dealt with by the Head or Chair of Governors

A pupil who has been acting in a bullying way will be given the opportunity to apologise and, where possible, make restitution. Sanctions may be imposed in line with the school Behaviour and Discipline Policy ultimately including exclusion that may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying (see Expulsion Policy).

Cyber-bullying

The school will differentiate between in-school and out-of-school incidents. There is a separate E-safety and Acceptable Use policy. Measures to prevent cyber-bullying include:

In-School:

- ICT lessons and E-Safety Policy make clear what are acceptable e-communications for pupils while under school supervision (to include Internet, email, Mobile phone, electronic games etc) and for staff on school premises.
- Infringements of the above are to be treated as disciplinary events (staff or pupil infringements) unless considered a Safeguarding matter.

Out-of-School, involving pupils or staff whose behaviour is impacting on another pupil or member of staff:

- Factual evidence must be provided
- We make clear that we will adopt a multi-agency approach i.e. if what we are presented with is a Safeguarding issue we will inform the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, if a criminal matter the police etc.
- All sets of parents will be involved, except if SSCP advise against this or if an allegation is made against a member of staff
- The school's involvement (when the incident takes place out of school) will remain educational (i.e. we will reiterate the PSHE teaching re personal safety, relationships, bullying

etc) and not disciplinary unless impacting on the smooth running of the school or relationships between the children in school

- We will not get involved when the issue does not involve current staff or pupils at the school, with the exception of reporting Safeguarding matters.

Document Log

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Date Authorised	October 2026
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Appendix 1: Suggested questions for victims of alleged bullying

CHILD HAVING PROBLEMS - QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction: ……. tells me that you have been unhappy recently.

1. What has made you feel like this?

2. What happened?

3. Who was there?

4. Where did it happen?

5. When did it happen?

6. Who did you tell?

7. What happened next?

8. What would you like to happen now?

Appendix 2: Suggested questions for alleged bully

CHILD ALLEGEDLY BULLYING - QUESTIONNAIRE

Introduction: ……. tells me that you have been having problems together recently.

1. Do you think you are having any problems?

Note the issues that this child raises, without any accusations.

2. Tell me what happened when…….

Ask about the specific incidents raised by the child feeling bullied. Be gentle because we need to know the truth and a threatened child will lie.

3. Discuss how both parties felt.

4. Ask if they can think of a better outcome in each situation

Be aware that the accused child may be feeling that they are the victim, and their behaviour was, in truth, a reaction to provocation.

5. What would you like to happen now?