



# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

May 2023

# The Serendipity School

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## Version History

Version Information Version No.	Updated By	Updated On	Description of Changes
1	Michele Aldridge	May 2020	Review 2019/2020
2	Pip Smith	May 2022	
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## Contents

1	Monitoring and Review.....	2
2	Scope .....	2
3	Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	2
4	Reference Documents .....	2
5	Introduction .....	3
6	Aims.....	3
7	Definition of bullying .....	4
8	Effects of bullying .....	5
9	Signs of bullying.....	6
10	Strategies for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying .....	6
11	Guidelines for Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy.....	7
12	Bullying which occurs outside school premises .....	8

# The Serendipity School

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## 1 Monitoring and Review

- 1.1 The Head Teacher will periodically report to staff on the number and type of incidents and their outcomes. The Senior Management Team will consider the handling of incidents of bullying regularly, and will discuss issues with staff as necessary.
- 1.2 The formal review will determine the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than the review date, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

## 2 Scope

- 2.1 This document describes The Serendipity Centre Ltd's (TSCL) policy on bullying in The Serendipity School. The policy draws on the DfE guidance *Preventing and tackling bullying* [RD1], which should be read alongside this policy.

## 3 Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or Acronym	Description
DfE	Department for Education
DH	Deputy Head
HT	Head Teacher
LA	Local Authority

## 4 Reference Documents

- [RD1] Preventing and tackling bullying - advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies DfE July (2017)
- [RD2] Cause for Concern Form  
TSCL
- [RD3] Worry Form  
The Serendipity School
- [RD4] Complaints Policy  
TSCL
- [RD5] Equality Act (2010)
- [RD6] SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- [RD7] Education Safeguarding Policy  
The Serendipity School
- [RD8] Education and Inspections Act (2006)
- [RD9] Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy  
TSCL

# The Serendipity School

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## 5 Introduction

- 5.1 At The Serendipity School, it must be recognised that due to the difficulties and traumas experienced by many of our students, that there is perhaps a greater potential for bullying than in other environments.
- 5.2 We recognise that many of our students experience difficulties in learning appropriate responses to a wide range of personal, social, emotional and educational pressures, and many adopt feelings of vulnerability, rejection and hostility which can often manifest themselves as bullying behaviour.
- 5.3 The Serendipity School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment where each student is considered important, and they can develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and morally to their fullest extent, thus maximising their learning.
- 5.4 All students at The Serendipity School L are entitled to a degree of safety and protection and therefore bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.
- 5.5 Every member of the school community has a responsibility to prevent and to deal with the incidents of bullying including racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic and online bullying.
- 5.6 The Serendipity School will also take note of bullying perpetrated in the community which spills over into the school and will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying.
- 5.7 This policy is written with the whole school community in mind and covers staff, students, parents/carers. Members of the school workforce suffering from bullying, or concerned about bullying, are to be advised that they can contact HR, their trade union, professional association or the Employee Assistance Programme for support and advice. Reference should also be made to the Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing) Policy [RD9].

## 6 Aims

- 6.1 The aims of the policy are to
  - reinforce the values of The Serendipity School's ethos of respect and to help ensure that it permeates throughout the whole service.
  - provide the students with the skills, strategies and information so that they develop an understanding of what bullying means and the possible impact it can have on themselves and others.
  - set and monitor consistent boundaries for acceptable behaviour.
  - encourage all students to take responsibility for their own actions and understand the consequences.
  - provide adequate training for staff so that all issues of bullying and the procedures for dealing with them are understood.

# The Serendipity School

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- support staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- ensure that information about bullying will be presented in a form that makes it possible for all to access e.g. symbols to support those with specific learning needs.
- students are left in no doubt that if they tell somebody about being bullied that their comments will be taken seriously and will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that students feel safe to learn; and that students abide by the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- report back to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deal promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- ensure that members of the school workforce suffering from bullying or concerned about bullying are to be advised that they can contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice.

## 7 Definition of bullying

7.1 As defined by the DfE (2017),

‘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, 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’.

7.2 Any action which makes a child feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened may be defined as bullying.

7.3 Bullying may take many forms and can include, but are not limited to:

- **Emotional** (threatening looks/gestures, tormenting such as hiding belongings, spreading nasty stories about someone, being made the subject of malicious rumours)
- **Physical assault** (pushing, hitting, kicking or any form of physical violence with intent to harm)
- **Verbal** (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making threats, insulting comments, offensive/intimidating remarks)
- **Sexual and sexist** (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or those which are sexist)
- **Exclusion** (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in)
- **Interference with possessions** (“borrowing”, hiding, stealing and destroying property belonging to someone else)

- **Racial** (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived racial differences)
- **Religious** (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived religious differences)
- **Cultural** (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived cultural differences)
- **On the basis of special educational needs and/ or disability** (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived differences in terms of their special educational needs and/ or disability)
- **Cyberbullying** (all forms of abuse involving the internet, social websites, chat rooms, mobile phones, email, text messages, photographs etc.). Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. It is recognised that in the case of cyber bullying, the victim and bully may not be on the school premises at the time when the incidents occur. However, the school recognises its responsibility to address the problem where possible and will take action to prevent incidents of this nature, which may include consultation with TSCL's IT support.
- **Sexual orientation** (homophobic/transphobic bullying involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of the victim's perceived or actual sexual orientation). Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that children and young people who are gay or lesbian (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying. The young person may not want to report bullying if it means "coming out" to teachers and parents before they are ready to. Homophobic bullying includes all forms of bullying above.

## 8 Effects of bullying

8.1 Students who are being bullied are being denied the opportunity to reach their full potential. Effects may be long term and may include:

- absenteeism – unknown or prolonged periods of time out of school
- fall in academic performance
- poor self-esteem
- health problems
- isolation and failure to develop socially
- depression and suicide
- relationship difficulties.

## **9 Signs of bullying**

- 9.1 All staff, students, parents / carers should be aware of the negative effects that bullying can have on individuals and should work towards ensuring that students can work in an environment without fear.
- 9.2 Students will be encouraged to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff. However, there is always the possibility that some students may feel nervous or indeed further intimidated at the prospect of seeking help, therefore staff should be particularly sensitive when they become aware that a student may have been or is being bullied.
- 9.3 Bullying can cause serious psychological damage and even result in suicide. A student who is being bullied may display some of the following signs:
- starts to avoid coming to school, or avoids attending specific lessons or going into specific areas of the school
  - changes to their usual routine with no apparent reason
  - becomes more withdrawn or anxious than previously / lacks confidence
  - begins stammering
  - threatens to run away or runs away
  - threatens self-harm / suicide
  - begins to perform poorly at school
  - frequently has missing or damaged possessions
  - is always asking for extra money or never has money
  - has unexplained injuries
  - becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
  - begins to bully others
  - stops eating or attending meals
  - is afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
  - becomes nervous when a message is received
  - is reluctant to discuss reasons for any of the above
  - changes to friendship groups
  - a lack of friends
  - 'illness' at certain times or on certain days
  - change in the standard of work
  - severe cases of depression.
- 9.4 Although the above list is most likely to apply to victims, changes in behaviour could indicate that someone has developed anti-social traits and may be bullying.

## **10 Strategies for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying**

- 10.1 Punishing bullies does not end bullying. At The Serendipity School, we stress that it is the bullying behaviour rather than the person doing the bullying that is not liked.
- 10.2 We positively encourage all the students to take responsibility for their behaviour and its consequences and to make a commitment to take action to end the bullying and provide support for the bullied student.

## 10.3 We will:

- work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying. Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including their resilience. Our PSHCE themes provide many of these opportunities. Other opportunities will be developed through the curriculum, tutor time, assemblies, and Student Voice meetings, school visitors e.g. the police, Barnado's, by raising awareness in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- monitor and look out for any signs of bullying by observing possible changes in behaviour.
- monitor work patterns, attainment levels, absence, truancy and lack of concentration as further possible signs of bullying.
- consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through the Student Voice meetings..
- train all staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying and actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable students.
- regularly remind all students that if they see bullying or are being bullied that they need to seek help from either another student or a member of staff.
- promote awareness of bullying through our support of Anti-Bullying Week and any other relevant national awareness initiatives.
- ensure all students are aware that if they are involved in bullying, consequences will apply.
- publicise and make visible/accessible the details of help lines and websites.
- actively encourage bystanders to tell a member of staff and/ or get help if they observe bullying and to give support to the person being bullied.
- offer social time activities to reduce numbers on the playground and to engage students in positive behaviour.
- work with parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school premises that give rise to bullying.
- Signpost parents/carers to external support agencies (e.g. NSPSS, CEOP, Think You Know) for advice and guidance.

## 11 Guidelines for Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy

### 11.1 The school will take the following steps when dealing with incidents:

- if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- a clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Head Teacher



# The Serendipity School

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- ensure the victim is safe
- provide a secure warm environment for discussion
- obtain empathetic support from the participants including the bully
- make sure that staff do not apportion blame to the bully in discussion
  
- make sure that nobody thinks that being a bully works by giving the attention they seek for their negative actions
- make sure that staff use every opportunity to praise everyone involved when positive circumstances occur
- all concerned will be interviewed and a record of the incident will be recorded
- information will be shared with staff at debriefing and briefing meetings, MDT and/or safeguarding meetings and actions agreed to be followed up
- parents/carers will be informed of any incidents
- encourage parents/carers to talk to a member of staff about any bullying concerns they have.

11.2 When bullying is discovered it is important for staff to log the incident using either a behaviour log, serious incident form or a *Cause for Concern form* [RD2] (depending upon the severity of the incident), so that a complete record is made and the action taken can be recorded and traced.

11.3 The consequences used will take into consideration the frequency, severity and nature of the bullying as well as any individual's special educational need and disability as to what is seen appropriate.

11.4 All good and appropriate behaviour will be celebrated formally in assemblies, Student Voice meetings, CLA, PEP and Annual Reviews and in class to further promote the school ethos of respect.

## **12 Bullying which occurs outside school premises**

12.1 School staff members have the power to discipline students for misbehaving outside the school premises.

12.2 Sections 90 - 92 of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* [RD8] say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address students' 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 students' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, especially online.

# The Serendipity School

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- 12.3 Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The Head Teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police, parents / carers or social workers of the action taken against a student.
- 12.4 If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.
- 12.5 While school staff members have the power to discipline students for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises.
- 12.6 Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, discriminatory or threatening behaviour, particularly when it relates to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act [RD6] (race, religion, colour, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, age, pregnancy and sexual orientation).