The Blue Coat School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Approved by the Governors' Safeguarding, Health and Safety Committee on _____

Signed: _____

(H Andrews – Chair of Safeguarding, Health and Safety Committee)

This Anti-Bullying Policy was devised by the Deputy Head (Pre-Prep) and the Deputy Head (Prep) in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

Date of Next Review: Michaelmas 2027

The Blue Coat School Birmingham Limited

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1

The Blue Coat School community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. The School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of the pupils can develop to his or her full potential. Pupils are expected to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

1.2

The Blue Coat School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. The School community is diverse with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Some pupils require additional support and help. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting The Blue Coat School in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. Acceptance of this Policy forms part of the School's Terms and Conditions.

1.3

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. All pupils and their parents are treated fairly and with consideration and it is expected that they will reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. Where necessary, the sanctions described in the Behaviour Management and Exclusions Policy will be applied for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

1.4

Staff at The Blue Coat School also recognise that there might be underlying causes for a child's behaviour. If staff suspect a child's behaviour is because the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, then the procedures set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy are followed and it will be treated as a child protection concern and discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or one of the Deputy DSLs.

1.5

Staff are aware that children may experience prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice, and other forms of discrimination. They understand that pupils may be bullied because of allergies or medical conditions. Staff are also aware that some children may be particularly vulnerable to being bullied, including children with special educational needs or children going through a personal or family crisis or suffering from a health problem. Staff are also aware that bullying can include a sexual element and this behaviour can be between children of any age, gender, and/or sexual orientation. Sexual bullying can have a disproportionate impact on girls. The School takes a strong approach against all forms of sexism, sexist stereotypes and homophobia. Staff recognise that bullying has a significant effect on children's mental health, emotional wellbeing and identity.

1.6
This policy has regard to the Equality Act (2010) and the DfE publications: 'Behaviour in Schools – Advice for headteachers and school staff' (2024); 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' (2017); 'Sexual bullying: developing effective anti-bullying practice' (Anti-Bullying Alliance) and any other relevant legislation or Guidance. It also reflects the principles of Keeping Children Safe in Education (2026).

1.7
The Blue Coat School Anti-Bullying Policy applies to all children in the school including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception).

1.8
The Blue Coat School Anti-Bullying Policy is available for parents on the school website.

2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

2.1
Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person or group of people either physically or emotionally, by an individual or a group. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups such as age, disability, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (and the other protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010) or other prejudices such as culture, homophobia, special educational needs, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, perceived differences or medical conditions. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are discriminatory including racist or homophobic comments, or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, gaming, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email). It could involve physical (including sexual) intimidation, sexualised bullying (including online), verbal, and emotional means (teasing, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. It can cause physical and emotional harm which may cause serious and lasting psychological damage. Harassment and threatening behaviour, or communications can be criminal offences. It is always treated very seriously, particularly when bullying is in respect of the protected characteristics. It conflicts sharply with the School's Policy for Equal Opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. The School will take action in response to a single incident of bullying irrespective of whether or not this is the first such incident or a repeated pattern. The incident will be managed and recorded as set out in Section 6 below so that patterns can be seen and so that the single incident does not become the first of a series.

3. SIGNS OF BULLYING

3.1
Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others

- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly going missing, or being damaged
- Changes to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, changing accent or vocabulary)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Health Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away
- Choosing the company of adults

3.2
Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

3.3
Bullying will not be tolerated or passed as mere 'banter', 'having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or 'boys will be boys'. Any child who is the victim of bullying or child-on-child abuse will be supported as set out in Section 6 of this Policy and as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Both the victim and the alleged perpetrator (and any other child affected by the child-on-child abuse) will be considered as being 'at risk' and safeguarding procedures will be followed, including referral to local agencies where appropriate. A Risk Assessment may be completed to manage the risk for the victim and his/her protection and support, the alleged perpetrator and all other children. The Risk Assessment will be reviewed regularly. Further details about child-on-child abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment are set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

4. PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

4.1
The following preventative measures are taken:

- Training is provided for staff so that they are aware of the principles of this policy. This also forms part of the induction process for new staff.
- Class/Form time, Year Group time and Assemblies are used to explain the school policy on bullying (including cyber-bullying, prejudice-based bullying, discriminatory bullying and sexual bullying). The PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other. It specifically tells pupils who they should inform if they are being bullied or are worried that another pupil is being bullied.
- Project work, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and lessons in other subjects are used when appropriate to discuss differences between people, highlight the issue of prejudice-based language and bullying and discriminatory bullying and to develop the children's social skills by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable. The role of the bystander is also discussed. All pupils are encouraged to tell a member of the teaching or pastoral staff at once if they know or suspect that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. Reported incidents are always monitored to enable patterns to be identified and to enable the school to evaluate the effectiveness

of its approach. The Deputy Head Pre-Prep and the Deputy Head Prep are responsible for monitoring bullying incidents and localities to ascertain any patterns or trends or any safeguarding concerns. Any identified patterns or trends are addressed.

- The Deputy Head Pre-Prep and the Deputy Head Prep are responsible for handling any incidents as an immediate priority in Pre-Prep and Prep respectively, and they respond to possible signs of bullying. They are supported in this by the Class Teachers and Teaching Assistants in Pre-Prep and Form Tutors, Pastoral Tutors, and Heads of Year in Prep.
- Pupils of all faiths are able to refer themselves to the School Chaplain. The Chaplain will give support and guidance to them whenever required, perhaps at a time of family break-up, sickness or bereavement. The Chaplain will provide confidential advice and seek to encourage the development of tolerance, understanding and respect for others in a multi-faith community. The Chaplain is supported in working with individual children by members of the Pastoral Team.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- Staff are alert to the possibility that cyber-bullying may take place and they take action in the event of cyber-bullying in line with this policy.
- In the Prep Year Group Hubs, staff support the Head of Year who acts *in loco parentis.* The informal after school provision environment is important in reinforcing a pupil's standards and values, providing the opportunity for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to the individual pupil outside the formal classroom. Close contact between the Head of Year and parents/guardians is encouraged, and contact is always made if there are concerns about a pupil's well-being.
- The Head of Year has a responsibility for oversight of the welfare of the children in their year group, particularly in Prep. They ensure that support is provided for children where required and they assist the Deputy Head Pre-Prep or Deputy Head Prep in raising awareness of the needs of children in their year group.
- In Pre-Prep, the staff support the Deputy Head Pre-Prep in reinforcing standards and values, providing opportunities for friendly, informal discussion of matters of concern to individual pupils outside the formal classroom. Any matters of concern identified in Aftercare are referred to the Deputy Head Pre-Prep by the Aftercare staff.
- Advice on where pupils can seek help, including anti-bullying posters and details of Childline (0800 1111), can be found around the school including The Health Centre, Year Group Hubs, Pre-Prep buildings and Prep buildings.
- The School reserves the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips, and in the vicinity of the school, involving pupils at the school.
- If necessary or appropriate, the School will seek support from external services for a pupil who is being bullied or for help in tackling any underlying issues which have contributed to a child engaging in bullying.
- Feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of the School's preventative measures is welcomed.

5. CYBER-BULLYING

5.1

Staff at The Blue Coat School are fully aware of the increasing availability to children of electronic devices that give unrestricted access to the internet and that these devices have the potential to be used in positive and negative ways. The Designated Safeguarding Lead has overall responsibility for Online Safety in the

School but staff and parents are also responsible for online safety. The school has high-level intelligent web-filtering solutions which are managed by the Network Manager in conjunction with the Estates and Compliance Manager. Certain websites are blocked by the school's internal filtering systems.

5.2

The ICT Acceptable Use Policy (Staff), the ICT Acceptable Use Policy (KS1 pupils), the ICT Acceptable Use Policy (KS2 pupils), the Online Safety Policy and the Remote Learning Policy are reviewed and updated annually and presented to the Governors' Safeguarding, Health and Safety Committee. The expected behaviour of all ICT users are clearly set out in these documents. Staff sign the ICT Acceptable Use (Staff) agreement annually. The ICT Acceptable Use agreements for KS2 pupils is signed by KS2 pupils annually.

5.3

If a pupil is found to be in violation of this agreement, including the misuse or attempted misuse of the Internet, then the appropriate disciplinary action will ensue. If there are safeguarding concerns for a child as a result of any such violation then the principles set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

5.4

The children are not allowed to use personal mobile devices at school. They are taught the importance of keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe. They are taught about cyber-bullying and the safe use of social networking services in Computing lessons in Pre-Prep and Prep. Cyber-bullying is also discussed in PSHE lessons in Pre-Prep and Prep. They are taught in age-appropriate ways to understand the risks posed by adults or young people who use the internet and social media to bully, groom, abuse or radicalise other people, especially children and young people. The school is guided by reference material regarding the use of the Internet in schools from The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and follows the guidelines for 7 – 11-year-olds on the CEOP Education website. Staff are also guided by information on the UK Safer Internet Centre website www.saferinternet.org.uk and the DfE publication: 'The use of social media for online radicalisation'.

5.5

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the School has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, then they must give the device to the police as soon as is reasonably practical. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is an image of a child being sexually harmed or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline. Staff should make all such decisions in conjunction with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a Deputy DSL or the Headmaster.

5.6

Pupils are required to report issues and concerns as part of the ICT Acceptable Use agreement. They are regularly reminded of this during lessons. Any issues or concerns raised by pupils or identified by staff are investigated and appropriate action is taken which might include disciplinary action and sanction. If there has been a serious breach of the agreement or the issues or concerns raised are serious, then the matter might be referred to the Police. Safeguarding concerns might also be referred to Children's Services following the principles set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

5.7
Data Protection laws are followed for the management of personal data.

6. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

6.1 Prep

6.1.1
The following procedures are adopted in incidents of bullying (including cyber-bullying):

- The member of staff to whom the incident is reported, or who first discovers it, will control the situation, and reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He or she will inform a member of SLT (usually the Deputy Head Prep or Head of Prep) as soon as possible and record the information on CPOMS.
- If appropriate, the victim will be interviewed on his or her own by the Head of Prep or the Deputy Head Prep together with another appropriate member of staff and asked to recount the events which will be recorded in writing. It will be made clear to him or her why revenge is inappropriate.
- If appropriate, the alleged bully/bullies will be interviewed individually by the Head of Prep or Deputy Head Prep together with another appropriate member of staff and an account of the events will be recorded in writing. It will be made clear to him or her why his or her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress if this is relevant or appropriate as a result of the investigation. The range of disciplinary measures will be explained, which, in extreme and persistent cases, may result in suspension or permanent exclusion. Any underlying causes for the bullying behaviour will be considered including those set out in 1.5 above and action will be taken if appropriate as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Other children/classes who have observed the incident(s) may be spoken to by their Form Tutor, the Deputy Head Prep or the Head of Prep. It may be appropriate for the whole of the year group to be involved in either a class-based or assembly-based discussion.
- The incident will be recorded onto CPOMS to enable the school to evaluate the effectiveness of its approach or to enable patterns to be identified.
- Members of staff in Prep will be informed on a 'need-to know' basis. The Headmaster will also be informed.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward which may include disciplinary sanctions and/or counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- The bullying incident will be followed up to check that bullying has not resumed, ideally during the fortnight after an incident and again later in the term or at the beginning of the next term if this is more appropriate.
- In very serious and persistent cases, and only after the Headmaster has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to Children's Services. However, it is the policy of The Blue Coat School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

6.2 Pre-Prep

6.2.1

The following procedures are adopted in incidents of bullying (including cyber-bullying):

- The member of staff to whom the incident is reported, or who first discovers it, will control the situation, and reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He or she will inform the Class Teacher as soon as possible who will inform a member of SLT (usually the Deputy Head Pre-Prep or Head of Pre-Prep).
- If appropriate, the victim will be interviewed on his or her own by the Class Teacher and the Head of Pre-Prep or Deputy Head Pre-Prep, and notes will be kept of the interview. It will be made clear to him or her why revenge is inappropriate.
- If appropriate, the alleged bully/bullies will be interviewed individually by the Class Teacher and the Head of Pre-Prep or Deputy Head Pre-Prep, and notes will be kept of their comments. It will be made clear to him or her why his or her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress if this is relevant or appropriate as a result of the investigation. The range of disciplinary measures will also be explained, which, in extreme and persistent cases, may result in exclusion. Any underlying causes for the bullying behaviour will be considered, including those set out in 1.5 above and action will be taken if appropriate as set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
- Other children/classes who have observed the incident(s) will be spoken to by their Class Teacher and/or the Deputy Head Pre-Prep. It may be appropriate for the whole of Pre-Prep to be involved in either a class-based or assembly-based discussion.
- The incident will be recorded onto CPOMS to enable the school to evaluate the effectiveness of its approach or to enable patterns to be identified.
- Members of staff in Pre-Prep will be informed on a 'need-to know' basis. The Headmaster will also be informed.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter with the Class Teacher and the Deputy Head Pre-Prep or Head of Pre-Prep.
- A way forward which may include disciplinary sanctions and/or counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
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6.3

Records of bullying incidents and how these were dealt with are maintained by the Deputy Head Pre-Prep and the Deputy Head Prep respectively. These records include details of behaviours which could escalate into bullying incidents and include records of any bullying in respect of the protected characteristics. The

Deputy Head Pre-Prep and Deputy Head Prep compile a report on the number and type of bullying and behaviour concerns for the Governors' Safeguarding, Health and Safety Committee at least termly.

6.4

The School seeks advice and guidance from external specialists if required, particularly if any trends or patterns are identified in bullying such as bullying of children with SEND, children with allergies, homophobic, racial, religious, cultural or cyber bullying or child-on-child abuse including sexual harassment and sexual violence. Further details of the School's policy towards child-on-child abuse are set out in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

7. RELATED POLICIES, MONITORING AND POLICY REVIEW

7.1

It is a standing agenda item (Safeguarding and Pastoral Report – compiled by Deputy Head Pre-Prep and Deputy Head Prep) to discuss bullying incidents at the Governors' Safeguarding, Health and Safety Committee so that policy and practice can be amended if required.

7.2

This Policy should be read in conjunction with other related whole school policies including: Behaviour Management and Exclusions, Data Protection Policies, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Online Safety, ICT Acceptable Use, Allergy Safety and Guidance for Staff on the Use of Photographs and Videos of Pupils by the School and The Staff Code of Conduct sets out procedural guidance including guidance on the use of mobile phones and cameras. All staff are expected to sign this Code of Conduct annually.

7.3

The Policy will be reviewed at least annually to ensure that it complies with statutory requirements and to ensure that any changes in practices are accurately reflected. It will be presented to the Governors' Safeguarding and Health and Safety Committee for approval in the Michaelmas Term each year. The minutes of this meeting will be presented to the Governors.