

# **Bledlow Ridge School**



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

**Date agreed: September 2025**

**Review date: September 2026**

## Intent

Our vision for Bledlow Ridge School is to empower our community to have the courage to make a difference in the world. We are committed to creating a community that is open to new possibilities and works together to enable everyone to fulfil their goals.

We believe that our School Values of “Empathy, Respect, Confidence, Curiosity, Health and Resilience” are key aims for our school community.

As part of this ethos, Bledlow Ridge School is committed to:

- promoting a whole school anti-bullying culture that prevents bullying happening between children.
- making sure that bullying is stopped as soon as possible if it does happen and that those involved receive the support they need.
- providing information to all staff, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

Our Community will:

- Monitor and review our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Support staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognise that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND.
- Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensure our pupils are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the antibullying policy.
- Require all members of the community to work with the school to uphold the anti bullying policy.
- Recognise the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding the school response to bullying in line with our complaints policy
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilise support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

At Bledlow Ridge School, we are aware that pupils may be bullied in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils. In line with the Equality Act 2010 it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advances equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Fosters good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This policy is closely linked with our Behaviour, Child Protection and Child on Child Abuse Policies.

At Bledlow Ridge School School, we discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, with all pupils through assemblies and PSHE lessons. We agree that:

- Bullying is usually physical hurting, name calling, nasty looks or leaving people out.
- Bullying usually happens when the relationship is imbalanced.
- Bullying is usually on-going.

Additionally, linked to teaching pupils about the protected characteristics, it is important that all children gain an understanding of the world they are growing up in, and learn how to live alongside, and show respect for, a diverse range of people.

The Equality Act 2010, identifies the 'protected characteristics' as:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

At Bledlow Ridge School, we pride ourselves on having a well-considered approach to the teaching of the protected characteristics, in order to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

## **What is bullying?**

The Anti-bullying Alliance definition of bullying which we have adopted is:

**'The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.'**

**There are many forms that bullying can take:**

- Physical
- Emotional
- Verbal
- Cyber

**Often someone will be targeted due to prejudice of some form; "Race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences."**

## Forms of bullying and bullying behaviour can include:

- **Physical bullying:** pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, fighting or any use of violence.
- **Verbal bullying:** name calling, sarcasm, threats, taunting, mocking, swearing, deliberately causing fear or unhappiness, damage to reputation, spreading rumours, gossiping.
- **Psychological bullying:** being unfriendly / hostile, excluding (silent bullying), tormenting (e.g. taking or damaging property, threatening gestures), identity theft/impersonation, revealing personal information. Cyber Bullying: hacking into someone's accounts/sites, posting prejudice /hate messages, impersonating someone online, public posting of images, exclusion, threats and manipulation, stalking.
- **Victimisation after previous complaint:** e.g. bullying due to either victims or bystanders speaking out as a result of a past bullying incident. Inciting bullying behaviour in others: e.g. encouraging individuals, groups or vulnerable pupils to bully others so that they receive the consequence rather than the instigator.
- **Sexual bullying:** unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching or sexually abusive comments.
- **Prejudicial bullying (against people/pupils with protected characteristics):**
- **Homophobic bullying:** any incident perceived by the alleged victim or any other person to be targeted around being lesbian, gay or bisexual. (People do not have to be lesbian, gay or bisexual to suffer from homophobic bullying.)
- **Transphobic bullying:** incidents perceived to be insulting to someone's gender identity or to transgender people.
- **Sexist bullying: incidents perceived to be demeaning to a gender in general.**
- **Racist bullying:** any incident perceived to be racist by the alleged victim or any other person; relating to religion, nationality or culture.
- **Bullying related to disability, SEN or health:** behaviour perceived to be insulting to people with a range of medical, mobility, sensory, mental health or learning impairments.
- **Bullying relating to home circumstances:** young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances.

## Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Looked After Children
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children from ethnic minorities
- Children entitled to Free School Meals
- Children for whom English is an Additional Language
- Children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian or bisexual

## Signs and Symptoms of Bullying:

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school or doesn't want to go on the 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 do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has items 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
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Legal Framework and Guidance:**

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Public Order Act 1986
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988

“Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.” DfE The Children Act 1989

### **Links with other school policies and practices**

This policy links with several school policies, practices and action plans including:

Behaviour Policy

Complaints Policy

Child Protection

Child on Child abuse Policy

Online Safety Policy

PSHE Policy

### **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of:

- The Headteacher communicates this policy to the school community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably, and that a member of the senior leadership team has been identified to take overall responsibility.

- Governors to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including: governors, senior leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the school.
- Pupils abide by the policy.

## **Implementation**

### **Responding to bullying measures:**

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school.

#### **Immediate response**

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.

#### **Support for the victim**

- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision making, as appropriate.

#### **Staff interview all parties**

- The Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or another member of leadership staff will interview all parties involved.

#### **Appropriate staff informed**

- The DSL will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns. The school will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.

#### **Parents/Carers kept informed of concerns and actions**

- The school will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with child protection and confidentiality policies.

#### **Sanctions and support outlined**

- Sanctions, as identified within the school behaviour policy, and support will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned. If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services including early help or children's social care, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.

#### **Record keeping and reporting**

- **All bullying incidents must be recorded on CPOMs** - information to be recorded can be found in appendix C. It must contain details of the initial allegation, notes from any investigation and any actions taken. Any further incidents regarding the allegation are added to CPOMs to give a chronology. These are shared with relevant staff so it can be updated as needed. Parents of both parties should be informed.
- If the situation does not improve, the Headteacher (or senior leader) should meet with the parent(s) of the bullying child(ren) and agree clear expectations and boundaries which would be shared with the pupils involved. Any further incidents should lead to intervention (e.g. through outside agencies), further monitoring, support and punitive sanctions as deemed necessary. Any necessary action should be taken until the bullying has stopped.

## **Response to incidents off site**

- Where the bullying of or by pupils takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required, the DSL will collaborate with other schools. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with this policy and the school's behaviour policy.

## **Cyber Bullying**

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will follow its 'Responding to bullying measures' above.

### **Added measures of support with cyber bullying will include:**

- Encouraging the person being bullied to speak up about any online bullying and/or illicit images they may have been sent and understand that they will be believed and supported.
- They do not have to save the images as evidence for an investigation.

(Staff members - Do not look at any images sent or suggest that the victim screenshots them. You will be breaking the law!)

### **Steps to identify person responsible**

Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:

- looking at use of the school systems;
- identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
- contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.

### **Stopping the spread of the incident, material or images**

Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:

- support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and the school searching and confiscation policy. (Note: Schools should ensure they access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and 'Childnet' cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the school's powers are used proportionately and lawfully.)
- requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.

### **Sanctions and support and protection**

- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online.

### **This may include:**

- advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply
- providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists;
- helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

## Supporting Pupils

### **Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:**

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the designated safeguarding lead, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Children Social Work Service, or support through the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

### **Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:**

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with Bledlow Ridge School's behaviour policy. This may include official warnings, detentions, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Children Social Work Service, or the Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS).

## Supporting adults

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

### **Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:**

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the headteacher.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.
- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including online), the school will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the schools' behaviour and discipline policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

### **Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:**

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures.



- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

## **Impact of Preventing Bullying Environment**

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, kindness and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (child on child abuse).
- Recognises the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Promote the positive place of diversity and openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold the school values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people, providing security, calm and freedom from fear.
- Promote an environment that encourages personal growth and well-being that positively impacts achievement and self-worth.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos, such as: Celebration Assemblies, awarding house points and class rewards.

## **Teaching and Learning**

The children will learn about anti-bullying through:

- Anti-bullying Assemblies and Assemblies celebrating diversity and discouraging prejudice and Assemblies addressing current social issues in an age appropriate way.
- Regular teaching opportunities and Anti-bullying week content with a different focus each year  
Anti-bullying content in PSHE (1Decision) Lessons
- Internet Safety and Harms, Caring Friendships, Respectful relationships and Empathy.
- Promotion of the Bledlow Ridge School values.

## **Involvement of pupils**

We will:

- Involve pupils in helping to write and review a 'child friendly', anti-bullying policy, to ensure that they understand the school's approach to anti-bullying and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Regularly canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Utilise pupil voice in providing pupil led education and support
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.

## **Involvement and liaison with parents and carers**

We will:

- Ensure that parent/Carers are aware that the school does not tolerate any form of bullying and has policies and procedures in place to tackle bullying behaviours.
- Make sure that key information about bullying is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the school website.
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

## **Monitoring and review: putting policy into practice**

- This policy is part of our commitment to safeguarding children. It should be read in conjunction with our other safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The school will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The Headteacher will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate and will report on a regular basis to the governing body on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.

## **Useful links and supporting organisations**

- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** [www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- **Childline:** [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)
- **Family Lives:** [www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)
- **Kidscape:** [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)
- **MindEd:** [www.minded.org.uk](http://www.minded.org.uk)
- **NSPCC:** [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)
- **The BIG Award:** [www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php](http://www.bullyinginterventiongroup.co.uk/index.php)
- **PSHE Association:** [www.pshe-association.org.uk](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk)
- **Restorative Justice Council:** [www.restorativejustice.org.uk](http://www.restorativejustice.org.uk)
- **The Diana Award:** [www.diana-award.org.uk](http://www.diana-award.org.uk)
- **Victim Support:** [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

## **SEND**

- **Changing Faces:** [www.changingfaces.org.uk](http://www.changingfaces.org.uk)
- **Mencap:** [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)
- **DfE: SEND code of practice:** [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25-years)

## **Cyberbullying**

- **Childnet:** [www.childnet.com](http://www.childnet.com)
- **Internet Watch Foundation:** [www.iwf.org.uk](http://www.iwf.org.uk)
- **Think U Know:** [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)
- **UK Safer Internet Centre:** [www.saferinternet.org.uk](http://www.saferinternet.org.uk)
- **DfE 'Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff':** [www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)
- **DfE 'Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying':** [www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying)

## Sexual harassment and sexual bullying

- Disrespect No Body: [Disrespect NoBody: campaign material - GOV.UK](#)
- Additional links can be found in 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July 2017) [Preventing bullying - GOV.UK](#)

## APPENDIX A

### GUIDANCE FOR ALL STAFF

Before recording an incident, it may be useful for staff to consider the following:

- Has the incident with the same person or people occurred several times within a reasonably short period of time?
- Is it a disagreement or the result of play which has gotten out of hand?
- Is it a 'falling out of friends' matter?
- Are you sure that the child has not had at least partial responsibility for the incident?
- Can you recognise a pattern to the incidents?
- Have you noticed any change in the child's behaviour?

Although incidents may not be bullying, they should always be followed up thoroughly in school and dealt with appropriately with timeliness and sensitivity.

**All incidents of bullying (as defined in our policy) will be recorded by the school on CPOMs**

## APPENDIX B

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Whenever a bullying incident is discovered, we will go through a number of steps. The exact nature of each step will be adapted to suit the nature and severity of the incident, and the response of those involved. Before progressing it may be useful for parents/carers to consider the following:-

- Has the incident with the same person or people occurred several times within a reasonably short period of time?
- Is it a disagreement or the result of play which has gotten out of hand?
- Is it a 'falling out of friends' matter?
- Are you sure that the child has not had at least partial responsibility for the incident?
- Can you recognise a pattern to the incidents?
- Have you noticed any change in the child's behaviour?

Although incidents may not be bullying they should always be followed up thoroughly in school and dealt with appropriately. When a bullying incident has come to the attention of Bledlow Ridge Primary School, it will always be taken seriously, investigated and actioned. However, we cannot report back to the parent/carer of any child except their own.

The school will:

- Talk the incident through with all parties involved
- Support the person who has been bullied to express their feelings
- Supporting the person displaying the bullying behaviour to express their feelings
- Explore the use of Restorative Approaches
- Discuss which rule(s) have been broken
- Discuss strategies for making amends

Actions will be in line with our behaviour policy, and may include:

- Explanation why the inappropriate behaviour is unacceptable
- Reparation of damaged relationships
- Restorative Approaches
- Time away from an activity
- Meeting with staff, parent and child
- Missing another activity
- Formal letter home from the Headteacher expressing concerns
- Time out from the classroom
- Pastoral support plan

In cases where there is no improvement following the above measures the following actions may be considered:

- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

## APPENDIX C

### **Bullying Record to be logged on CPOMs**

#### **To include the following:**

Name of teacher completing the report  
Pupil's names of those involved  
Date of incident  
Time of incident  
Locations of incident  
Name of alleged perpetrator(s)

#### **Target's Account/Concerns of parents/carers:**

Nature of incident (including details of injury or damage to property etc)

Add any elements that apply

Physical      Verbal      Indirect      Cyberbullying

Add any types of bullying that apply

Racial    Religious    Cultural    Sexist    Transphobic    Homophobic    SEN    Disability

Any other circumstances (eg Gifted and Talented, health condition etc)?

Parents of alleged target(s) informed (if they are not raising the concern)

#### **Accounts of those involved**

Alleged perpetrators accounts of the incident(s)

Witnesses/bystanders accounts of the incident(s)

(including names and ages)

Details of immediate action taken

**The staff member who has logged the incident must review and add further information to CPOMs - even if there has not been another incident. All actions must be reviewed in a timely manner.**

## **Appendix D - Responding to Incidents of Bullying – The Support Group Method**

This appendix outlines the restorative processes and approaches the school will take when responding to incidents of bullying. This appendix includes an outline of *The Support Group Method*.

### **The Support Group Method – Introduction**

The Support Group Method, developed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson, was first outlined in *Educational Psychology in Practice* (1991). The approach addresses bullying by forming a support group of children and young people who have been bullying and/or have been involved as bystanders. It uses a problem-solving approach, without apportioning blame, giving responsibility to the group to solve the problem and to report back at a subsequent review meeting.

For further information, see 5A The Support Group Method and 5B Recording Sheets for the Support Group Method

### **Step one – talk with and listen to the target**

Aims of this step:

- To understand the pain experienced by the target
- To explain the method and gain permission to proceed
- To discuss who will make up The Support Group
- To agree what will be recounted to the group.

### **Step two – convene a meeting with the people involved**

The facilitator arranges to meet with the group of children who have been involved and suggested by the target. A group of six to eight children works well. This is an opportunity for the facilitator to use their judgement to balance the group so that helpful and reliable children are included alongside those whose behaviour has been causing distress. The aim is to use the strengths of the group members to bring about the best outcome.

### **Step three – explain the problem**

The facilitator starts by telling the group that s/he is worried about the target who is having a very hard time at the moment. By asking the group to listen to his/her own worries, the facilitator can divert some suspicion or irritation which might be directed towards the target. The facilitator recounts the story of the target's unhappiness and may use a piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise the target's distress. At no time does the facilitator discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group.

### **Step four – share responsibility**

When the account is finished the listeners may look downcast or uncomfortable and be uncertain about the reason for the meeting. Some may be anxious about possible punishment. The facilitator makes a change in the mood by stating explicitly that:

- no-one is in trouble or going to be punished.
- it is the facilitator's responsibility to help the target to be happy and safe but they cannot do it for the group.
- the group has been convened to help solve the problem

### **Step five – ask the group members for their ideas**

Group members are usually genuinely moved by the account of the target's distress and relieved that they are not in trouble. Each member of the group is then encouraged to suggest a way in which the target could be helped to feel happier.

Ideas are owned by the group members and not imposed by the facilitator. The facilitator makes positive responses and does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

### **Step six – leave it up to them**

The facilitator ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. S/he thanks them, expresses confidence in a positive outcome and arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

### **Step seven – meet them again**

About a week later, the facilitator discusses with the target how things have been going. S/he then meets with the group to discuss how things have been going for them. This allows the facilitator to monitor the bullying and keeps the children involved in the process.

**Records of meetings must be logged onto CPOMs**