



**Beam County Primary School**  
Oval Road North, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 9ED.

25<sup>th</sup> September 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of every student at Beam is our utmost priority. Previously, we have provided guidance regarding the issue of bullying. and we understand that concerns about bullying can be distressing, and we want you to know that we take such matters seriously. We are committed to fostering a school environment where all students feel safe, respected, and supported. In this regard, we would like to provide you with a clear understanding of the procedures to follow if you believe your child is experiencing bullying while attending our school. Your child's happiness and safety are paramount to us, and we are here to promptly and effectively address any concerns.

The information below has previously been sent out to parents, and as we embark on a new academic year, we thought that it would be useful to revisit the information.

*Bullying information*

*There is little doubt that bullies are not kind to others. They push, shove and call people names. They also might engage in cyberbullying, relational aggression and countless other types of bullying. But many people need to realise that not all unkind thing children do constitute as bullying. Children, especially young children, are still learning how to get along with others.*

*Parents, teachers and other adults need to model kindness, conflict resolution, inclusion, and responsibility.*

*Children will occasionally do or say something hurtful. And while it is important to address the behaviour, it is inappropriate to label them a bully. Instead, try to distinguish between hurtful or unkind behaviour and bullying behaviour.*

*While there is no universal definition of bullying, it is widely agreed among researchers that there are three essential elements:*

- 1. That the behaviour is ongoing.*
- 2. That it is intended to be harmful.*
- 3. That there is a power imbalance.*

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*Research has also indicated that a major cause of confusion among parents was the difference between fighting and bullying. Since fighting can occur between equals and may happen occasionally, it is considered different to bullying.*

#### *Expressing Negative Thoughts and Feelings*

*Children are often open and honest with thoughts and feelings. Young children, especially, will speak the truth without thinking about the consequences. For example, a pre-schooler might ask: "Why is your mum so fat?" These types of unkind remarks are not bullying. They usually come from a place of innocence, so an adult should give them ideas on how to ask questions or say things in a way that isn't offensive.*

*It's also important that children on the receiving end of unkind remarks learn how to communicate their feelings with the offending adult or child. For instance, it is healthy to say: "I felt hurt when you laughed at my new braces," or "I don't like it when you call my mum fat." Giving children tools to express their hurt empowers them to not only take ownership of their feelings but to learn how to be assertive when someone is unkind.*

#### *Being Left Out*

*It is natural for kids to have a select group of close friends. Although children should be friendly and kind toward everyone, it's unrealistic to expect them to be close friends with every child they know.*

*It's also normal that your child will not get an invitation to every function or event. There will be times when they are left off the guest list for birthday parties, outings, and playdates. This is not the same thing as ostracising behaviour, which is bullying. When your children feel left out, remind them that sometimes they too have to choose not to include everyone.*

#### *Experiencing Conflict*

*Children bicker and argue, and learning to deal with conflict is a normal part of growing up. The key is for children to learn how to solve their problems peacefully and respectfully. A fight or a disagreement with a close friend does not represent bullying—even when children make unkind remarks. Likewise, a spat or disagreement with a classmate here and there is not bullying.*

#### *Good-Natured Teasing*

*Most children get teased by friends and siblings in a playful, friendly or mutual way. They both laugh and no one's feelings get hurt. Teasing is not bullying as long as both kids find it funny. **But when teasing becomes cruel, unkind and repetitive, it crosses the line into bullying.** Joking and teasing become bullying when there is a conscious decision to hurt another person.*

*Teasing becomes bullying when kids:*

- Make demeaning comments
- Engage in name-calling
- Spread unsavoury rumours
- Make threats

*If your child has bossy friends, teach them how to respond to 'bossy' behaviour. For example, your child could say: "Let's play your way the first time. Then, let's try my way." Also, be sure you teach your children how to develop healthy friendships. Talk to them about the dangers of 'fake friends'.*

*If a playmate never wants to do things in any way but their own, this could signify a controlling friend.*

*When observing the unkind behaviours your child experiences, be sure you label them correctly.*

*Doing so will help you keep things in perspective, not only for you but for your child. Moreover, it will help you know how to handle the situation appropriately so your child can learn and grow from it.*

*When your child does experience bullying, take the necessary steps to help your child and please notify the school using the concern form:*

<https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=noiJDDX00EWYayGZ58m1X41ek1W4jKJNtFFNyAcPDb5UQ0JYUUNTRDhSV1Y0TFNDWFISNjIEQ1ZBNy4u>

- *Or pop into the main school reception and ask for a Concern Form.*
- *Or talk to your child's teacher*

*If we label every unkind thing a child does as bullying, the message of what bullying truly is gets watered down, and the word 'bullying' loses its meaning - no one wants that to happen. When we talk about bullying, we want people to take it seriously. The following things should and will, be addressed but are not considered to be bullying:*

- *Expressing negative thoughts and feelings.*
- *Experiencing conflict.*
- *Not playing fairly.*
- *Teasing (but only when **both** children laugh and no one's feelings get hurt).*

*Please help us in helping children to understand the difference between when someone is unkind and when someone is bullying and remind them to tell an adult in school if they are upset or worried. They can also use 'Worry Bags', which are in every class, and Years 3 - 6 can use Tootoot (<https://tootoot.co.uk/>)*

Kind regards,

*Miss T Whittington*  
Headteacher