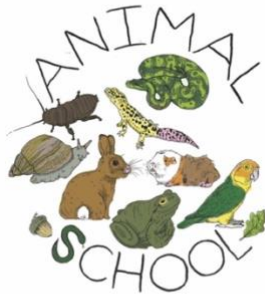# Animal School Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Animal School we are committed to providing a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment for all. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Everyone—students, staff, volunteers, and visitors—has the right to feel secure, valued, and supported.

We recognise that our setting supports vulnerable young people and that emotional wellbeing and trust are at the heart of our provision. This policy sets out our approach to preventing and responding to bullying in a therapeutic, consistent, and child-centred way.

2. Aims of This Policy

- To prevent bullying by creating a culture of inclusion, kindness, and respect.
- To empower students to speak out and seek help.
- To ensure all staff respond promptly and effectively to bullying incidents.
- To work with students and families to rebuild trust and restore relationships.

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is **repeated, intentional behaviour** that hurts, threatens, or humiliates another person, physically or emotionally. It can be carried out by an individual or a group, face-to-face or online.

Types of Bullying:

- **Physical:** Hitting, pushing, kicking, damaging belongings
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, insults, threats
- **Emotional:** Excluding, isolating, spreading rumours
- **Cyberbullying:** Online messages, images, or posts intended to hurt or intimidate
- **Prejudicial:** Based on race, gender, disability, religion, sexuality, or appearance

4. Recognising the Signs

Children may not always tell someone they are being bullied. Staff are trained to look out for signs, including:

- Reluctance to attend sessions
- Withdrawal or anxiety
- Changes in behaviour or mood
- Unexplained injuries
- Damage to clothing or property

5. Our Approach to Prevention

We foster a positive, inclusive culture through:

- Regular 1:1 check-ins with students
- Clear boundaries and expectations shared with students
- A therapeutic ethos that values empathy and communication
- Staff modelling respectful behaviour at all times
- Activities that build social skills, teamwork, and emotional literacy
- Clear guidance on online safety and respectful digital behaviour

We regularly remind students that:

- Bullying is never acceptable.
- They can talk to any adult if they are worried.
- Speaking up is a strength, not a weakness.

6. Reporting Bullying

Students are encouraged to:

- Speak to any trusted adult on site.
- Use worry boxes or anonymous feedback if they prefer.
- Tell a peer who can help them speak up.

Staff must:

- Take every concern seriously.
- Record concerns on the appropriate safeguarding/incident form.
- Reassure the student they will be listened to and protected.
- Report the issue to the Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) promptly.

7. Responding to Incidents

All bullying incidents will be:

- Taken seriously
- Logged in the incident/safeguarding record
- Investigated promptly and fairly
- Followed up with appropriate restorative or disciplinary action

Where bullying is confirmed:

- The victim will be supported with regular check-ins and a personalised care plan.
- The child engaging in bullying behaviour will be supported to understand the impact of their actions, and behaviour plans or therapeutic interventions may be put in place.
- Parents/carers will be informed and, where needed, involved in follow-up.

Restorative approaches (e.g., facilitated conversation, reflection tasks) will be used when appropriate to rebuild trust.

---

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Manager:

- Oversees implementation and review of the policy.
- Supports staff and families in responding to incidents.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Monitors safeguarding logs and patterns of behaviour.
- Liaises with external services if needed.

Staff:

- Model positive behaviour.
- Create a safe space for students to share concerns.
- Respond swiftly and consistently to incidents.

Students:

- Are encouraged to treat others with kindness and respect.
- Are supported to report concerns and take responsibility for their actions.

---

9. Monitoring and Review

- Bullying incidents are monitored termly to identify any patterns.
- Student voice is collected regularly to assess feelings of safety.
- This policy is reviewed **annually**, or sooner if required due to incidents or changes in guidance.

10. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy

11. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed **annually** or following a bullying incident.

Signed:

Lindsay Cross   Manager   31/07/2025