

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

EVERY CHILD MATTERS

We are committed to delivering the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. 'Stay Safe' is a central outcome and we aim to address bullying and discrimination as soon as it is reported or detected as one means of achieving this.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

As a school we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils so that they are able to learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any description is not tolerated in our school. However, should it occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that any incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We expect that anyone who knows that bullying is taking place should tell a member of staff.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying is wilful, or persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or : insulting behaviour; intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group; an imbalance of power leaving the individual being bullied feeling defenceless. This definition of bullying can be extended to include cyber- bullying (see below).

Bullying could be:

- Physical: extraction of property, pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, any form of violence, or threatened violence.
- Verbal: insulting, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading, rumours, persistent teasing.
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.

Cyber-bullying can be defined as an aggressive, intentional act, carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly and over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him/herself. Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying, which has in recent years become more apparent, as the use of electronic devices such as computers and mobiles phones by young people has increased. This can include bullying through text message, picture / video clip (via mobile phone cameras), phone call, email, chat-room, through instant messaging, bullying via websites.

Definition of Harassment

Harassment can be defined as a malicious act of annoying and threatening an individual through various means, i.e. via text messages, emails, phone-calls, letters, notes with personal motives and reasons. Harassment is usually carried out by an individual who is close to the victim, but it could be an individual that is unknown to the victim. Harassment refers to a wide spectrum of offensive behaviour. It refers to behaviours that are found threatening, or disturbing and beyond those that are sanctioned by society. Only the more repetitive, persistent and untruthful types of speech qualify legally as harassment.

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUPILS. PARENTS. STAFF

It is everyone's responsibility to stop bullying.

Pupils

- Must not bully anyone else, or encourage and support bullying by others.
- Must tell an adult if they are being bullied, usually either a member of staff or a parent
- Must act to prevent and stop bullying, usually through telling an adult if they know or suspect that someone else is being bullied
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Pupils must recognise that being a 'bystander' is not acceptable, and understand how their silence supports bullying and makes them in part responsible for what happens to the victim of bullying.

Parents

- Must contact the school immediately they know or suspect that their child is being bullied, even if their child has asked for 'secrecy', and work in partnership with the school to bring an end to the bullying.
- Must contact the school if they know or suspect their child is bullying another child.
- Must share with the school any suspicions they have that bullying is taking place even when it does not directly involve their child

The role of the staff

A student can approach any member of staff in the school to help them to deal with issues surrounding bullying. The staff will treat all allegations of bullying seriously and will investigate each incident.

The Form Tutor

- Note changes in friendship groups.
- Observe closely the socialisation of new pupils.
- Check on patterns of attendance and lateness, and sickness in school.
- Act immediately on parents' suspicions.

The Subject Teacher

- Note instances of withdrawn personality.
- Be suspicious of a sudden drop in achievement.
- Be careful of unintended outcomes when choosing groups or when partner work is involved.

Teachers on Duty

- Patrol areas which are not directly observable.
- Note the occurrence of isolated pupils.
- Observe inappropriate behaviour of pupils.

Heads of Year/leadership Team

- Act immediately on parents' suspicions.
- Record all incidents reported by teachers, parents, and pupils.
- Arrange support for both victims and bullies.
- Discuss with staff suitable sanctions where necessary-
- Give opportunities for pupils to discuss the ideas.

Support Staff

- Listen to children when they seek you out to talk about problems.
- Liase with form tutors, heads of year regarding any incidents.

SCHOOL STRATEGIES TO PREVENT BULLYING

- Supervision at breaks, by staff and school prefects, and lunch times by lunchtime supervisors.
- Segregated yards at start of school and break times. Years 7 and 8 on the back yard, whilst Years 9, 10 and 11 on the front yard.
- Organised lunchtime activities for pupils to get involved in e.g. sports activities.
- Prefects trained to look out for bullying behaviour and to make the correct response.
- Peer mentors from Year 10. Some are linked to form tutor groups, others will help with supervision at break times and run drop in centres for pupils who feel the need to talk.
- Curriculum time is dedicated to the issue of bullying. In this time pupils learn about bullying and why it may occur and will learn strategies to help them to cope if they become a victim. The issue is also often raised through assembly time.

SCHOOL STRATEGIES FOR INTERVENTION AND PROTECTION

Bullying will not be ignored and the school will react to any form of bullying. As a school both the victim and the bully will be supported where the behaviour, not the person is focused upon.

Low level bullying

This will be handled quickly and sensitively without making too much of the incident. This will involve an appropriate member of staff following these procedures:

- Talk with the victim to understand their feelings.
- Talk with the bully to give the "evidence" of distress/hurt; to reinforce the view that their behaviour is unacceptable; to encourage the bully to make a response to the victim in the form of an apology and seek to improve the relationship
- In talks with both the bully and victim, seek to discover whether there are underlying reasons for the behaviour.
- Feedback to the victim.
- Monitoring, which may include the use of peer mentors.

Where this is not felt to be an adequate response, where the bullying is deemed to be above the low level, the school may then employ the following strategies:

- No blame approach.
- Conflict resolution.
- Mediation.
- Peer mentors who may be trained in mediation skills.
- Help from the Anti-Bullying agency within the LA.
- Isolation/Exclusion. .
- Other outside agencies e.g. police.
- Someone to turn to -this may be a member of staff e.g. a teaching assistant, a form tutor, Head of Year or member of the Leadership Team. It may be a 'teaching assistant who has skills in counselling or outside agencies may need to be involved e.g. education welfare, education psychologist or CAMHS. It could be the school nurse who is trained in counselling skills and can offer pupils an 'independent' and 'confidential' support service and who runs a drop-in centre during lunch times. Peer mentors can act as a support to pupils which may range from 'befriending' through to 'counselling'.

Websites for pupils

www.childline.org.uk
www.youngncb.org.uk
www.kidscape.org.uk

Websites for parents

www.parentlineplus.org.uk
www.kidscape.org.uk
www.bullying.co.uk

APPENDICES

No Blame Approach

This was developed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson and has successfully been used in secondary schools. It starts with the principle that what is important is to solve the problem and not to punish the bully. It focuses on the feelings of the victim, seeking other pupils, including the bully, to empathise with the victim and provides support to the victim. It seeks to give pupils, including the bully, responsibility for resolving the problem. The victim has to agree to be involved in the process.

It works through a series of progressive "steps":

1. Interview with the victim, getting them to describe the effect the bullying has had, and to agree what can be shared with others
2. Meeting with those involved. This includes involving the group of the victim's peers, including the bully, bystanders and others. At the outset it is made clear that no one is to be blamed and punished.
3. Explanation of concerns where the group listens to or sees what the victim wishes them to know about the effects of bullying.
4. Responsibility shared where the group acknowledges what has happened and recognises the victim's feelings.
5. Group is asked for ideas, with individuals in the group, and as a group suggestions are sought as to how the problem could be resolved and an agreement of action is reached,
6. Responsibility is left with the group to act on the suggestions they have made and agreement is made to meet again.
7. Group meet again after an agreed period of time to describe what has happened and if any further action is needed.

Conflict Resolution

The member of staff is the 'leader' of this process and more 'directive' in suggesting outcomes. The member of staff has to establish with both parties that he/she will be 'objective' and 'non-partial', and will listen to and consider the views and perspectives of both parties.

The process of conflict resolution involves:

- Identification and assessment of the problem/concern through discussions with both parties.
- Formulation of the problem and suggestions for resolution put to both parties.
- Agreement from both parties to an agreed plan of action.
- Monitoring and review of progress.

If an agreement cannot be reached, then the member of staff has to look at Conflict Management where both parties agree to follow certain rules and not to act in a particular way towards each other.

Mediation

This is where the victim and the bully talk to each other with a member of staff present. Certain rules are followed to help resolve the problem.

- Both parties need to consent to take part in mediation and agree to follow ground rules e.g. to listen without interruption; non-confrontational comments.
- Mediation takes place in a quiet room and starts with the mediator establishing that both parties have agreed to take part and want to find a way of ending the unhappiness
- Starting with the victim, both parties are able to express their feelings without interruption, and then the mediator encourages discussion about how they may move forward and may suggest possible actions.
- Progress is checked and there may be a subsequent meeting to look at longer term actions.