

MODEL SCHOOLS ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

POLICY SUMMARY

Introduction

School has developed and implemented an anti-bullying policy in accordance with Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) and Department of Health (DoH) requirements as per 'Working Together' and 'Don't Suffer in Silence' and the Human Rights Act 1998.

Principles

- Bullying is not acceptable in any form or for any reason.
- All children are entitled to be educated in an environment free from fear, harassment or degradation.
- Bullying behaviour is problematic for both the victim and the perpetrator.
- Best outcomes occur when the school can work together with parents and carers to address concerns about bullying behaviour and victimisation.

Definition

Bullying is behaviour performed by a single person or group of people, which is intended or perceived to inflict hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation to another person or group of people. This includes racism, sexism, disabilism and homophobia.

Scope

Incidents of bullying behaviour that occur on School premises are the legal responsibility of the School. Incidences that occur outside of School premises are the School's concern in regard to the pupil's conduct and welfare out of School, and School will address issues that are raised by other sources.

Prevention

A School zero tolerance policy towards bullying is implemented by all staff, who have a responsibility for dealing with this problem. Awareness will be raised amongst the children at a

number of levels, who will be informed of the School's expectations about the unacceptability of bullying and what they should do if they are bullied or are aware of bullying by others.

Parent Involvement

The important part that parents and carers play in supporting their children and promoting change is recognised by the School and the School welcomes the active involvement of parents of both victims and perpetrators of bullying. Parents and carers will be kept advised of any concerns the School has about their children in relation to this issue.

Implementation

The rigorous application of the School Anti-Bullying Policy will be the responsibility of all staff, who will also ensure that incidents which fall within the School's definition are properly recorded.

Post Victim Response

For the Victim - Protection, sympathy, empathy, counseling, advice and support on how to avoid future incidents, mediation where appropriate.

For the Bully - Reinforcement of the School's message that bullying behaviour is unacceptable, a proportionate use of fairly and consistently applied sanctions (possibility of exclusions for serious cases), advice and instruction on how to behave better and reinforcement and support for improved behaviour.

Monitoring and Evaluation

School to provide Annual Report to the Governors which can be shared with parents, carers and pupils, including any agreed policy adjustments.

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Introduction to the Policy

Recent high profile cases and court rulings have served to re-emphasise the importance to all schools of controlling and managing bullying behaviour, and highlighted the responsibilities and duties of care that schools have to their vulnerable pupils.

A recent information pack published by the Department for Education and Employment called 'Don't Suffer in Silence' provides guidance to schools on how to respond to the problem of bullying, as well as detailing their expectations as to schools' responses. This message is reiterated in a joint publication between DfEE and the Department of Health entitled 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' which states 'All settings in which children are provided with services or are living away from home should have in place rigorously enforced anti-bullying strategies'. The Human Rights Act 1998 also embodies the principle of a child's right to have an education free from harassment and degradation.

The purpose of this document is to set out a model school's zero-tolerance anti-bullying policy, reflecting the assertion that bullying is unacceptable under any circumstance, and that a well developed school ethos of mutual respect, fairness and equality is a school's best method of prevention. It also details pragmatic and non-oppressive strategies for the support and management of the victim and the perpetrator alike.

Principles of the Policy

- It is the absolute right of all children to undertake their education in an environment that is safe and secure, and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, abuse or degrade them.
- Zero tolerance. Bullying behaviour is not acceptable under any circumstance and should not be tolerated in any form. There is no justification for bullying in any circumstance, such as differences of race, religion, sexual orientation, ability or gender.
- Bullying behaviour is problematic for both the perpetrator and the victim. It should be addressed positively and constructively enabling growth and development for both the bully and the victim.
- Schools should evolve a shared responsibility towards managing anti-bullying strategies involving school staff, parents, carers and other professionals involved with children regarding bullying.
- Staff should have time and resources invested in the training and support they require to confidently undertake the School's prevention and management strategies regarding bullying.
- User-friendly information about the School's policy and procedures should be made available to children and their parents or carers.

Aims of the Policy

- To fulfil the statutory responsibility of the School to respect the rights of children and to protect and promote their welfare.
- To provide clarification to staff, pupils and their parents or carers of the School's zero tolerance policy towards bullying behaviour and of the School's responsibility for responding to incidents of bullying.
- To promote a School ethos where children are safe and able to realise their full potential and to eliminate intimidating behaviour.
- To implement a whole-school policy and identified procedures for addressing and controlling the problem of bullying.
- To ensure parents and carers can be confident that their children are being educated in a safe and secure environment and that the School takes their welfare very seriously.

Objectives of the Policy

- To develop and consistently implement a whole-school approach to School's anti-bullying policy.
- To increase awareness of staff, pupil, parents and carers about the School's attitude towards bullying and to create an environment where bullying is seen as unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour.
- To be proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- To raise awareness of staff, pupils, parents and carers of the steps the School will take when an incident of bullying has occurred,
- To allocate a reasonable proportion of School's time and energy towards clarifying the extent of the problem of bullying in School and to bringing it under control.
- To reassure children that action will be taken to keep them safe from bullies and to demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and inappropriate.
- To monitor the effectiveness of School strategies towards the prevention of bullying and to accurately record all incidents of bullying behaviour that take place in School.
- To adopt a fair but firm, non-oppressive strategy to address bullies about their problematic behaviour and to provide them with support to enable them to change.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour performed by a single person or group of people which is intended or perceived to inflict hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation to another person or group of people. This includes racism, sexism, disabilism and homophobia and may be direct or indirect.

Direct forms include physical violence and threats, verbal assaults, taunts, destruction of property, extortion and unwanted sexual interest/contact. Indirect forms of bullying include ignoring, withdrawal of friendship, excluding, malicious gossip, spreading rumours and abusive or oppressive graffiti.

Scope of the Policy

The scope of this policy encapsulates incidents of bullying which take place on School premises. Incidences that take place off site are not the legal responsibility of the School, but the School will naturally have an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its pupils and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside school. Therefore:

- If a pupil is found responsible for acts of bullying outside School grounds then this matter will be addressed and the bully's parents informed, if appropriate.

- If a pupil is the victim of bullying outside School grounds then support and advice will be provided including how to avoid further incidents in future. The victim's parents will be informed.
- Local police will be contacted and their help sought for dealing with more general concerns about the safety of children outside of School, and making School premises more secure. Concerns regarding School transport will be raised with transport companies and their help enlisted in resolving them.
- If information is received that indicates a child is victim of sibling bullying outside School then this will, in the first instance, be discussed with the parents. The Community Services Department will be contacted if the concerns persist.
- If children are being bullied by pupils of another School then the Headteacher of that School will be contacted and invited to deal with the matter.

Prevention of Bullying

School staff involved in the education and supervision of children will be made aware of the School's anti-bullying policy and the need for its consistent application when incidences of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff will constantly reinforce the School ethos to children that bullying is unacceptable and inappropriate and that positive action will be taken to prevent and manage it.

The awareness of pupils regarding bullying behaviour will be raised at a number of levels, which include:

- Whole School Level – children will be informed of the School's zero tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent incidences of bullying through assemblies. This issue will be regularly raised when the whole School will be informed of the progress of the policy and any changes that may be introduced.
- Classroom Level – during form periods, tutorials, circle time, projects, PSHE and Citizenship.
- Individual Level – additional support and guidance will be offered to children who feel at risk of bullying or who have suffered incidences of bullying in the past.
- Perpetrators of bullying will be provided with advice and support and taught strategies to enable them to control their unacceptable behaviour and prevent further incidents.
- Arrangements will be made to ensure that there is adequate supervision provided during 'vulnerable' times; such as lunch and break times and at the beginning and end of the school day, to minimise the risk of bullying incidents.
- Children will be encouraged to speak with staff about bullying incidents they have experienced or witnessed. Staff will then respond positively, take the child's concerns seriously and ensure a full investigation is held into the matter.

- Parents should share at the earliest opportunity any concerns they have over their children's welfare with the School, and be prepared to work with the School to keep their children safe in future. Expressions of concern will be taken seriously and be fully investigated.
- Parents who believe their child is bullying others should share their concerns with the School at the earliest opportunity so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed upon to prevent further incidents and help the child to change their behaviour.

Staff will at all times treat each other, parents, carers and pupils with respect and courtesy and provide the children with a behavioural lead by setting a good example and enabling them to learn appropriate responses to others. This will support the School ethos of appropriate behaviour founded on fairness, equality and respect where individual differences are celebrated and seen as a source of enrichment.

Parental Involvement in the Management and Prevention of Bullying

Parents and carers have an important influence on their children and the School is totally committed to working with parents and carers, using the home/school agreement, to secure their support when their child is involved in an incidence of bullying. School firmly believes that the best results occur when professionals, parents and carers can work together when bullying occurs.

Where there is evidence that a child, as either perpetrator or victim, is involved in a single serious bullying incident, or is repeatedly involved in less serious bullying incidences, then School will inform parents and invite their involvement in the management of the problem and the prevention of further incidents. Where the incidents are isolated or of a less serious nature, School staff will manage the incidents and parents will be informed.

Implementation of the Policy

The zero tolerance policy will be fully implemented into the School's working ethos and rigorously applied to enable School to create and maintain a bully-free environment. Incidents which fall within School's definition of bullying behaviour will be managed by all staff involved in the teaching or supervision of the children, who have a responsibility to ensure that the victim receives the support they require, the bully is informed of the unacceptability of their behaviour and a record is made of the incident.

Children will be made aware that they should inform staff of any incidents or concerns they may have; that action will be taken when bullying is reported; that staff members want to know their concerns and that their concerns will be taken seriously.

Management of Bullying Incidents

Firm and decisive action will be taken by School to deal with any incident of bullying behaviour that is witnessed by or reported to any member of staff.

Post-Incident Responses for the Victim

When a staff member receives direct or indirect information that a bullying incident may have occurred, the report will be taken seriously and fully investigated.

School will then offer a proactive, supportive and sympathetic response to the victim(s). The exact nature of the response will be determined by the child's individual needs and may include:

- Immediate action to halt the incident and ensure the child's safety
- Reassuring the child that they did the correct thing by reporting the incident
- Positive reinforcement to the victim that they were not responsible for the bully's behaviour
- Implementing strategies to prevent further incidents
- Sympathy and empathy to the child
- Offering counselling
- Engaging in befriending
- Providing assertiveness training for the child
- Providing extra supervision and monitoring
- The creation of a support group
- Peer mediation and/or mentoring
- Informing/involving the victim's parents
- Employing adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (as long as this does not increase the vulnerability of the victim)
- Arranging a review of progress

Post Incident Responses for the Perpetrator

School will adopt positive sanctions to show the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable and to encourage them to change. School takes bullying very seriously and by adopting a supportive, pragmatic, problem-solving approach they will enable bullies to behave in a more acceptable way, as the use of punishment in this situation is not necessarily conducive to managing bullying behaviour.

The response of the School to bullying incidents will be proportionate – the more serious the incident, the more serious the response. Sanctions, when applied will be done so consistently and fairly, and the following options will be considered:

- Immediate action to halt the bullying incident in progress
- Reinforcement of the message to the perpetrator that bullying behaviour is against School rules and is unacceptable under any circumstances
- Loss of lunch and/or break time privileges
- Detention
- Daily or Headteacher's Report
- Removal from class or group
- Withholding permission to participate in non-curriculum sports or out-of-school activities
- Parents informed or involved
- Counselling and/or instruction in behaving more appropriately
- Employing adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (as long as this does not increase the vulnerability of the victim)
- Fixed term exclusions
- Positive reinforcement and/or a rewards system that encourages change and the management of unacceptable behaviour

Monitoring and Evaluated the Implemented Policy

A record will be made of any and all incidents that fall within the School's definition of bullying, with identification of any racist/sexist/disabilist or homophobic elements.

The Governing Body will receive an Annual Report detailing the extent of the issue and of any emerging trends. This information will be shared with parents, carers and pupils.

Senior School staff and Governors will examine and evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy and agree any amendments that may be required to address ongoing concerns. These will also be shared with staff, parents, carers and pupils.