

# Anti-bullying Policy

This document sets out the school's policy in relation to the issue of bullying. It reflects a belief that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstances (zero tolerance) and all staff understand that doing nothing when observing or being made aware of any such incident is never an option – we are all committed to dealing with bullying immediately and professionally. We know that it is best prevented through the development of a school ethos based on mutual respect, fairness and equality. This document also acknowledges that bullying behaviour is problematic for the victim and perpetrator, and embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

## Principles

All children have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and to be protected from others who may wish to harm, degrade or abuse them.

There is **no justification whatsoever** for bullying behaviour and it will not be tolerated in any form. Differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability or any other perceived difference are absolutely unacceptable as reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the bully and the victim and will be addressed in positive and constructive ways which provide opportunities for growth and development for the bully and victim.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies will involve children, staff, governors, parents/carers and other professionals working with children who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying behaviour.

It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention and management of bullying and staff require advice, training and support to manage it with confidence.

## Aims

- To eliminate intimidating behaviour and promote a school ethos in which each pupil is safe and able to play a full part in the life of the school
- To address the problem of bullying and to bring it under control through the implementation of whole-school policy and procedures
- To reassure parents and carers that School takes their children's welfare seriously and that they are being educated in a safe and secure environment
- To make pupils, parents/carers and staff aware of what steps to take when an incident of bullying has occurred
- To demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and to reassure victims that action will be taken to keep them safe
- To address with bullies their problematic behaviour in a fair and firm, non-oppressive manner, and to provide them with support to enable them to change their behaviour

## **Definition**

Bullying is the systematic, wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. Any repeated interaction which is **perceived** or **intended** to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation is bullying.

Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect. Direct forms include physical violence and threats; name calling, verbal assaults and taunts; the destruction of property; extortion; unwanted sexual interest or contact. Examples of indirect forms of bullying include ignoring and the withdrawal of friendship; excluding; malicious gossip and spreading rumour; abusive or oppressive graffiti.

School takes all forms of bullying extremely seriously, and all staff and governors are committed to immediate and effective action in line with this policy.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to incidents of bullying which take place on school premises. However the school has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its pupils and will respond appropriately to any information it receives about bullying outside school. For example the headteacher's authority extends to incidents on the journeys to and from school, and he or she is therefore entitled to impose sanctions for inappropriate behaviour by children during those journeys.

Thus:

- If it emerges that a pupil is responsible for bullying other children outside school this matter is addressed and (if appropriate) the bully's parents informed.
- If a child is found to be the victim of bullying outside school help and support is offered and advice given on how to avoid further incidents in future. The victim's parents are informed.
- If there are more general concerns about children's safety outside school the local police are contacted and their help sought in making the area around the school premises more secure.
- If information is received that a child is being bullied by a sibling outside school this is initially discussed with the parents. If concerns persist then the matter is referred to the Social Services.
- If children are being bullied by pupils of another school the Head of that school is informed and invited to deal with the matter.

## **Prevention**

All staff involved in the education and/or supervision of children are made aware of the issue of bullying and the need to apply the schools policy of zero-tolerance consistently when episodes of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff constantly reinforce the message to children that bullying is unacceptable and take positive action to prevent and control it.

In addition the issue of bullying is raised with pupils at a number of levels including:

- At whole school level – through assemblies when children are informed of the school's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that are taken to prevent bullying taking place.
- At classroom level – during circle time, projects, PHSE and Citizenship
- At individual level – children who are felt to be at risk of bullying (or who have suffered from bullying in the past) are offered additional support and guidance.
- Children who have bullied others are given advice and support and taught strategies to enable them to bring their unacceptable behaviour under control and to prevent further incidents.
- School recognises that there are particular times when children may be more vulnerable to bullying – lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Arrangements are made to ensure that at such times there is adequate supervision available to reduce the risk of bullying incidents.
- Children are encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware. In these circumstances staff respond positively, take the expression of concern seriously and ensure that the matter is fully investigated.
- Children are encouraged to seek help, support and advice from the trained Year 6 pupils who are responsible for peer mediation
- Parents who believe their children are the victim of bullying should share their concerns with school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with school to keep their children safe in future. All expressions of concern are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.
- Similarly if parents believe their child is bullying others, this information should be shared with school so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed to prevent further incidents and the bullying child helped to change their behaviour.

All of these preventative strategies operate within a school ethos founded on equality, fairness and respect for others in which individual differences are celebrated and seen as a source of enrichment. In order to help children learn and develop appropriate responses to others, all staff at all times treat each other (and children, parents and carers) with courtesy and respect and model appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

(Cross reference to Mission Statement and Behaviour Policy)

### **Parental involvement**

School is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents and believes that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents/carers are able to work together when bullying occurs.

School recognises the important influence which parents/carers have on their children and always hope to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as victim or a perpetrator.

If a child is involved repeatedly in serious incidents of bullying (either as a victim or a perpetrator) school informs parents and invites them to become involved in the management of the problem and the prevention of further incidents. Less serious incidents may be managed by school staff and parents simply informed, although parents will be most welcome to come into school without being specifically invited if they so wish.

## **Implementation**

School is committed to creating a bully-free environment and will ensure that its zero-tolerance policy is applied rigorously. All staff involved in the teaching and/or supervision of children take responsibility for addressing incidents which fall with the school's definition of bullying and ensure that the victim receives what support is required; the bully is informed of the unacceptability of his/her behaviour and a record is made of the incident.

All children need to be aware that staff want to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

## **Post incident responses for the victim**

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a child may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report is taken seriously and investigated.

School offers a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to children who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular child's individual needs and may include:

- immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child's safety
- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do
- reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully
- strategies to prevent further incidents
- sympathy and empathy
- counselling
- befriending
- assertiveness training
- extra supervision/monitoring
- creation of a support group
- peer mediation/peer mentoring
- informing/involving parents
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
- arrangements to review progress

This list is not comprehensive, and other responses may be used with professional discretion.

## **Post incident responses for the bully**

School takes bullying behaviour very seriously and adopts a supportive, pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable bullies to behave in a more acceptable way. School is of the view that the positive use of sanctions can be useful in demonstrating to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and in promoting change.

School responds to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly. The following options will be considered:

- immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress
- engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of school rules and is unacceptable

- loss of lunch/breaktime privileges
- daily/ Headteacher's report
- removal from class/group
- withholding participation in sports or out of school activity (if not essential part of curriculum)
- parents informed
- counselling/instruction in alternative ways of behaving
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim)
- fixed periods of exclusion
- permanent exclusion (in extreme cases which may involve violence)
- rewards/positive reinforcement for children in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control

This list is not comprehensive, and other responses may be used with professional discretion.

### **Monitoring and evaluating**

Each incident of bullying falling within the school definition will be recorded. Any incidents with a racist, sexist, disability or homophobic element will be identified.

An annual report will be made to the Governing Body indicating the extent of the problem and any trends which may emerge.

Senior staff and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any ongoing concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and pupils.