



Anti-Bullying Policy

History

Started	November 2003	School Conference
First Draft	December 2003	Staff
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Review 1	January 2008	Staff
Approval	March 2008	Full Governors
Review 2	September 2011	HT / Staff
Approval	October 2011	Full Governors
Reviewed	February 2016	School improvement/ Curriculum Committee

1 Introduction

This policy was begun at the whole-school conference, November 2003, with contributions from teachers, support staff, governors and mid-day supervisors. It updates the previous policy (2000) and has been shared with all members of the school community, including pupils and parents.

It has been approved by governors, and will be reviewed regularly.

It was reviewed and revised in January 2008 to update and improve the guidance with cases of bullying involving SEN pupils and to include reference to cyber-bullying.

It was reviewed and revised in September 2011 and February 2016 to take account of changes to school procedures and the school's developing understanding of bullying issues.

2 Aims of the Policy

- To help individuals celebrate and value their differences and to acknowledge and respect the **rights and** differences of others.
- To encourage everyone to view themselves as an important part of the school community where their participation is valued and views appreciated.
- To encourage an openness amongst all members of the community about all forms of bullying.
- To help individuals **take responsibility for and** understand the consequences of their own actions.
- To develop a **procedure** whereby all incidents of bullying and harassment are dealt with fairly and appropriately.
- To help everyone feel secure in reporting incidents of bullying.

3 Definition

Bullying is a persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone. Different types of bullying have three things in common:

- they involve deliberately hurtful behaviour;
- they are repeated over time;
- they involve an unfair balance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (hiding possessions, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

In addition, it may be indirect, eg excluding someone from a social grouping, spreading stories.

We recognise that bullying can occur at a distance for example cyber-bullying including text messaging, emailing and within chat room forums.

4 Preventing Bullying

Our approach to behaviour is outlined in the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and this document suggests a range of strategies for promoting good behaviour throughout our school community.

In addition, specific action is taken by the school to prevent bullying through:

- maintaining the ethos outlined in the school's Positive Behaviour Policy;
- raising awareness of the issues of bullying with staff (at staff meetings and on training days), pupils (through the curriculum and school assemblies) and parents (via the school newsletter, parents meetings and at new intake meetings) at regular opportunities;
- the involvement of other agencies, eg community police;
- the taught curriculum;
- encouraging the wearing of school uniform;
- ensuring that children understand they have a right to be themselves, hold their own beliefs and celebrate their background and culture;
- agreeing class and school rules with pupils regularly, and maintaining high expectations of the relationships between pupils;
- teaching specifically about personal safety including online safety.
- teaching specifically about anti-bullying during PSHE and through assemblies and special weeks with an 'Anti-bullying focus'.

5 Who is involved?

5.1 The Bully or Perpetrator

The person who bullies is someone who attempts to exercise power over someone else. Any child can use bullying behaviours. Stereotyping people who bully can be misleading.

It should be recognised that people who bully, have real difficulties and we have a responsibility to educate them. In many cases, people who bully have themselves been the victims of bullying, or at least suffer from low self-esteem – in these cases bullying helps them to feel "better" than other children

5.2 The Victim

The victim is the target of the bullying behaviours. We recognise that anyone can be a victim of bullying. All allegations of bullying must be taken seriously and be fully investigated, and the wellbeing of the victim is at the heart of all subsequent actions taken by the school.

5.3 Observers

Those who witness bullying without taking any helpful action also contribute to the problem as they are condoning, if not encouraging, bullying.

5.4 Other Pupils

Even children who are not directly involved with bullying may also be affected as dealing with incidents often consumes a great deal of their learning time and can adversely affect the atmosphere in the class.

6 Identifying Bullying

Pupils, staff, volunteers and parents should be clear about what is meant by the term bullying. It cannot be assumed that everyone has a shared understanding. For example, many people who bully claim that they are not, in fact, bullying – ‘*I was just playing*’ or ‘*I was only joking*’ are regular excuses. As such, the Headteacher is responsible for judging if bullying is taking place after consultation with involved parties.

All pupils must recognise that bullying is unacceptable. Children and parents are encouraged to report all incidents of bullying.

Reinforcement of this point should be a recurring part of every child’s school experience.

It is important that all school staff look out for signs of bullying and that they react decisively in every case.

Bullying is rarely a straightforward matter and often includes a number of complex social interactions. Staff should err on the side of caution and the anti-bullying procedure should be followed in all the following cases:

- where the behaviour clearly meets the three criteria set out in the definition staff should follow the procedure *from Stage 2*
- where bullying behaviour is suspected, either by staff or a parent, but not proven
- where a victim *feels* as if they are being bullied, for example: there is a persistent issue, but not necessarily a single perpetrator; or the perpetrator’s persistent behaviour is not deliberate but has the same effect as if it were
- where there is a reciprocal pattern of bullying behaviour

A single, isolated incident should be dealt with using the Positive Behaviour Policy, but staff should be aware of the cumulative effect of individual incidents and be sensitive to the victim’s feelings and perceptions.

Parents too should be aware of signs of bullying and encourage openness. Very often, children may not wish to tell anyone that they are being bullied. In some cases it is because they may feel ashamed or even guilty. In others they fear further bullying may take place as a result. It may also be that they feel it is a waste of time if previous problems have been ignored. Although children should be encouraged to be open about bullying, not all will, so it is important to be aware of signs that a child may be the victim of bullying.

Children who are being bullied may:

- be frightened of walking to and from school;
- be unwilling to go to school;
- begin to do poorly in their school work;
- have their possessions go missing;
- become withdrawn, anxious and/or prone to tears;

- begin to display bullying behaviours towards other children or siblings;
- become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- demonstrate changes in behaviour;
- be frightened to say what is wrong;
- give improbable excuses for the above actions;

although each of these actions may be caused by other factors. Staff should be mindful that these behaviours could be indicative of potential safeguarding concerns, please refer to Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Where bullying involves children with Special Educational Needs, staff should take care to fully explain the situation and take appropriate steps to support them within the 'Circle of Friends' framework. When dealing with incidents involving children with Special Educational Needs, staff should be aware that their actions may be a direct result of the difficulties experienced by these individuals.

- In some cases children with Special Educational Needs are more sensitive to criticism and may have difficulty successfully interacting with other children on the playground. For example, when involved in a game and something goes wrong, children with Special Educational Needs may find disagreements particularly difficult to understand and cope with and may interpret this as bullying. Intervention at Stage 1 should be used to support the child in question.
- Some children with Special Educational Needs find moderating their voices and use of language difficult which may be interpreted as bullying.

In both cases staff should take the individual child's needs and difficulties into consideration and deal with the situation appropriately.

7 Our Approach to Bullying

The following plan outlines the steps to be taken when bullying is reported or suspected.

1. Staff should treat all disclosures of bullying seriously and take time to listen to the complaint and reassure the victim.
2. All reported and suspected bullying should be passed to the class teacher as soon as possible, irrespective of how trivial it may seem. It is the class teacher's responsibility to coordinate the approach to the specific bullying issue.
3. As soon as is reasonable practicable, preferably the same day, the class teacher should talk with the victim to establish the pattern of behaviour leading to the bullying.
4. The Headteacher should be informed and a decision taken as to whether to act at Stage 1 or Stage 2, or whether the Positive Behaviour Policy is appropriate instead.

In many cases, there will be linked behaviour outside of school, for example, at youth club, using mobiles or the internet, or simply at the Rec. This should always be taken into account when investigating bullying and victims and perpetrators should always know that the school is aware of these incidences. Parents must be informed so that they can take appropriate action and close liaison with other organisations, eg youth club, is essential. Staff should closely monitor the impact of events outside of school on the relationships within school.

7.1 Stage 1

In most cases Stage 1 will be the most appropriate course of action. Stage 1 is appropriate when:

- bullying is suspected but the pattern of behaviour is unclear
- there are complex interactions, eg a number of children are involved or there are counter allegations
- a victim feels bullied but there is no evidence

Stage 1 should not be used where:

- bullying behaviour is clear and needs immediate remedial action

At Stage 1 the Class Teacher should:

1. Support the victim, eg through a “Circle of Friends” approach (Appendix 1) or organising supportive friends, offering inside space or additional contact with a named adult.
2. Initiate monitoring using a sheet from Appendix 2. These can be given to the individual, a group or the whole class as necessary.
3. Meet with the alleged perpetrator to explain the allegations and what needs to happen to make improvements. Listen to their explanation, but remain aware of common excuses. Focus on the impact on the victim.
4. Meet with the perpetrator’s parents to explain the issue and the school’s expectations.
5. Meet with the victim’s parents to explain the school’s actions and arrange a follow-up meeting in a week’s time to discuss progress.
6. Spend some time observing the interactions of the groups.
7. Inform staff of the issue through weekly Briefing.
8. Ensure that monitoring is completed and reviewed regularly.

Each week, in discussion with the Headteacher, decide on the next steps:

- The issue is solved and monitoring can stop; or,
- Monitoring needs to continue for a further week; or,
- The situation needs escalating to Stage 2.

The class teacher should meet the victim’s parent’s regularly to inform them of progress. This can be reduced as the issue resolves.

Class teachers may want to use SEAL or PSHCE materials to support the class in a more general way at this time.

7.2 Stage 2

At Stage 2 the presence of bullying is clear and decisive action needs to be taken.

1. The Headteacher meets, separately, the victim and the perpetrator and decides on a course of action.
2. The unacceptable behaviour is made clear to the perpetrator and the school’s expectations are reinforced
3. The following could be considered:
 - a meeting between the victim and the perpetrator, with the Headteacher (only if the victim agrees)
 - removal of break-times and lunchtimes for the perpetrator in order to protect the victim

- an “on-report” system for the perpetrator
 - access to external services for either the victim or the perpetrator through the CAF process
4. The Headteacher meets the perpetrators parents to plan for improvements to behaviour
 5. The Headteacher meets the victim’s parents to explain the school’s actions. A follow-up meeting is arranged.
 6. The Class Teacher initiates monitoring as at Stage 1 to keep track of improvements. “Circle of Friends” could be used (Appendix 1)

Immediate improvements should be expected. The school retains the right to use exclusion should a perpetrator, given appropriate support, be unable to modify their behaviour to such an extent as to keep the victim safe. Exclusion is the Headteacher’s decision alone and will be taken on consideration of all the circumstances.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

8.1 All staff

All staff, including supply teachers, PPA teachers, classroom support staff, HLTA’s and playground supervisors, are responsible for:

- always listening to anyone who feels that they are a victim of bullying;
- informing the class teacher of reported or suspected incidents of bullying;
- ensuring pupils understand that they will be listened to and that action will be taken, especially since bullying will not, in normal circumstances, be dealt with in a ‘public’ forum;

8.2 Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for following up issues at Stage 2 and maintaining a record of the incidents of bullying that have taken place at this level.

8.3 Class Teacher

The victim’s class teacher is responsible for:

- following up the issue using the approach outlined in Section 7;
- making a record of the issue and informing the headteacher as soon as possible;
- seeking advice from other staff who may know the pupils involved well;
- informing parents of the action the school is taking after an issue has been reported in line with Section 7.
- listening to concerns expressed by parents, children and other members of staff.

8.4 Playground supervisors

Playground supervisors, including midday supervisors, teachers and teaching assistants on duty, are responsible for:

- being vigilant on the playground or in the dining hall for suspected incidents of bullying;
- ensuring that areas of the playground or grassed areas do not become unsupervised, through careful placement of adults on the playground.

8.5 School Council

Playleaders on duty are responsible for ensuring inclusive play on the playground.

8.6 Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- telling a member of staff if someone they know is being hurt or bullied;
- telling someone if they are themselves being hurt or bullied.

8.7 Parents

Parents are responsible for:

- informing the class teacher of any concerns or worries about their child with respect to bullying;
- supporting the school's approach to resolution, as either the parent of a victim or a person who has been bullying;
- attending meetings with the class teacher or Headteacher designed to resolve the issue.
- monitoring sensitively the progress and reporting back to the class teacher any further or continuing concerns.

8.8 Governors

Governors are responsible for investigating any long-term grievance or concern for a family who feel that a bullying issue has not been resolved by the staff in the school. This action should be taken after the family have followed the school's complaints procedure, which is outlined in the school brochure. Governors will respond to complaints as appropriate within the time constraints outlined in the school's complaints procedure.

9 Monitoring and Review

The headteacher is responsible for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the Governors' usual review cycle.

Appendix 1 – Circle of Friends

The “Circle of Friends” Approach to Bullying

Step 1: Meet with the victim

When the teacher finds out that bullying has happened she starts by talking to the victim about his feelings. She does not question him about the incidents but she does need to know who was involved.

Step 2: Convene a meeting with the people involved

The teacher arranges to meet with the group of pupils who have been involved. This will include some bystander or colluders and even friends of the victim who joined in but did not initiate any bullying. A group of six to eight young people works well.

Step 3: Explain the problem

She tells them about the way the victim is feeling and might use a poem, piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise his distress. At no time does she discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group.

Step 4: Share responsibility

The teacher does not attribute blame but states that she knows that the group are responsible and can do something about it.

Step 5: Ask the group for their ideas

Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. The teacher gives some positive responses but she does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

Step 6: Leave it up to them

The teacher ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. She arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

Step 7: Meet them again

About a week later the teacher discusses with each student, including the victim, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process