



Believe. Achieve. Succeed.

Anti-bullying Policy

Statement of Principle

We want our school to be an educationally inclusive institution in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well being of every young person matter.

We will not take educational inclusion for granted so we will identify any pupils who may be missing out and then take practical steps to meet pupils' needs effectively, promoting tolerance and understanding in our diverse society.

Aim

We aim to provide a safe, secure and positive environment where:

- Children can achieve their potential, making full use of the opportunities available to them.
- Children themselves and their property are treated with respect and are free from intimidation.
- Children are actively listened to.

The Nature of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as the abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent to cause distress to another individual or group. It is deliberately hurtful behaviour which may be physical, sexual, verbal or indirect in nature. It is repeated over a period of time on those who feel powerless to resist with the intention of causing distress. All of the above forms of bullying have a psychological affect on the victim.

Bullying should always be taken seriously. All bullying is unacceptable.

Bullying does not only occur between children. The above definition can also be seen to characterise some relationships between adults or between adults and children.

In more serious instances where adults abuse their power over a child or a child abuses their power over another child, bullying may be viewed as child abuse and should be treated as such. (See Child Protection Policy).

Bullying is deliberately hurtful. It typically has seven elements:

1. An initial desire to hurt
2. The desire is expressed in action
3. Someone is hurt either physically or emotionally
4. There is an imbalance of power
5. It is without justification
6. It is typically repeated
7. There is evident enjoyment by those who bully

Bullying can also stem from thoughtlessness, such as in name calling or stem from institutionalised attitudes, for example in relation to gender or race. That does not make it any less unacceptable.

Bullying can typically take three forms:

1. Physical bullying hitting, kicking, taking belongings
2. Verbal bullying name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
3. Indirect bullying spreading nasty stories, exclusion from social groups

Name calling is the most common direct form. This may be because of individual characteristics. However, pupils can be called names because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour, sexual orientation or some form of disability.

The use of mobile phones to text insulting, obscene or threatening messages is both verbal and indirect bullying. The use of phones, including camera phones to harass or transmit derogatory text messages and or photographs must also be viewed as bullying.

Bullying is always significant to the person being bullied.

BULLYING BY RACE, GENDER, SEXUAL ORIENTATION or DISABILITY

1. Racist Bullying

Following the Stephen Lawrence incident, the 1999 MacPherson report defines racist bullying as “any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”. A child or young person may be targeted for representing a group. Attacking the individual sends a message to that group. Incidents can include:

- Verbal abuse – name calling, racist jokes, offensive mockery / mimicry
- Physical aggression or threats
- Wearing offensive or provocative badges or other insignia
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines into the school
- Racist inciting of others
- Racist graffiti or other written insults including against food, music, dress or customs
- A refusal to associate with someone of other ethnic origin in work or play.

For further information and guidance consult the Northumberland County Council anti-racism policy

2. Sexual Bullying

Sexual bullying is characterised by the following:

- Abusive name calling
- Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- Pornographic material
- Graffiti with sexual content

In its most extreme form, sexual bullying takes the form of sexual assault or even rape. Under these circumstances police would normally be involved as these are criminal offences.

Sexual Orientation

Pupils do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to experience this type of bullying. In most cases being different can be enough.

For further information and guidance consult the DfES publication on homophobic bullying "Stand Up for Us"

3. Disabilities

Children and young people with special needs or disabilities are often at a greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly. The bullying is usually about their specific difficulties or their appearance. This is compounded by the fact that these children and young people may not be able to articulate their experiences.

Recognising Bullying

Research shows that 75% of bullying in primary schools takes place in the playground. In secondary schools it is also most likely outdoors but other hotspots are classrooms, corridors and toilets, especially when supervision is minimal. School transport is another potential hotspot.

Both boys and girls bully and can bully as individuals or as members of a group. Children who bully others come from any kind of social or cultural background. Adult bullying of children also occurs and is equally unacceptable.

Bullying always creates inequalities and is damaging to all those involved. The person being bullied, the person who bullies and those who witness or know about the bullying are all affected in some way. Those who bully can experience difficult and unhappy relationships with both peers and adults and frequently need help to overcome these difficulties. Research evidence has shown that those who bully are more likely to engage in anti-social activities and have a greater prevalence of poor mental health.

A child or young person could have experienced both being bullied and having bullied others. Bullying is not a natural part of growing up and should never be accepted as such.

Those who bully may show aggression through for example, poor control of impulsive actions, a positive view of violence or a desire to dominate. They may exhibit anxiety through for example low self esteem or difficulties in making friends. They may be easily led in joining in bullying or in standing by whilst bullying takes place.

Those who bully may experience difficulty in admitting what they have done; be reluctant to admit that what they have done is wrong; suppress feelings of guilt; feel no remorse and repeat the hurtful action, especially if this goes unchallenged.

Those who are bullied may spend their lives in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and feel that they have done something to attract the bullying. Any child or young person can be bullied.

Those who are being bullied may experience:

- Unhappiness
- A sense of desolation and in some cases, desperation
- Reduced self esteem and self worth
- Poor academic performance
- Exclusion from normal social experience
- A strong desire to escape the situation which may result in absconding or truanting
- A desire to self-harm or even to commit suicide

Those who are being bullied may exhibit the following:

- Unwillingness to attend or participate in activities
- Unwillingness to venture into some areas of a building
- Fear of walking to school or of using public transport
- Underachievement
- Books or clothes destroyed
- Possessions and money going missing
- Signs of distress such as crying easily, lack of appetite
- Becoming withdrawn or disruptive and / or aggressive
- Stammering
- Stealing to pay the bully or replace missing possessions
- A variety of physical symptoms including cuts, bruising, aches, pain, faints, headaches, stomach upsets, bedwetting, disrupted sleep patterns
- A marked change in well established patterns of behaviour

Those who are bullied are often reluctant to say what is wrong or to seek help.

Strategies and Procedures for preventing and dealing with bullying

Prevention

Tackling bullying is one way of making the school a happy and secure place for everyone. By involving the children in decisions affecting the life of the school and by listening to and valuing their opinions we hope to cultivate a climate that encourages openness, not silence and secrecy, which can encourage bullying.

All pupils will know there is a policy and procedures in place to deal with bullying.

The school is organised so that children spend a large percentage of the day with one teacher, enabling them to build up relationships based on trust. Staff know the children well and are able to spot changes of behaviour etc which might be signs of bullying.

In encouraging children to speak out about bullying, we may seem to have “more” bullying certainly in the short term, but we hope this strategy may help to change attitudes in the future.

Teachers should lead by example at all times and avoid using bullying behaviour, otherwise bullying will be seen as an acceptable form of behaviour. Teachers should treat children as individuals who have rights.

The curriculum is used as a vehicle to broaden children’s perception and promote the view that speaking out about bullying is good, it is not sneaking, a weakness or trouble making. Assemblies are often used to highlight bullying.

Outside agencies such as the police are invited into school to discuss issues like bullying.

At morning and afternoon breaks two members of staff are on duty. Children are encouraged to play in ‘open’ spaces on the field and yard, rather than to congregate in hidden corners such as behind the bike sheds. The duty staff are available and approachable if anyone has a problem. Two lunchtime auxiliary assistants perform the same function at lunchtime.

Parents are welcome to contact us at any time if they are concerned about their child. The partnership between home and school is crucial in helping us tackle the issue of bullying.

Pupils are involved in procedures for dealing with instances of bullying through circle time, community of enquiry or peer mediation.

Strategies

The following guidelines should be followed by staff if they come across bullying:

- Remain calm; you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control of the situation.
- Take the incident report seriously.
- Take the child who has been bullied somewhere safe.
- Reassure the victim(s), don't make them feel inadequate or foolish; offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s).
- Encourage the bully to see the victims' point of view.
- Tell the class teacher and the Head.

Depending on a number of factors the Headteacher will decide what action is to be taken.

- a) To support the child who has been bullied, eg develop support network of peers, build up self esteem.
- b) To ensure the bully understands that their behaviour is unacceptable, eg loss of credit, loss of free time, withdrawal of privileges, involvement of parents, exclusion.

The class teacher and or Headteacher will investigate all incidents and the Headteacher will record all incidents and the subsequent action taken. Parents will be involved if appropriate.

Preventative Work

The policy will be promoted at every opportunity particularly in assemblies, PSHE and Citizenship when the curriculum can provide a way in to discussions about relationships and respect for others. Within all aspects of the curriculum children will be expected to work with others and behaviour which demonstrates tolerance and an understanding of others feelings will be rewarded and used as a positive role model.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will report to Governors on an annual basis identifying any specific actions that have been or need to be taken.

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