

Edward Peake C of E (VC) Middle School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition and Rationale

Definition

The following 3 dimensions collectively help us to define bullying behaviour

1. Bullying is intentionally hurtful.

It is the deliberate, unjustifiable and unprovoked use of aggressive behaviour. It includes actions that cause physical, emotional or mental hurt to the victim and actions that violate another person's freedom and rights.

2. Bullying is a repeated experience.

Being bullied is the experience of persistent or repeated anti-social behaviour. However, occasionally there can be single incidents which constitute bullying because of the fear and intimidation that projects beyond that initial incident.

3. Bullying also involves an inequality of power.

The person/s being bullied find it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour, or those involved in the bullying behaviour have power over the victim. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time, but more common examples include that they are bigger/stronger/older, have more friends, are more established in the school or care less about the consequences of their actions. Bullying behaviour can involve individuals or groups.

Rationale – We believe we should create an environment in which all pupils feel safe, have equal opportunities and where there is a positive attitude towards the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of the individuals who live here.

The school takes its role in the prevention and handling of bullying very seriously. Staff are asked to investigate cases as thoroughly as possible. All cases where staff either suspect or confirm bullying are reported by entering the incident onto class charts. In this way it is possible to build up a picture of those involved.

In order to help children report problems "What happened?" sheets are available around school. These can be filled in and handed to a member of staff.

The following principles inform our anti-bullying approach:

- Bullying behaviour is in all circumstances unacceptable.
- All adults in the school community (staff, governors and parents/carers) are expected to present positive role models to children.
- Bullying is a shared problem and staff and parents will need to work together in partnership to resolve incidents.
- The safety and welfare of the children concerned will at all times be central to decisions about actions taken in response to bullying.
- Anti-bullying approaches will be consistent with the values of our community and preparing children for life in an inclusive society. These include incorporating an acceptance of and valuing of difference, the need to cope with difficult individuals and the role of forgiveness.
- When incidents have been dealt with, all parties should be supported and enabled to move on positively.

Types of bullying

There are four main types of bullying:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft or threats of such behaviour)
- Verbal (name calling)
- Indirect (spreading rumours; excluding someone from social groups; ridicule)
- Cyber (computer, mobile phones, games consoles, social networking sites)

It is important that we recognise the difference between bullying and simply 'falling out'. Many isolated one-off incidents do not fall into the category of bullying.

Signs and symptoms of bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate of a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school bus
- pleads to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- develops a stammer
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to perform poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes / belongings torn or damaged
- possessions go 'missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- lunch or other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- returns home starving – lunch / money has been stolen
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- begins bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating

- is frightened to say what is wrong
- provides improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and therefore investigated.

The school's response

All bullying behaviour is taken seriously, including subtle actions which can build up for individuals over time, eroding self-esteem and building unhappiness or a climate of fear.

The school avoids at all times labelling pupils as either victims or bullies. It is important that pupils who have been the targets of bullying behaviours are able to see that this experience will end and that it is not the result of something about themselves that has attracted or deserved such treatment by others. Similarly children who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be expected to resolve the matter and change their behaviour. It should be remembered that there is no typical "bully". Many children may use bullying behaviours from time to time.

Not all hurtful behaviour is bullying, but all hurtful behaviour is unacceptable in school. The following are examples of hurtful behaviour which may not be bullying:

Children may fall out with their friends and engage in hurtful behaviour. Such experiences can be extremely distressing to the individuals involved.

Children may retaliate against the hurtful behaviour of others.

Although not all hurtful behaviour is intentional, all hurtful behaviours are a matter of concern and will be dealt with by the school. Where pupils cause harm or distress without intent, the impact of their behaviour will be pointed out and any continuance will be regarded as intentional. Similarly, all unsafe behaviours and unsafe environment issues will be dealt with.

- The school will encourage a climate where children report bullying to a member of staff who will listen. The school will always liaise fully with parents in order to resolve the matter, although details of action taken which relates to other children will remain confidential.
- Pupils will be taught that bullying is unacceptable inside or outside of school
- Pupils who report incidents will be encouraged to express feelings as well as details about incidents. (Details of names should be reported on the daily briefing notes to assist all staff in being vigilant).
- We will encourage mutual support and focus on changing the behaviour of the instigators.
- In suitable cases a 'no-blame' approach may be followed, particularly where future behaviour and the mending of broken relationships is more important than punishing past hurts. In more serious cases sanctions may need to be imposed.
- The school will seek parental help and support via the pupil's planner, a telephone call or letter. This is particularly important where disputes may spill over out of school.
- The form teacher is asked to rigorously monitor progress after incidents of bullying in order to help ensure that they are not repeated.
- It is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for pupils who feel bullied and help build and maintain an anti-bullying ethos in and around school.

Teachers explore issues relating to bullying in PSHCE time, collective worship and in community circles. On these occasions we can analyse issues such as self-esteem, assertiveness and valuing each other regardless of differences.

Pupils who have been bullied are supported by:

- Being offered an opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of school staff with whom they feel comfortable.
- Offer of continuous support.
- Reassurance.
- Support to restore lost self-esteem and confidence.
- Use of restorative conversations, if appropriate.
- Assurances that Edward Peake will continue to monitor the situation.
- It may be appropriate to encourage and support the victim to develop a wider circle of friends and interests.

Parental involvement:

- The parents / carers of those involved will be informed of incidents as appropriate.
- Parents should always initially contact their child's form tutor (or Year Leader if the form tutor is unavailable) if they are concerned about their child being unsettled at school or if they suspect that there may be an involvement in bullying.
- Parents / carers should encourage their children to tell someone if they are ever being bullied or are aware that bullying is taking place.
- Parents / carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school to achieve good relationships between pupils by supporting the strategies used in school.

Useful sources of information:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying (advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying)

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.kidscape.org.uk

Signed _____
Chair of Governors

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Appendix 1:

Possible pupil strategies for dealing with bullying:

- Inform an adult at school as soon as possible.
- Laugh or ignore comments or teasing wherever possible. These people want a scared reaction and humour or silence might throw them off. You may have to be resilient and keep it up for a while, they are then likely to get bored.
- Shout 'no' or 'go away'. But you must say it clearly and walk away immediately. Practice in the mirror.
- If it is a group bothering you, be assertive look them in the eye and say 'this isn't funny' and walk away.
- You could sign up for self-defence classes which will give you more confidence. This doesn't mean that you 'fight back', but they can help to build your confidence.
- Stay with a crowd, bullies are more likely to pick on kids who are on their own.
- Ask one of the gang members when they are alone why they find it necessary to gang up on one person. This approach will only work if you have some sort of relationship with that person.
- Speak to your parents. You need their help and support.
- Keep on walking, do not stop if they attempt to confront you. Get someone to witness, so that a teacher intervenes.
- Stop thinking like a victim – you do not deserve this and you did not ask for it. Walk tall; pretend you are confident, even when inside you do not feel confident. Look at the bullies and smile as if they do not frighten you, even when you do not feel this inside. Keep walking away and ignore them. They will get bored eventually.
- Keep a diary of all events; time, place and what is said. Ask your parents/carers to contact school and tell them what is happening. It is not right that bullying is allowed to go on, nor is it right that the bullies should be allowed to get away with such behaviour.

Don't suffer in silence: tell someone

Appendix 2:

Possible ways that parents can help their children:

- If you are worried that your child is being bullied, ask them directly.
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying.
- Take bullying seriously and find out the facts when told of an incident.
- Don't agree to keep bullying a secret.
- Talk with your child's form tutor if it is happening at school.
- Help practice strategies such as shouting 'No!' walking with confidence and running away. Don't suggest that they fight back.
- Give your child a chance to vent their feelings about being bullied.
- Arrange to meet your child, if the bullying is happening on the way to or from school or another activity.
- If you feel it would help your child's confidence ask if they would like to start self-defence classes.
- Check that your child is not inviting bullying by the way that they are speaking or behaving towards others.
- Keep a diary of all incidents.
- Invite children over to help your child to make friends.