

Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

What is 'bullying'? We ask this question very seriously, and need to find an answer to it – for, unless we know very clearly what we define as bullying behaviour, we cannot effectively combat it. Who are 'we'? We believe that in the definition of bullying there must be a shared consensus of opinion – among teachers, classroom assistants, mealtime assistants, parent helpers, pupils and their parents/carers. Only when there is shared understanding about what bullying is, and what it is not, can our children feel secure in a consistency of approach towards incidents – whether they are potential or actual victims, perpetrators or bystanders.

Bullying is one form of anti-social behaviour, yet it is important to know that not all anti-social behaviour, is bullying. The odd fight between children of similar strength is not bullying. The thoughtless push to get to the front of a queue is not bullying. Tempers lost for a multitude of possible reasons, resulting in hurtful words between classmates is not bullying. We define bullying as:

Planned hurtful dominance of one child by another, or a group of others, that takes place over a period of time.

Planned

That bullying is a planned act makes it very different from the 'thoughtless' unsociable acts mentioned above. They exhibit uncontrolled behaviour; by contrast, the bully is in sentient control over his/her actions, even though they may not understand why they are behaving in this way.

Dominance

Central to our definition of bullying is that the situation involves an abuse of power, the victim being physically and/or psychologically hurt by someone who is necessarily therefore in a position of power over them.

Over a period of time

This part of our definition again moves bullying away from the uncontrolled isolated incident. Of course, isolated incidents of unsociable behaviour can cause great distress: we treat such incidents very seriously indeed, counselling and listening to the people involved in an effort to effect a positive outcome for all, with reference to our Behaviour Policy and Practice.

Aims

- To promote non-bullying behaviour.
- To provide a caring, secure and stimulating environment with a consistent approach towards behavioural issues.
- To have a system in place that works to prevent bullying behaviour.
- To effectively support and protect victims of bullying.
- To effectively support bullies in changing their behaviour.
- To have a clear and consistent procedure for incidents.
- To work in partnership with parents and carers on bullying issues.

Delivery of the Policy

Prevention

We would hope that we do not have actual bullying in our school. Our environment, school culture, and specific educational experiences must therefore engender pro-social behaviour that is both praised and rewarded. Bullying, as well as other behaviour problems, may be prevented from arising by:

- Offering warmth, security, praise and recognition to all children in our care, thus establishing quality relationships and high self-esteem.
- Providing an appropriate match of task to children's interests and abilities, and taking appropriate action immediately it is recognised that a child is experiencing difficulty with his or her learning – lack of self-esteem and frustration cause a great many behaviour problems which may include bullying.
- Giving many opportunities to encourage co-operative working and playing skills; praising and rewarding co-operative and altruistic behaviour.
- Providing a rich and stimulating playtime environment. A variety of playtime toys and activities are available to be used by the children; these include many designed for co-operative play skills to be developed. We already have:
 1. Games on playground
 2. Sports equipment
 3. Key Stage 1 area.
- Effective playground supervision.
- Negotiating rules with the children. These are negotiated within each class; specific issues – such as bullying – will also be discussed as part of our Circle Time process. It is important that the children have understanding and 'ownership' of the rules, rather than simply having them imposed.
- Including work on bullying in group development session, eg Circle Time. These will address:

What is Bullying? The negotiation of the meaning and vocabulary involved. This is of vital importance – the children need to use the correct words.

What can I do? If someone is ever bullied, they need to feel secure in the knowledge of procedures for incidents and be sure that they will be supported and protected.

Non-aggressive solutions to problems will be explored through discussion and role play.

Supporting and Protecting Victims

Children who are bullied need to feel that the school will support and protect them. Measures must be taken to ensure that:

- Children know that adults in the school will listen to them. It is vitally important that victims of bullying speak out, ignoring threats of reprisals by those who are bullying them, and conquering fears that adults will treat their communications as mere 'tale telling'.

- Children know that everyone takes incidents seriously and will take actions to stop the bullying.
- Children know the procedures for reporting and dealing with incidents.
- Group development work explores assertive behaviour in response to bullying, developing skills in saying 'No', in ignoring or 'laughing off' hurtful remarks. This can be approached through the powerful medium of role-play situations.
- All adults connected to the school are aware of signs of bullying, and will communicate instances.

Procedures for Incidents

We have stated clearly above that actions will be taken to stop bullying if it occurs. What are those actions? They must be constructive – towards effecting an end to the bullying behaviour and situation, towards the victim's feelings and responses, and also constructive regarding the perpetrator's feelings and responses. We are unequivocal in our stance against bullying, but we also care for the individual who expresses their personal and social problems by planning hurtful dominance of another.

The aim for procedures within our school is **to stop the bullying by encouraging shared responsibility towards the care of individuals** within (our) society. The procedural sequence is outlined below:

1. Bullying is identified – observed by an adult or reported by a child. At this stage it is important to remember our definition of bullying behaviour – “planned hurtful dominance of one child by another, or a group of others, that takes place over a period of time”.
2. The victim is interviewed by the classteacher, talking about their feelings and recording them in written or pictorial form. They will say who has bullied them. Details of the incident will not be constructive at this stage; having been attended to at stage 1., they will cloud the central point which is to effect shared responsibility towards care of each other.
3. The bully or bullies, together with some bystanders if applicable, are seen as a group. The teacher will then communicate the victim's feelings, using the recorded evidence. The teacher will ask each person in the group how the victim may be made happier. The group will be given the responsibility to solve the problem.
4. After a period of a week, the teacher will meet with the victim and perpetrators separately, to assess whether the situation has progressed.
5. If bullying behaviour has persisted, parents will be informed. Discussions with the classteacher and headteacher will address particular behavioural needs, including Individual Behaviour Plans and clearly defined consequences for actions (refer to the school's Behaviour Policy).
6. The Behaviour Support Team will be contacted should the bullying behaviour continue. Persisted extreme behavioural problems may lead to exclusion.

Partnership with Parents/Carers

It is essential that we communicate our policy and practice concerning bullying to the parents/carers of our children. Without a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour, mixed messages will confuse our children and non-bullying unsociable behaviour will cause even greater problems, whilst real bullying may be obscured.

We encourage parents to talk to us about their concerns, both educationally and in behavioural matters, and this includes their awareness of instances of bullying.

School Grounds

Statistically, much bullying behaviour happens in schools' playtimes. We hope that our rich, varied and spacious grounds will engender pro-social behaviour. Playtime activities and toys are often designed to develop pleasure and skills in co-operative play.

Equal Opportunities

The work involved in these anti-bullying measures will always take care to ensure that attention will be paid to the school's Equal Opportunities Policy, noting particularly that:

- Equality of sex, race and ability will always be observed when dealing with bullying issues.
- Bullying behaviour includes sexual and racial harassment and offensive remarks and behaviour towards people based on their ability.

Evaluation of the Policy

We are constantly assessing our behavioural goals, including bullying issues and actions, by observing and interacting with the behaviour, attitudes and feelings of our children.

We will be looking for evidence of:

the effectiveness of preventative measures
the effectiveness of procedures

by examining the incidence and types of bullying in our aim to create and continue as a bullying-free school.