

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Signature (Chair of Governors):	
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Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction:

At our school we are clear that bullying, in any form, should never be accepted. We want our school to be a safe and happy place to be where nobody feels worried about being bullied or picked on. We make sure that there are strategies in place to help prevent bullying from happening in the first place and to quickly stop bullying if it does occur.

The second part of this policy has been written by the children of our school themselves and is on display in every classroom and around school. It acts as a child-friendly reminder of the policy.

It is important that everyone understands how we tackle bullying and so we make sure we remind people about this policy in a number of ways by:

- Putting it on our school website for people to read.
- Having a child-friendly version of the policy (see below).
- Reminding everyone about it through our anti-bullying assemblies that take place throughout the year.
- Making sure bullying is addressed in our school curriculum.
- Reminding everyone who works in our school about the policy through our staff and TA meetings.
- Asking the school council and or pupils across our school to have a voice into policy and practice review via pupil conferencing.

What is bullying?

Bullying can be physical, direct verbal, relational, material, cyber and can be related to different kinds of harassment (e.g. sexist, transphobic, homophobic, racial, gender, special educational needs/disability, faith/beliefs, looked-after children, young carers and their families, appearance, difference). Bullying is different from other kinds of aggressive behaviour.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, frequently repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. There is often a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend himself or herself. Whatever the problem or difficulty, it is our responsibility as a school to work with the children involved in order to address the issue promptly.

Bullying may include any of the following sorts of behaviour:

- Physical: Hitting, punching, kicking, pushing or jostling
- Verbal: Threats, teasing, repeated and deliberate name calling
- Damage to property / belongings on purpose or theft.
- Forcing the child to give money or belongings
- Exclusion: i.e. deliberately not letting children play with their group of friends and isolating them
- Prejudiced-Based Bullying: Repeated name calling and unkindness because of a difference i.e. family circumstances, ethnic / religious background. We call this 'prejudice-based' bullying.
- Cyber Bullying: i.e. sending unkind pictures/messages via the internet or through phones.

It is important to realise that if one of the actions above occurs in school, whilst it is never acceptable, it may not *necessarily* be bullying. For example, two children may have a disagreement and push each other in temper. This is not acceptable and would be addressed in line with our relationships and behaviour policy but it would not meet the definition of bullying. Likewise, children may fall out from time to time and say unkind words to each other. Whilst, we do not condone this, it is not necessarily bullying. Bullying is deliberate unkindness (usually over a period of time) where one person or a group of people are deliberately trying to upset or harm another person.

However, regardless of whether or not an incident is classified as bullying, we want all children to feel happy and safe in school and as such we will work hard to support any child who does not feel this way whatever the reason.

Being pro-active to stop bullying:

We believe that we should take pro-active measures to try and discourage bullying from occurring in our school. A key strategy in preventing bullying is to create an environment and ethos where children know: what bullying is and the different forms it can take, the impact that bullying can have on other people, that bullying is not acceptable, how children can themselves help to prevent bullying from taking place and that there are clear ways for children to report if they think bullying is occurring.

Pro-active measures taken by the school to prevent bullying from occurring:

- Ensure there is a clear anti-bullying policy in place that is shared and understood by all.
- Ensure there are regular whole-school assemblies on the theme of anti-bullying (and prejudiced-based bullying).
- Ensure there are clear reporting systems in place so children know how they can report any incidents of bullying in confidence.
- Ensure bullying (and prejudiced-based bullying) is addressed through the school curriculum (usually in Relationship and Health Education – RHE- lessons).
- Ensure the issue of cyber-bullying is tackled through computing lessons.
- The use of 'Circle Time' for whole-class discussions on bullying.
- Recording all reported incidents of bullying to measure if there are any common themes that need addressing and to track the number of incidents that are occurring.
- Ensuring adults in school are trained and supported to deal with bullying (both in terms of working with the victims and those who have been bullying).
- Consistently reinforcing a caring ethos and celebrating acts of kindness.
- Ensure all staff remain alert to the possibility of bullying and look out for signs of bullying.
- Constantly reviewing and improving the school environment to ensure our environment is safe i.e. looking for bullying 'hot-spots' and taking action.
- Providing structured activities and games at break and lunch times and ensuring adequate levels of supervision at break times and lunchtimes.
- Involvement in national strategies such as 'Anti - Bullying Week'.
- Asking parents and children for their views on how the school deals with bullying through annual surveys and when bullying incidents are reported.
- Regular parental involvement in the follow up process to an incident identified as bullying.
- Adults consistently modelling positive relationships in school.
- Use of peer mentoring schemes for children when they start the school i.e. a 'Cheeky Chum' where an older pupils acts as a buddy for a younger pupil.

Pro-active measures taken by the children:

- The children have set out their own child-friendly anti-bullying policy that is linked to this policy (see appendix 1).
- Children know that as kind, honest and responsible citizens, they will report any incidences of unkind or bullying behaviour to an adult so that the children involved can be supported and the behaviour will change.

Pro-active measures that can be taken by parents and carers:

- Look for signs of sudden changes in behaviour i.e. suddenly becoming very withdrawn, moody or quiet.
- Inform school if you think there might be a bullying-related problem.
- Speak openly with children about the importance of treating everyone with kindness, consideration and respect.
- Not jump to conclusions and recognise that there might be two sides to a story (i.e. recognising the fine line between bullying and 'falling out')

Dealing with Bullying if it Occurs:

The bully is often a victim also and sanctions alone is not a solution.

A key part of tackling bullying is to accept that it could happen. Despite the school's pro-active work, it is important to acknowledge that no school can guarantee that bullying will never occur.

It is vital to establish an ethos and environment where children know they can safely report bullying if it occurs.

Reporting:

There are a number of ways bullying can be reported by children, these include:

- Speaking to a trusted adult in school.
- Speaking to a parent or carer, who will then make contact with the school, usually via the teacher or Home School Link Worker.

- There is a **'Worry Box'** in each classroom where children are able to write a message to the class teacher, Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or Home School Link Worker. This is checked regularly.
- Speaking to a trusted friend who can share their worries with an adult for them.

Tackling Incidents:

Each situation can be quite unique and there is not a simple 'one size fits all' approach to resolving issues. Whilst the school will always make it very clear to all involved that bullying will not be tolerated, research shows that usually a sanction alone is not enough to ensure the bullying stops and is not repeated. In nearly all cases a personalised response and plan will be needed. However, the aim is always the same, **for the bullying to stop and not be repeated.**

It is useful to have a framework in place for dealing with such incidents:

- All accusations of bullying will be thoroughly investigated, usually by the Headteacher, deputy Headteacher or Home School Link Worker, but also in some cases by the class teacher (this depends on the nature and severity of the bullying and who it has been reported to initially). Once the school has been notified of a potential bullying incident (either via the parents or child) the adult investigating will usually speak with the children involved to ascertain what has happened from their point of view. If parents are reporting the incident, the adult in school will also speak with the parents to gather further information. The adult in school will record the details of what has happened so that they can be referred back to if necessary. **It is essential that the victim of bullying knows that they will be heard.**
- The adult dealing with the situation will then decide on a plan of action. In the first instance this will involve talking with all parties involved before writing and sharing a plan which will support both the child being bullied and the child who has been bullying. There will then be close supervision of the situation over the coming days and weeks with weekly reviews with the children involved. Parents will be spoken to once a week too. In some cases it may be appropriate for further strategies to be used. This could involve a number of things including 'A Circle of Friends', 'Buddy' or peer group support system, establishing strong support networks for children within the year group or individual work with the children involved. We have staffed trained in such strategies and approaches. In all cases it will be made clear that bullying or unkindness is unacceptable and must stop.
- The situation and plan will also be recorded on CPOMs. These records are used to look for patterns or repeated incidents involving the same children.
- Lines of communication will be set up to ensure that should bullying continue, the victim has easy access to an adult they feel confident to confide in. It may also be appropriate to help the child who has been bullied identify a 'buddy' or peer to help support them within the year group. It will be made plain to the child who has carried out the bullying that these lines of communication have been set up and that any further incident is going to be reported and dealt with immediately.
- All adults who work with the children who were bullied and the child who has been bullying will be informed of the situation and will be asked to monitor the children's behaviour closely.
- Once the initial issue has been addressed, the adult managing the situation will consider whether or not the child who has been bullying needs further support to address any underlying issues.

Keeping Parents Informed:

In all cases, the school will inform the parents of all children involved of any bullying incident(s) (if the parents' themselves were not the ones to inform the school initially).

The school will communicate what action is being taken and will also 'follow-up' with the parents' of the child who has been bullied to ensure that they are satisfied the bullying has stopped. This will normally be a number of communications over a period of time. This will be agreed with the parents at the time of the initial incident being investigated.

The Difference between bullying and 'falling out'

We have discussed in school that there is a fine line between children 'falling out' with each other and bullying. Regardless of whether it is a case of bullying or falling out, the school will look to resolve the issue quickly.

Generally speaking, where children 'fall out' this tends to be between friends and usually, in time, the relationship can be fixed (sometimes with help from an adult). Children might say unkind words to each other when they fall out or occasionally even hurt

each other in the heat of the moment, this does not necessarily mean that a child is bullying or being bullied (although the school would need to address this). In these cases, an apology and an opportunity to share feelings can often resolve the issue.

Falling out can become bullying if it repeated over time. This is more likely to happen where there is clearly an imbalance of power or a deliberate attempt to upset another child repeatedly.

Whether a child is being bullied or has fallen out with friends, the school should support all the children involved through taking positive action.

Sanctions vs Supportive Work

As noted above, when tackling bullying, the aim should always be to stop it happening and to prevent any further incidents occurring. This is also addressed through our Relationships and Behaviour policy. In many cases, there are underlying reasons why bullies act in the way they do and in some cases the child in question may have been the victim of bullying themselves at some level.

Of course, the priority has to be protecting and supporting the victim but we also believe we need to work with the child who is bullying to support them in changing their behaviour. This will often involve work with a trained adult.

However, the school believes that children should learn that, as in adult life, there are consequences for their actions and so it is likely that a child found to be bullying will receive a consequence for this in line with the school's Relationship and Behaviour policy. In some cases, this opportunity to reflect upon the impact of their actions alongside an adult can be enough for the child to learn that their behaviour was unacceptable and for them to stop it immediately. It can also be effective in sending a clear message to other children that bullying will not be tolerated. Decisions regarding consequences will be taken on a case by case basis and with due consideration to the severity of the bullying incident.

Prejudice-based bullying

We are very clear that any form of prejudiced-based bullying is unacceptable. Prejudiced-based bullying is bullying of a person or group of people based on differences such as gender, race, religion or sexuality. This could be their difference or a difference within their family i.e. parents, siblings etc.

We also tackle the use of prejudiced-based language used in any situation i.e. the inappropriate use of terms related to race, gender, disability or sexuality. Prejudiced-based bullying is proactively tackled through the strategies outlined above.

Any incidents of prejudiced based behaviour should be reported to the Headteacher via the 'prejudiced-based incident form' available in the school staff room. This will also be recorded on CPOMs.

Monitoring and Reviewing this Policy

The school continuously monitors the effectiveness of the anti-bullying measures that are in place. Each term the Headteacher reports to the governing body on the number of bullying incidents that have taken place (all reports are anonymised).

This policy is formally reviewed annually by the HHeadteacher and the governing body. The school will use cases of reported bullying, anti-bullying records, up to date research and guidance and views of stakeholders to inform reviews of the policy and procedures that are in place.

Appendix 1:

Mill Rythe Junior School



WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is when someone or a group of people **pick on another person on purpose**.

Usually it happens more than once and it could include: calling them names or saying unkind things either to them or to other people, deliberately leaving them out, hurting them, taking or damaging their property or sending them nasty messages (including on the computer or with a phone).

Sometimes we might **fall out** with people and this **can be very upsetting** but it isn't quite the same as bullying. When we fall out we might say or do unkind things that upset another person. Usually, with a bit of help from an adult, we are able to make friends again quite quickly.

WHAT CAN WE DO TO STOP BULLYING FROM HAPPENING?

In our school we know what bullying is and we know that bullying will not be accepted.

- We all have a responsibility to make sure it doesn't happen.
- We make sure that we are all kind and that we look after each other.
- We remember to celebrate and share kindness.
- We don't have bystanders – if we see bullying we do something about it.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU SEE BULLYING OR THINK YOU'RE BEING BULLIED?

- Tell an adult you trust either at school or at home.
- Tell a friend who can tell an adult.
- Write it down in the worry box or email the online worry box.

WHAT WILL THE SCHOOL DO IF BULLYING IS REPORTED?

LISTEN – An adult in school will listen carefully to you and find out what has happened.

SUPPORT – They will put together a plan with you to make sure the bullying stops and the bully is supported.

CHECK – They will check that the bullying has stopped.