

Anti Bullying Policy

Introduction

The primary role of our school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all of our pupils. A safe, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Hence, the issue of bullying will be positively and firmly addressed by our school.

Article 19 in Convention on the rights of the child states:

“ Children have the right to be protected from all forms of physical and mental violence”

Rationale

Recognising our pastoral responsibility towards our children we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that their welfare is safeguarded and their safety is preserved.

We will create a positive school climate which encourages respect, trust, caring, consideration and sensitivity towards others.

We realise that bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved; it affects everyone in the classroom, the school community and ultimately in the wider community. All members of the school community have the right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute; in whatever way they can to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

We aim to create a calm and caring environment. Each child should be encouraged to fulfil his intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, aesthetic and emotional potential. Values such as mutual respect, respect for property, fairness and honesty, care and consideration of others, self respect and self-discipline will be central to the creation of our caring environment.

Definition

Bullying is an act of aggression causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms: physical, verbal, making gestures, extortion and exclusion. It can be an abuse of power and can be planned and organised or be unintentional. It may be perpetuated by individuals or by groups of pupils.

AIMS

1. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/ guardians.
2. To create a school ethos which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
3. To develop and implement strategies, which are preventative in orientation, intended to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying behaviour taking place.
4. To develop and implement a programme of support for those who are victims of bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
5. To enable pupils to articulate their fears and concerns and be confident that they will receive a sympathetic and supportive response from teachers and other adults within the school community.
6. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.
7. To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring arrangements through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.

Specific Issues

In our school we aim to promote an anti-bullying culture and ensure it is an integral part of the school's approach to promoting relationships between all members of the school community. All members of the school community have an entitlement to work in a secure and caring environment.

Responsibilities of Staff

Our staff will:

- § Foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others

- § Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- § Discuss bullying with all classes so that every pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- § Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying
- § Listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- § Report suspected cases of bullying to Mr Scott or Mrs Cousley. (Pastoral Care Coordinator)
- § Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- § Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively in accordance with agreed procedures

Responsibilities of Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- § Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- § Intervene to protect the pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so
- § Report to a member of staff any witnesses or suspected instances of bullying.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- § Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put to an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

Responsibilities of Parents

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- § Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be evidence of bullying
- § Advising their children to report any bullying to their class teacher or Mr. Scott
- § Advising their children not to retaliate violently to any form of bullying

- § Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken
- § Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not directly involved
- § Co-operating with the school, if their children are accused of bullying, try to ascertain the truth, and point out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.
- § Taking an active interest in their child's social life and therefore being aware of his or her company at all times

Forms of Bullying

- § Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil
- § Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it
- § Using offensive names when addressing another pupil
- § Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family
- § Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements
- § Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil
- § Excluding another pupil from a group activity
- § Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms

Effects of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour.

Signs and Symptoms

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- § Anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- § Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, missing

- § Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- § Pattern of physical illness e.g. headaches, stomach aches
- § Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays
- § Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting
- § Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- § Possessions missing or damaged
- § Increased requests for money or stealing money
- § Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- § Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination they warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

In Gracehill Primary School we recognise that any pupil can be a victim or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.

Preventative and Reactive Strategies

Equal importance will be attached to the development and implementation of both preventative and reactive strategies. *Preventative strategies* will be used to minimise the likelihood of incidents of bullying taking place.

The theme of bullying will be specifically addressed across a number of subject areas within the curriculum.

The curriculum will address the following questions:

- § What is meant by the term ‘bullying’?
- § What forms of behaviour constitute bullying?
- § Why do some people get bullied?
- § How does it feel to be bullied?
- § How should I seek help if I am being bullied?
- § What should I do if I know that another pupil is being bullied?

Various strategies will include:

- § Circle time
- § Class discussion
- § Role play
- § Anti-bullying Posters
- § Videos, DVD's and exercises
- § Visiting group play & workshop eg. Konflux Theatre
- § Story telling
- § Reading & sharing of class novel involving bullying issues
- § Balloon debates (Key Stage 2)
- § Poetry

Reactive Strategies

These strategies are reactive in nature with the aim of responding to incidents of bullying in ways which are supportive of the victim and which seek to influence the behaviour of the bully away from repeating this type of unacceptable behaviour.

Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

The **Board** will have overall responsibility for ensuring a safe environment for all of the school community.

The **Principal** is responsible for promoting an anti-bullying culture and ensuring the policy is active

The **S.M.T.** will provide leadership in terms of developing both preventative and reactive strategies.

The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will record any bullying incidents and work with the class teacher advising any class preventative strategies, skills or exercises. She will support the class teacher to build up the child's class esteem.

The **Teachers** will follow procedures outlined in the policy and promote an anti-bullying culture in school.

Non-teaching staff will be aware of policy and procedures

All staff must avoid:

- § Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language when addressing pupils; making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background
- § Humiliating directly or indirectly, a pupil who is academically weak or outstanding or vulnerable in other ways.
- § Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidating nature, or any form of degrading physical contact.

Pupils will be made aware of what to do if they were bullied or witness a bullying incident. The ethos of the school and planned preventative programmes and activities will involve pupils in promoting an anti-bullying culture in school. We realise that victims and witnesses need to be encouraged to tell and that secrecy and silence nurture bullying.

Parents

Our school will issue guidelines to parents as to how they should report concerns about bullying and also regarding the procedures by which they will inform parents of the action taken to deal with the bullying incidents.

PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENT

INCIDENT REPORTED

Discuss incident with victim.
Identify bully / bullies – obtain witnesses if possible

Confront bully/bullies. Ask them to tell the truth about incident. Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable
In our school

Record details: who, what, where, when, why, how
Action taken

If they own up: Teacher talks to bully about way victim is feeling and how they can be helped, Bully apologises. Bully is deprived of something

If bully does not own up, investigate further. If it is clear that he is not taking responsibility continue with procedure.

If bullying behaviour stops, favoured activity will be reinstated and self-esteem is rebuilt.

ADVISE PRINCIPAL
who talks to pupils

Mrs Cousley will record actions taken and all relevant details

Teacher & Mrs. Cousley will support victim – peer support, assertiveness skills, action plan to protect victim

Continue to monitor the situation by observation of play times; lunchtimes and have discussions with victim to ensure no repetition

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists, situation may be referred to the psychology dept. NEELB
(He/she may be excluded from school either temporarily/permanently)

NB. Responses for the bully depends on the perceived severity of the incident

SUPERVISION

Teachers will provide an anti-bullying culture in their teaching areas and will be involved in a supervisory role before, during and after school in key areas.

Additional supervision will be provided by the lunchtime supervisors. Opportunities will be provided to raise awareness of the nature and extent of bullying in school and staff will be involved in inset sessions to review policy and procedures.

Senior staff members or Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will attend external based courses appropriate to the needs of the school. Support will receive guidance and training.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Our School Anti-Bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying encountered. The Pastoral Care Co-ordinator will be responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating.