



Hopelands Preparatory School

Caring and Anti-Bullying Policy

Any form of bullying, whether verbal, physical or psychological, is completely unacceptable in School.

The purpose of this policy document is to give a clear statement to pupils, staff and parents about the school's attitudes to bullying, about the action which will be taken to prevent it happening, and the school's response if it should occur. It aims to ensure that:

- each individual is treated with consideration and respect at all times
- all individuals and groups are aware that they must not exploit or cause unhappiness to others
- staff are aware of the ways in which bullying can happen, and of the strategies for preventing it, and dealing with it should it arise
- that opportunities exist for pupils to express their worries, and for them to be aware of the support available
- that although each situation is unique and should be dealt with appropriately, staff, pupils and parents feel confident that a consistent approach will be taken, and that concerns will always be treated seriously and sensitively

Definitions of bullying:

Adults' definitions of bullying usually have the following three things in common:

- it is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- it is repeated over a period of time (although a single incident can also constitute bullying)
- it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

Bullying can be:

- Physical - pushing, kicking, tripping, punching, pinching or any other use of violence
- Verbal - name-calling, telling false tales, sarcasm, spreading rumours, taunting, persistent teasing, threatening
- Emotional - excluding, tormenting (i.e. hiding or destroying possessions, threatening gestures), being unfriendly, ridicule, humiliation, black-mailing
- Racial - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or abusive comments

- Religious – taunts, gestures, name-calling
- Homophobic – taunts, gestures, name-calling or sexually abusive comments
- Cyber – social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and e-mail

Children’s definitions often place more emphasis on the effect than on the intention: the bullied child often feels isolated, lonely and powerless.

Bullying is not confined to obvious physical or verbal attack, but can include, for example, deliberate silence, exclusion from group activities, spreading rumours, interfering with other pupils’ possessions or ‘cyber-bullying’ such as sending threatening texts or emails or posting embarrassing information on social networking sites. It is the school’s view that all members of the community have a responsibility to ensure that bullying does not happen; pupils who stand by and do not report this kind of behaviour are in fact complying with it. We aim to create an atmosphere of openness and trust, where concerns can be raised at an early stage and dealt with swiftly.

The following policy stems from five general aims. To raise levels of awareness and understanding so that:

1. Everyone in the school community should take responsibility for combating bullying
2. Appropriate action can be taken following prompt authentication of the bully and his/her behaviour
3. Victims have the right to feel protected and supported
4. Those engaged in bullying should be encouraged to change not only their behaviour, but also their attitudes and beliefs about bullying
5. Parents are kept informed and fully understand the procedures for dealing with bullying behaviour

As a school our objectives will be:

- To continue to respect that every pupil has the right to work and play in a caring, safe, non-threatening environment.
- To undertake that all staff and pupils have an understanding of bullying and everyday manifestations of it.
- To clearly convey and act to ensure that all pupils understand that bullying of any kind in our school will not be tolerated.
- To put in place clear procedures for reporting, confirming and dealing with bullying behaviour and that these procedures should be understood, followed and supported by all members of staff.
- To make full and proper use of the lines of communication that already exist between staff, parents and pupils to enable this policy to be successfully implemented as quickly as possible.

The school understands:

- The extremely serious nature of any form of bullying (see list above) in causing psychological damage and, in extreme cases, even suicide.
- Although bullying is not a criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Procedure for dealing with bullying

In the first instance, the use of a direct intervention method would be the best approach, as it is the least time consuming approach that exists today and is very effective in deterring infrequent bullying behaviour.

Step 1: The Occurrence of a "one-off incident"

1. Report the bullying incident to the appropriate staff member, i.e. Form Teacher.
2. Reassure the victim that they will be protected and the bullying will be stopped. If the victim has come forward and told you about a bullying incident, praise them for telling.
3. If the victim is physically hurt seek medical attention.
4. Establish through individual discussion with the pupils involved, including witnesses, the true cause of the incident and where the blame lies.
5. Tell the bully(s) quite firmly and authoritatively that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and has got to stop.
6. Get the bully to think of ways to atone for his/her action(s) - insist on compensation for items lost, damaged or stolen and the return of items "borrowed" or stolen. The Head and parents will need to be contacted in this case.
7. Try to get the bully to apologise to the victim. (The bully may not "feel" sorry and there may be no genuine remorse at this stage, but saying sorry is the first step for the bully towards recognising that their bullying behaviour is wrong).

It is important to record incidents no matter how small or insignificant they may seem as this record can be used to monitor further behaviour and to help justify, if necessary, the implementation of his/her sanctions at a later time.

In order to deal with recurring or more serious to extreme incidents or bullying behaviour, the "common concern approach" is a more effective method to employ. Using this method, pupils are brought together to try to work out a mutually agreeable way to deal with bullying. The purpose is to get the pupils who are bullying to arrive at a common feeling of concern for the victim(s) and to use this concern to change behaviour and to develop empathy.

The common concern approach is time-consuming, but;

- It has proved to be effective in many cases by changing pupils' attitudes
- It helps to avoid a situation in which the bully bears grudges against the victim(s)
- It should help to contribute towards developing a positive school ethos

Step 2: Recurring - serious incidents of bullying behaviour

Stage 1: Getting the Facts Straight

1. If you witness the bullying, stop it and remove the bully from the situation.
2. If it seems that there could have been more than one bully, each should be interviewed individually in order to establish what happened. Witnesses/bystanders should be interviewed and then the victim.
3. With the bully begin: "I would like to talk to you because I've heard you may have been unkind to X - What do you know about it?"

4. After the identification of the bully has been established, ensure that you accept no excuses from him/her. The following are two common ones:
 - a) "I was only just playing/teasing." In such cases, your response might be:
 - b) "Why was X upset about it then?"
 - c) "X was asking for it." or some other excuse which tries to put blame on the victim. In such cases, your response might be:
 - d) "I am asking what did you do wrong?"
5. Try to avoid a confrontational approach by disbelieving the bully's version. Seek sensitivity to reinforce any responses which reveal some concern for the victim (e.g. "I'm interested to hear you say that".)
6. Where appropriate, it may help to ask the children (bully and victim) to write down what happened and then to use this record as the basis for discussion (accepting amendments and additions as necessary).

Stage 2: Making Amends

1. Say "All right, we've talked about this long enough now. What do you suggest we do now to help X? What can we do to put things right?".
2. The idea is to encourage the bully to carry out some corrective action to improve relationships.
You may need to ignore/discourage side issues, e.g. "but X always picks on me first" could be countered by "Let's stick to the ideas, what can we do to help X?"

Some possibilities:

- Apologising to the victim (in writing, where appropriate)
- Listing the bullying behaviours which need changing and prioritising them
- Making a promise/agreement not to engage in this behaviour again
- Asking other pupils to help monitor the situation and report any breaches of the promise/agreement
- Reward positive behaviours when they are achieved
- End the interview with "All right, that's good. Now I want us to meet again on (name a day) and you can tell me how you've been getting on with X."

Stage 3: Contacting the Parents and Informing the Head

1. For serious or continued repeated incidents, contact the parents of both the victim and the bully as quickly as possible after consultation with the Head has taken place.
2. Parents should be informed of the incident(s) and the action taken thus far.
3. Consider whether it would help to see the parents of the bully and/or victim with the child.
4. Consider implementing a two-way diary system to help to focus attention on positive aspects of behaviour both at home and at school.

Stage 4: Keeping a Record

1. Record all incidents and your actions on the "incident report form".
2. Pass this form onto the Head to be signed and dated.
3. The form should then be included in the pupil's file.

Stage 5: Follow-up of the Initial interview (only needed in severe cases)

1. See the bully and victim again at the time agreed in Stage 2.
2. Consider whether to see them separately or together.
3. If the problem still remains, it may be necessary to repeat Stage 2.
4. Make arrangements for further monitoring and further meetings until you are sure the bullying has stopped and seems unlikely to start again.
5. If the bullying behaviour has not stopped, see Stage 3.
6. Record and date these follow-ups onto the original "incident report form".

If these approaches do not appear to be working, it may be necessary to impose certain appropriate sanctions to help deter the bullying behaviour. Sanctions could also be imposed before implementing Step 2 or as part of Stage 2, Step 2. You should try to make the sanctions appropriate to the behaviour or incident which has occurred.

Sanctions which have worked:

- a) Assign the bully to assist a particular member of staff with special tasks at break time (remember to offer praise if the tasks are done well).
- b) Keep the bully in during park visits, perhaps standing outside the office.
- c) Withdraw the bully from favourite activities.
- d) The bully must do his/her work in isolation, i.e. at a desk by themselves.
- e) The bully is refused travel (for a set period of time) on the school bus to and from events, if this is where the inappropriate behaviour is occurring.
- f) The bully must eat lunch next to a staff member.
- g) The bully is assigned extra duties: sorting and stacking books, clearing up art materials, etc. (make sure that praise is given for accomplishing these tasks well).
- h) After school detention.
- i) Issue a report card which monitors all school and home behaviour and must be signed each day by the parents and Head.
- j) Suspension for a period of time.

Suggested steps that could be taken to help prevent bullying from occurring (after consultation with the Head):

1. Assign a "friend" to all new children.
2. Vary the ways in which children are grouped, both in the classroom and for Physical Education, so that they can understand consistent patterns of collaboration.
3. Kindness campaign, where appropriate, in which pupils are nominated for acts of kindness.
4. Poster contest, where pupils design posters to reinforce positive behaviours, e.g. "Be Considerate", "Be Kind", etc.
5. Assemblies on the theme of caring, presented by different forms.
6. Lessons about issues such as grief, race, divorce, special needs, kindness and courtesy to help pupils to understand what others might be going through.
7. Telling school - make our school a place where children feel confident enough to approach others to discuss matters with them.
8. Assertiveness training for all pupils through role-play situations.
9. Read stories about unkind behaviour, that require the pupils to come up with the solution (either drawn or written).

10. Rewarding positive behaviour can be more effective than pointing out or telling children off for negative behaviour. Children want attention and if you highlight the positive behaviour rather than the negative one, children will respond accordingly.
11. Take all reports of bullying seriously as it is important to be seen by both parents and pupils to be treating the issue seriously.
12. Have a clear classroom routine so that the pupils will know what is expected of them and what the logical consequences will be for inappropriate behaviour.
13. Always be punctual to class as it is during this time that pupils are often bullied.
14. Show an equal, impartial and consistent interest in all pupils as inconsistencies by you will be noticed and emulated by some pupils and this could lead to bullying behaviour occurring.
15. Watch for early signs of distress in children as this could be an indication they are being bullied.

Conveyance of the Policy to Pupils

Many of the points mentioned in this policy can be easily explored through the curriculum. Many subject areas within the existing curriculum could be used to promote anti-bullying values and co-operative behaviour.

This may be achieved directly through reference to individual or group behaviour and its impact on others. For example, through the current history, English, geography and religious studies curriculum. Alternatively, it could be achieved indirectly through the selection of curriculum approaches, which require pupils to work together co-operatively and which include regular opportunities for personal evaluation and reflection on how effectively each pupil has worked with others and how interaction could be improved. Activities which are based on group tasks, experiments and investigations offer plenty of opportunities for this kind of development.

Assemblies should also be used as a means of promoting the policy. Themes such as friendship, conflict, power, trust could be used as a basis, with role-plays and stories to help show what the pupils themselves could do to help reduce and prevent bullying. Pupils must also be taught to be assertive, to resolve conflict creatively and constructively.

Artwork, poetry and displays should also be used to highlight key areas of the policy. If these are hung in a prominent place(s) within the school, the intended message would then be conveyed to both pupils and visitors to the school and help to reinforce the caring, supportive image of our school.

Training and Review

Staff will receive training by the Head in this policy and the procedures to follow every two years at INSET training days. Key statements from the policy will also be introduced to new staff members through induction meetings.

Information about the implementation and evaluation of the policy should be made a regular item in weekly staff meetings. More specific cases of bullying will be raised in staff meetings to monitor and observe situations.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the school's governing body. The governing body will ensure that the procedures contained in this policy have been and will be discharged efficiently.

Any deficiencies or weaknesses in the school's anti-bullying arrangements will be remedied without delay.

S Bradburn
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