

Netherleigh and Rossefield School

Anti-Bullying Policy

October 2017

Written in conjunction with DfE advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) and Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (2014)

See also the E-Safety Policy.

Introduction

All staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of bullying and know that at Netherleigh and Rossefield School bullying will not be tolerated. Bullying can take many forms including physical, verbal, gender, sexist, homophobic, racial, cyber and religious bullying. We treat all incidences of any type of bullying seriously and there are some broad guidelines which should be followed.

Guidance for parents is periodically sent home. The most recent of these is *Supporting Young People Online: Information and advice for parents and carers (Childnet International)* which features E-Safety advice for parents and was sent home in June 2017. Parents are also invited to morning/after school sessions where all aspects of online and other potential bullying are discussed.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is not only to help staff and pupils to deal with bullying when it occurs, but even more importantly to provide a culture in which bullying is prevented.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; our school staff have to make carefully considered judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on

its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Cyberbullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

The Seriousness of Bullying

All forms of bullying are taken very seriously at Netherleigh and Rossefield School. We recognise that bullying can cause physical and psychological damage and significant distress. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Guidelines - Procedures to follow (in conjunction with the School Behaviour policy)

Who to tell?

Children must be encouraged to seek out any member of staff including lunchtime supervisors if they have any concerns about bullying behaviour. Staff must be responsive to allegations of bullying and initially treat every incident as serious. Pupils must be able to tell teachers about outside bullying and this must also be taken seriously.

The member of staff who is first contacted by the pupil takes initial responsibility for investigating the incident (in the event that the person contacted is not a teacher, they should immediately contact a member of the teaching staff). It is essential that pupils are confident that all allegations are taken seriously and acted upon. The incident will always be investigated and recorded. The Class Teacher of both the victim and the culprit (if proven) will be kept fully informed, as will the Assistant Heads or Headmaster.

Recording of Bullying

All instances of bullying are logged in the centralised Anti-Bullying Log, which is located within the school office.

- All incidents of bullying will be recorded in the Anti-Bullying Log and dealt with as per the Behaviour Policy. The log is kept in a folder in the school office and is regularly analysed by the Senior Management Team, to allow any patterns or trends to be identified. Each relevant entry is itemised and copies are also kept within relevant pupil folders.
- After initial investigations, if the incident appears to be a serious one, the Assistant Heads or Headmaster should be closely involved as well as the Class Teacher(s).
- If the matter is very serious, the Assistant Heads or Headmaster will assume responsibility for continuing the investigations.
- Some members of staff have considerable experience in dealing with bullying issues and can offer advice.
- When serious incidents occur, the parents of the bully and the victim should be informed.
- Where appropriate the parents of the bully and the victim will be asked to come to school for a meeting.
- In extreme cases the police will be informed.
- Enquiries should be made to determine the reasons for the bully's behaviour and, if possible, action taken to alter the behaviour of the bully or bullies. The victims of bullying should receive support and help to develop strategies for dealing with bullying.
- Offenders will be sanctioned. They may, for instance, lose their right to use their lunch times and break times. Sanctions will be issued at the discretion of the Senior Management Team.
- Disciplinary action will be taken against the bully including a written assurance that s/he will not be involved or responsible for any further incidents of bullying. In cases of severe and persistent bullying exclusion may be necessary.

Having established who the culprit is and taking appropriate action, a follow up meeting within two weeks should be held by the Class Teacher/Assistant Heads/Headmaster in order

to prevent this happening again. A further meeting during the next half term is also recommended. In this way support is given not only to the victim but also to the bully.

- In some cases supervision at break time and lunchtime will be considered for the bully and any other appropriate measures.
- In the most serious cases, it may be necessary to seek assistance from outside agencies to help with the victims and bullies i.e. specialist counselling may be needed.
- In extreme circumstances suspension and expulsion will be considered.

What we do to prevent bullying

The school's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. School staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address. We expect good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. This culture should extend beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates including travel to and from school.

Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

We also aspire to:

- involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents can feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home
- involve pupils. All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders
- regularly evaluate and update their approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers
- implement disciplinary sanctions. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable
- openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities. Schools can also teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable
- use specific organisations or resources for help with particular problems. The school can draw on the experience and expertise of anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record and/or specialised expertise in dealing with certain forms of bullying
- provide effective staff training. Anti-bullying policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek

support. Schools can invest in specialised skills to help their staff understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) pupils

- work with the wider community such as the police and children's services to agree a clearly understood approach to cases where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed. Successful schools also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside school
- make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils should feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying
- create an inclusive environment. Schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- celebrate success. Celebrating success is an important way of creating a positive school ethos around the issue.

Promoting the Anti-Bullying message:

If unchallenged, other pupils can learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want. Bullying can pervade the relationships of pupils and become accepted as normal.

- The anti-bullying message must be repeated in assemblies and via the Class Teacher.
- Pupils should be constantly made aware that we, as a school, will not tolerate bullying. They must constantly be told that they should not suffer and that any teacher or supervisor is prepared to help. They should always be encouraged to talk to someone.
- The help and assistance of staff responsible for particular groups of pupils, such as in Computing or Music, should also help in disseminating the anti-bullying message.
- Younger children will often notice bullying and will usually tell teachers about it. This atmosphere of looking after others should be positively encouraged by all teachers.
- Duty staff and lunchtime supervisors should be particularly vigilant when patrolling the school and playgrounds.
- Staff should be aware of the potential for the development of groups or factions in school. These groups could be year groups, religious or ethnic groups, sexist or racist in character. These should be actively discouraged.
- We celebrate the differences in people and their successes at Netherleigh and Rossefield School; this is communicated on a regular basis within lessons, assemblies, Headmaster's awards and our extra-curricular activities.

Bullying which occurs outside of school premises

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances.

This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in the town centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Headmaster will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or local anti-social behaviour coordinator. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises (or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.)