



Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to ask for help and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to talk to the staff.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber All areas of internet ,such as email & internet chat room misuse
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls
Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to staff
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

Strategies for Dealing with Bullying

The following is a list of actions available to staff, depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as victims are often victims too – that is why they bully.

- Discuss the problem with the victim. This will require patience and understanding.
- Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Advise the Headteacher.
- Where appropriate discuss the situation with the victim and the alleged bully to see if an amicable situation can be achieved.
- Discussion with the bully: present them with details and ask them to tell the truth about the situation / incident. Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable behaviour at The Firs Lower School.
- If they 'own up' then follow the procedure outlined below and in the school's Behaviour Policy.
- If they do not 'own up', investigate further. If it is clear that they are not telling the truth, continue with the procedure. Children usually 'own up' if they are presented with all the facts.
- Separate discussions should be held with the bully and the victim.
- Sanctions for the bully may include withdrawal from favoured class-based activities, loss of playtime or privileges. In more severe cases exclusion from school during lunchtimes or exclusion from school depending on the perceived severity of the incident.
- The situation should be closely monitored by observing at playtimes and lunchtime and discussions should be held with the victim to check that there is no repetition and that the situation is resolved.
- As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then favoured activities etc can be reinstated and the child praised for good behaviour.
- Keep parents fully informed throughout the process.

Prevention

We will use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of school / playground / class rules
- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays (or using role-plays)
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters