

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 completely unacceptable at our school, although it is important to recognise that bullying can occur anywhere. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to ask for help and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, effectively and sensitively. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to talk to the staff.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is repeatedly hurting another person emotionally or physically. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional -being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures and looks etc.)
- 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 the internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, text messaging & calls and misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

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

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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 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
- Using role-play to explore different scenarios
- having discussions about bullying and its impact on those involved
- participating in anti-bullying events to raise awareness
- cyber bullying awareness built in to Computing curriculum

Cyber bullying awareness to be made a focus on Internet Safety Day every February.

Signs of bullying

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:

- Changes in their sleeping patterns
- Changes in their eating patterns
- Experiencing tearfulness or anger
- Has mood swings
- Feels ill in the morning, perhaps saying they feel sick or have a tummy ache
- Becomes withdrawn or starts stammering
- Becomes aggressive
- Refuses to talk about what is wrong
- Begins to target their siblings
- Continually 'loses' money or possessions
- Has unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- Comes home with missing or damaged belongings or clothes
- Doesn't want to go to school
- Changes their route to school (Y4) or are frightened of walking to school
- Suddenly loses concentration at school / seems to care less about their work / progress
- Often seems alone or excluded from friendship groups at school
- seems less willing to speak up in class and appears insecure or even frightened

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 a member of the SLT / Safeguarding Team.
2. In all cases where anyone involved feels that bullying is occurring, the incidents will be recorded on an anti-bullying record sheet in the Anti Bullying Log. (Kept in Headteacher's room and on CPOMS).
3. In most cases parents will be informed and will be asked to meet / talk with school staff to discuss the problem.
4. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
5. A plan of action will be agreed, including close monitoring, strategies to support the victim and approaches to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour. (See next section).
6. Even if one party does not agree that the behaviour constitutes bullying, if at least one party does, the school will follow this policy in terms of the actions it takes.
7. If sanctions are thought appropriate, ensure they are administered inline with the school Behaviour Policy.

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 bullies are often victims too – that is why they bully.

Stage 1 Investigation:

- 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 but that we are looking for a solution. Relate to Golden rules- Ready, Respect, Safe.
- Separate discussions will be held with the bully and the victim initially.
- The victim will not be asked to sit with the bully if they feel emotionally unable to do so.
- Ensure that parents are kept informed and reassured in terms of the fact we are looking into the matter fairly and with a determination to deal with the problem. Also communicate the way we are looking after the emotional well being of those involved.

Stage 2 Resolution:

All situations are different and the appropriate course will be taken in each circumstance. However the following detail the types of strategies that will be followed:

a. Restorative Conversations

- Restorative conversations are an intrinsic part of the school's behaviour policy.

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- The victim is given an opportunity to meet with the bully face to face in a safe and supervised setting and talk through the impact that the bullying has had, or is having, on them.
- Restorative conversations are designed to empower the victims and to help the perpetrators understand the consequences of their behaviour.
- As part of the process, everyone commits to actions to improve the situation and follow up meetings are used to track progress.
- (In a 2013 survey by Family Lives, teenagers were asked, looking back on their time in school, what they felt was the best way to prevent bullying. The majority advocated some method of helping bullies to become more aware of the true consequences of their actions, as well as an increase in the availability of support groups for victims.

b. The no-blame or support group method

- In this method, the victim, or target, of the bullying is asked to talk about and/or draw a picture or write about the effect bullying has had.
- Staff will then hold a meeting with a group of children, including the bully(ies), those who may have seen the incidents and perhaps others who are not directly involved. Staff explain to the group how the victim is feeling and the group then offers suggestions to find a solution.
- Removing 'blame' from the process allows the perpetrators to involve themselves in finding a solution without feeling threatened or defensive.
- Those who were bystanders are given a chance to see that by doing nothing, they were condoning the bullying.
- The group (supported /led if necessary by staff) is encouraged to come up with practical problem-solving solutions and the responsibility for carrying out these ideas rests with the group.
- Each pupil in the group then carries out their own solution, so that a child who has been excluded from activities with other children may now have someone to play with and another may accompany him on other occasions to make sure there is no bullying etc..
- A week or so later the group reconvenes to discuss progress and what has been achieved.
- Records are sometimes kept of the way this method is carried out, but not always.

c. Mediation between the bully and the victim

- The pupils involved are encouraged to talk issues over with the aid of a mediator (a member of staff) and find a way forward to end the cycle of bullying.
- Although mediation can be successful in some cases, victims of bullying may be making themselves vulnerable when discussing their feelings. When using this method, the meetings need to be conducted sensitively.

d. Circle / Community time

- Pupils may sit in a circle and might play games or do fun activities for a short time. Then they can discuss matters as a group, including bullying. This is a way for everyone in class to take part in a structured way.

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- This includes listening to the person making the points without making remarks or laughing. Some schools may use a toy or emblem, representing the opportunity to talk uninterrupted for the person who is holding it.
- With this method, there is a risk that children might feel humiliated and distressed talking about difficult feelings in front of their class. Lots of care will always be taken with this method, to ensure children feel safe and well supported when talking about sensitive issues.

Stage 3 Follow up and possible use of sanctions

- The situation will be closely monitored by duty staff 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.
- Through informal or formal meetings (as appropriate) the progress with the agreement / arrangements in place will be monitored.
- In situations where it is felt that there is a high risk of the bullying reoccurring, a plan will be created to deploy additional staff, to provide added supervision (often the SLT).
- Support for the victim and the bully will be offered, such as
 - regular contact from the Pastoral Care Assistant.
 - regular contact with parents/carers
 - ensuring parents/carers have support e.g. National Bullying helpline <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/contact.html>
 - ideas and support from the Anti Bullying Alliance <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>
- Sanctions / protective measures for the bully may be considered if behaviour continues or is deemed very serious. These could include withdrawal from favoured class-based activities, a move to a different playground for social times, loss of playtime or privileges or 'Exits' (in accordance with the steps set out in the Behaviour policy).
- In very severe cases, fixed term suspension from school or from school during lunchtimes, may be considered, depending on the perceived severity of the incident.