

## **Introduction**

Bullying in any form is unacceptable to the whole school community and will not be tolerated. Bullying in all forms causes its victims distress and can damage them in the short and longer term. It is appropriate that all members of the school are aware of bullying, and demonstrate awareness that it should not be tolerated in any guise. This policy seeks to set out how we can achieve this practically.

## **Safeguarding children and young people**

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the Evolution centre will report concerns to the local authority or social worker.

The Department of Education updated its advice to schools in relation to bullying in its document "Preventing and tackling bullying: advice for Head teachers" June 2017. This policy should be read alongside this guidance.

Some forms of bullying are illegal and school staff should be reminded that in some instances it may be necessary to involve the police. This is particularly the case where young people show the following behaviours towards their peers;

- violence or assault
- theft
- repeated harassment or intimidation, e.g. name calling, threats and abusive phone calls, emails or text messages
- hate crimes

## **What is Bullying?**

"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, often 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 or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

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.

*DfE "Tackling bullying" 2014*

## **Cyber Bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying 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 wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 gives Head teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones, without parental permission. The Evolution Centre and Vocational Centre may consider taking action in school, even where bullying has occurred outside of school, if it impacts on young people's learning.

## **Bullying resulting from sexuality: LGBTQ and transgender issues**

*(information included from Shropshire's transgender guidance for schools)*

Trans and gender questioning young people are vulnerable to bullying, as is any child or young person who does not conform to gender norms and stereotypes. Additionally children and young people with trans family members may also be bullied.

There is a relationship between transphobia, homophobia and sexism. However, sexist, sexual or transphobic bullying and homophobic bullying are not the same as each other. Very often, sexist attitudes manifest themselves in homophobic bullying and any child or young person who is perceived as not expressing stereotypically masculine or feminine traits expected of their gender, might experience homophobic or transphobic bullying.

A member of staff dealing with an incident, may or may not be aware that the child or young person identifies with a particular sexuality. They must challenge the prejudice, but should take care not to label the incident in front of other pupils, as this could unintentionally result in 'outing' or labelling the person.

## **Awareness: Promoting Appropriate and Good Behaviour**

To actively raise awareness of bullying and oppose it in all its forms it is appropriate to promote 'Good Behaviour' from all staff, learners and visitors.

This is achieved through: -

- Consistent good behaviour from staff demonstrating; acceptance of peers, learners and visitors and listening to their points of view; courteousness; sharing and turn taking.
- Celebrating all achievements however small, taking into account that achievements are not only academic but can be an act of kindness or good behaviour.
- Staff demonstrating mutual support and understanding.
- Zero tolerance of taunts or negative behaviours relating to race, sex and gender, sexuality and age.
- Clearly defined rules relating to the schools aims in relation to behaviour, rewards for positive behaviour and sanctions for negative behaviours. (See Positive Behaviour Policy)

The school will use the annual anti bullying week in November in particular to raise awareness and knowledge around bullying.

School staff should be aware of the growing bullying issues around biphobia, transphobia and cyberbullying, ensuring that all opportunities are used in school for appropriate discussions and the teaching of information which reduces negative behaviours against any of these groups.

## **Procedures for dealing with actual or alleged bullying**

Within this section it is important to highlight the ways that bullying is reported within the school and the varied approaches to address bullying.

### **General Principles for managing incidents of Bullying**

- Always act on suspected bullying, ignoring could lead to unnecessary distress and harm.
- Be objective when dealing with any evidence, don't make premature assumptions.
- Listen carefully to all accounts – try to get as full a picture as possible before making any judgement. However delays can cause distress and can give an impression that such behaviour is acceptable. Accounts from a number of learners saying the same thing does not assure accuracy.
- Adopt a problem solving approach, taking objective evidence from learners and working towards a resolution.
- Monitor and review the situation ensuring that the instance of bullying has not reoccurred.

### **Reporting Bullying**

- Suspected or actual bullying should be recorded on the school information management system where the creation of a record will automatically alert the headteacher.
- Bullying should be responded to in line with other negative behaviour by referring to the school behaviour Management Framework.
- Strategies for dealing with the bully may be identified in an individuals' Behaviour Support Plan.
- Teachers should discuss the bullying log regularly within staff meeting in order to raise awareness, problem solve and share good practice.
- In most cases an individual response will be agreed in liaison with adults who know the young people well; this may involve carers, home managers, parents and social workers.

- All school staff should be aware that some students, whether through their own vulnerabilities, special educational needs or previous life experiences may find reporting bullying more difficult and staff should be alert to ensuring each student has a voice.

## Approaches to Bullying

### Curriculum Approaches

Issues around bullying can be highlighted and taught through a variety of planned opportunities in the school year as well as being incorporated into the PSHE, Citizenship, ASDAN, personal skills and RE curriculum. Tutorials also offer a good opportunity for less structured discussions.

Issues that need addressing include: -

- Identifying what bullying is and the existence of the anti-bullying policy.
- Identifying the rights of a victim and what to do if bullying takes place.
- Raising awareness about cyber bullying and online safety (CEOP)
- Teaching about forming and maintaining relationships.
  - Why people become bullies.
  - How bullying affects others.
  - How to prevent bullying.

### Key Strategies for counteracting bullying

The DfE document, "Preventing and tackling bullying (May and July 2012) outlines key strategies for counteracting bullying. A copy of these documents can be accessed on the internet.

The aims of school anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

To prevent, de-escalate and stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.

To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.

To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.

To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multiagency/specialist support.

Disciplinary penalties have three main purposes, namely to:

Impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;

Deter him/her from repeating that behaviour

Signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing the same.

The Evolution Centre and Vocational Centre do not use permanent exclusion, however fixed term exclusion can be used effectively if students have engaged in physical altercations which necessitate follow up and risk reduction planning. Fixed term exclusion may give opportunity for meetings to be called and for reflection. Fixed term exclusion also provides a clear message to other student's that physical violence will not be tolerated.



## Anti-Bullying Policy

The use of restorative approaches in schools developed from experience of restorative justice in the youth and criminal justice systems. The principle is that the pupil causing harm is held to account for their behaviour. This means:

- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied;
- accepting responsibility for the harm caused to others (for example staff, friends or family)

Also suggested are the use of; Group work, circle time, circle of friends, befriending, mediation by adults, mediation by peers, active listening and counselling based practice.

### Persistent Bullying

Where bullying carries on after measures and strategies have been applied, or it is felt that tougher measures are needed; the teaching staff may wish to consider the following.

- Removal from the group
- Further application of appropriate sanctions identified in the Behaviour Management Framework

### Supporting the Victim of Bullying

It is imperative that the victim is supported throughout any instance of bullying, this may consist of: -

- Active listening
- Advice
- Assertive training
- Having a named person/learner for support

### Monitoring

Monitoring after any incident of bullying should be a systematic set of routines to establish that the problem has been conquered and that possibility of reoccurrence is minimalised. To ensure this the following actions should be followed;

- Head teacher to ask the student's tutors to monitor progress through regular discussion and conversations.
- All adults at school to remain vigilant and to log any further episodes of bullying
- Ensure that both the victim and the perpetrator of the bullying are aware that monitoring and review will be conducted, thus reducing reoccurrence.
- Ensure that the bully log is maintained as appropriate.

Regular training will be undertaken with staff to reinforce expectations and process and outline new documentation and or strategies. New staff should receive training relating to the bullying policy as part of their induction to the school. The staff also have a duty to remain up to date with online safety and child exploitation. To do so a member of staff will have CEOP Ambassador status and provide staff training and carry out sessions with students.



## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Evaluation

The effectiveness of the policy to combat bullying should be evaluated on an annual basis. This evaluation should inform updates and amendments of the policy.

Consultation with staff, learners, their families and should be carried out to fully consider any incidents, its management, the outcomes and progression for the future.

By raising awareness, everyone involved in the immediate and wider communities of the school will understand and share knowledge relating to expectations and the schools intolerance of bullying. This will in turn increase learners understanding and make them more likely to feel comfortable to report incidents.

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Last reviewed and updated: September 2018