



Houghton Conquest Lower School and Early Years Centre

Anti-Bullying Policy

School Policy on the Prevention of Bullying and Harassment

As a values school, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that 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.

The school recognises that the anti-bullying policy is an implicit element of an effective behaviour policy. Our Behaviour Policy is based on fair, explicit and consistent rules of conduct (**The Golden Rules**) that encourage and reward appropriate behaviour. We believe that good behaviour is based upon respect and regard for and of personal and communal rights and all pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The promotion of good behaviour involves all staff, pupils, school and home and this approach enables school and home to engage in a positive partnership based on shared expectations. The continued reinforcement of the schools aims through the application of the policy provides consistency for the pupils and the chance to behave appropriately in all contexts.

Objectives of this policy

- All governors, teaching and non teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parent 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.

Definition

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- Deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- Repeated over a period of time
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against

Parents of children under 5 should read the Early Years Centre Behaviour Policy. At this age they do not pre-meditate any actions or behaviours, it is spontaneous. The behaviour might be hurtful but it is not bullying.

The Nature of Bullying

Bullying generally falls into one or a combination of the following categories:

- *Physical* – unprovoked assault on a person or group which can include:

- a) Prodding
 - b) Hitting
 - c) Punching
 - d) Pinching
 - e) 'Roughing up'
 - f) Unwanted touching
 - g) Jostling
 - h) Cornering
- *Psychological* reduction of person's self-esteem or confidence through threatening behaviour, including:
 - a) Taunting or teasing about race, gender, disability, appearance, family circumstances or any other aspect of their lives which can be used to wound
 - b) Name calling
 - c) Labelling
 - d) Stereo typing
 - e) Talking behind back
 - f) Spreading malicious tales
 - g) Breaking trust
 - h) Criticising constantly
 - i) Belittling
 - *Social* – this can take the form of:
 - a) ostracism
 - b) rejection by peer group
 - c) ignoring
 - d) staring out
 - e) threatening looks
 - f) pulling faces
 - g) writing notes, letters, graffiti
 - h) setting up malicious websites, sending malicious e mails or text messages on mobile phones
 - *Verbal* – the use of language in a derogatory or offensive manner such as:
 - a) shouting and swearing
 - b) rudeness
 - c) racist or sexual abuse
 - d) spreading rumours
 - *Other* – other forms of bullying include:
 - a) interference with personal property
 - b) extortion
 - c) Cyber-bullying

There are also different types of bully:

- *Occasional*
- *Chronic*

The *occasional* bully does not bully consistently, and often bullies in response to something that is happening to them at a particular time.

The *chronic* bully is defined as someone who is not in control of their behaviour, and as someone likely to be consistently behaving badly towards others.

Specific types of bullying:

Racist Bullying – a pupil is targeted for representing a group, and attacking the individual sends a message to that group. Incidents can include:

- Verbal abuse by name calling, racist jokes and offensive language
- Physical threats or attacks
- Wearing provocative badges or insignia
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- Racist graffiti or other written insults

Sexual Bullying – affects genders, adults and children. Boys are also the victims of girls and other boys. In general sexual bullying is characterised by:

- Abusive name calling
- Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- Pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content

Homophobic Bullying

- Homophobic language, such as “That’s so gay”, “You’re so gay” and derogatory language and name calling are examples of behaviour that is not tolerated. Again it can be verbal, physical or emotional abuse.

Special Educational Needs

Pupils with Special Educational Needs may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other children; however, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific difficulties or disability. (However, it should not be forgotten that any child may experience bullying and that anything that can be seen as different by peers may potentially lead to bullying).

Perpetrators and the victims of bullying share many of the characteristics common in the bullying equation. These include low self-esteem; under-achievement; feelings of rejection and/or isolation; and a genuine sense of being different from the majority. The feelings of power generated by the act of bullying are often an expression of inadequacy and insecurity.

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
- Dislike of school or refusal to go to school
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- 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
- Frequently complaining of feeling unwell – headaches, tummy aches, odd pains
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with torn clothes or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or missing

- Asks for money or start stealing money
- Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Personality changes – moodiness, sudden outburst of temper, lots of weeping, tiredness and forgetfulness
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Bedwetting, rocking, nail biting or nervous ticks
- Gradual withdrawal from social activities
- Jumpiness
- New fears, e.g. of the dark

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

Strategies for addressing Bullying

- Recording all incidents of bullying (see under recording procedures)
- Listening carefully to pupils and providing opportunities for them to express their views and opinions formally and informally (e.g. circle time, assemblies, as part of a planned lesson with an anti-bullying focus or impromptu "chat" etc.)
- Raising the profile of bullying across the curriculum in lessons and timetabling opportunities for identifying key lessons or parts of lessons within existing schemes of work where appropriate.
- Provision of a Worry Box in Reception Area – checked regularly by Emotional Well-Being Partner. A Worry Box will also be available in each classroom (checked by the class teacher).
- Involving parents by communication information about 'what is bullying?' as well as inform parents if we are concerned about their child's behaviour.
- Individual support for children who require specialised support.
- Displays which promote services and key anti-bullying messages
- Improve self-esteem and assertiveness through individual interactions, modelling and extended curriculum opportunities
- Monitoring by SLT through serious incident sheets / red card data.
- Providing opportunities for achieving success in social situations e.g. school visits
- Specialised 1:1 and/or group intervention if necessary.
- Sanctions which may lead to exclusion in extreme circumstances

Prevention

We will use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying. This may include:

- Establishing Golden Rules at the beginning of the year with frequent reminders.
- Signing a behaviour contract – class charter.
- 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) and drama workshops.
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters.
- Focus weeks, e.g. anti-bullying week.
- Emphasis on living by our values implicitly and explicitly in all areas of school.

- The school, parents and pupils sign up to a Home-School Agreement.
- The staff meeting agendas always have Safeguarding and Health and Safety as the priority items.
- Internet Safety in KS2 Curriculum Content.

Procedures for dealing with Bullying

There are five key points to remember when addressing all incidents of bullying:

- 1) Never ignore suspected bullying
- 2) Don't make premature assumptions
- 3) Listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils witnessing/saying the same behaviour seen does not necessarily mean they understand what happened or that it is bullying.
- 4) Adopt a problem solving approach with all pupils involved which helps to move the pupils forward and away from a cycle of blame.
- 5) Follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed.

How an incident of bullying is dealt with

How an incident of bullying is dealt with will depend on whether the bullying is witnessed by a member of staff or not.

If 'an incident' is witnessed and is part of a **repeated and intentional behaviour pattern, where the pupil has caused harm and it involves an imbalance of power** (*power comes in many forms – physical power, influence, popularity. Power itself isn't negative, but it can be used to cause hurt*), the member of staff must deal with it immediately and record what has happened. All involved should be given the opportunity to discuss the incident and all present will be expected to listen politely and attentively.

If appropriate, those involved may be spoken to separately.

If the incident is not witnessed, the member of staff to whom it is reported must sensitively investigate the possible bullying and determine if bullying has taken place. If the member of staff is certain that an incident of bullying has taken place it must be dealt with as though it had been witnessed. If after investigation it transpires that there was no incident of bullying or their investigation was inconclusive, a record of the alleged incident must still be recorded and reported to the Headteacher.

When dealing with incidents of bullying, the staff member must make an assessment of the incident (the staff member may wish to include the Headteacher, if they feel the bully(s) will respond negatively when challenged or there are many complex factors).

As Health and Safety and Safeguarding are prioritised items weekly to be discussed as a staff, all behaviour is monitored and known and shared with all staff in the organisation. This enables everyone to respond in a preventative, proactive way, rarely reactive.

The response may differ dependent on several factors e.g. whether the bullying is carried out by an individual or by a group, frequency and duration, the severity of the bullying etc.

Issues to consider when discussing consequences with pupils:

- Has the bully picked on someone they have had no relationship with or is it on someone that there is an on-going relationship with, or was a past relationship with?
- Is the bullying against an individual or are there other victims?
- Is the behaviour "out of character" or is there a past record of bullying or related behaviours already highlighted?

- How is the bullying effecting the class / group? Is the bully seen as a negative influence and /or intimidating force by other pupils in the group?
- Is the bullying against pupils or is there evidence that staff / adults are being bullied?
- What is the nature and severity of the bullying?
- Where there is a group undertaking bullying are all equally involved? And therefore equal consequences?

It is important that the “victim” is placed in the “driving seat”. Staff must explore solution based approaches with the pupils involved. The staff member dealing with an incident of bullying must follow through with what has been promised and communicate what has been done back to the victim.

Parental Complaint about Bullying

If your son/daughter comes home complaining of being bullied and they have not talked to a trusted member of school staff, you need to alert their classteacher straightaway (a phone call, e-mail, or come into Reception). The school will act immediately following the same procedures as “How an Incident of Bullying is Dealt with”.

If parents do not feel bullying has been effectively dealt with they should follow the school Complaints Policy.

A bullying incident should be addressed as a Child Protection concern where there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm’ (Children Act 1989).

Bullying outside the school premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “**to such an extent as is reasonable**”. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on.

Once alerted the headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises when under the lawful control of the staff member.

Possible consequences for persistent bullies include:

- Pupil apology (verbal, written)
- “voluntarily” completing an act of kindness towards the “victim”
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Internal exclusion
- External fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

Procedures for reporting with Bullying

A record of incidents of bullying is kept and patterns are analysed to ensure relevant interventions in alleged bullying are robust. The analysis will enable the school to create a preventative ethos.

Confirmed bullying incidents are reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

Support for staff

Support for staff is available through:

- The Induction Programme – with a nominated mentor
- INSET training – in-house and external
- CPD opportunities
- Values led assemblies

Whistle blowing

Adults should report any behaviour by colleagues that raises concern to the senior management team and / or relevant external agencies. Whistle blowing is the mechanism by which staff can voice their concerns, made in good faith, without fear or repercussion. (Displayed in staff room – CBC policy).

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher, staff and Governors.

Related National Documents

Education Act 2002

Education and Inspectors Act 2006

Equalities Act 2010

(DfE 2014: Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies)

Signed:

Date:

Mrs J Randall
Chair of Governors