

Upton St Leonards Church of England Primary School

Anti Bullying Policy

At Upton St. Leonards we place great importance on the way that pupils conduct themselves and interact with adults and their peers around the school. This was recognised by our Ofsted Inspection in 2007 which noted, "Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils reflect carefully and deeply on issues relating to themselves and to each other, with a deep understanding of the importance of friendship."

All those in our learning community have rights and responsibilities which must be respected:

- Learn:** to engage in the learning process without distraction or disruption
- Respect:** to treat others and be treated both fairly and reasonably
- Feel Safe:** be free from physical hurt or emotional antagonism

These rights and responsibilities underpin our work in school and this anti-bullying policy

AIMS

1. To create an environment free from the fear of physical and verbal abuse and all other forms of intimidation.
2. To develop a positive whole school attitude and a planned approach in which pupils, staff, and parents work together to eliminate bullying in all its forms.
3. When and where necessary to do everything possible to modify pupil behaviour and develop social awareness whereby the bully comes to realise the consequences of his/her behaviour.
4. To involve outside help from support agencies, eg School Psychology Service, Primary Behaviour Support Team, YES Team etc. in persistent and/or serious incidents of bullying.

Bullying is an interaction which establishes individual/group identity, dominance and status at the expense of another/others. It can take many forms and is no less damaging and hurtful in being verbal or passive than by being physical. Bullying is an activity that can occur between the sexes.

A purely preventive policy dependent upon policing the environment, forbidding behaviour, encouraging victims and punishing the perpetrators can have no lasting effect. Only by developing higher values and a better social climate/awareness involving consideration, empathy, and unselfishness, etc; is the bully likely to modify his/her behaviour and function differently in a social setting.

Definition of bullying behaviour

“Bullying: All children make friends, break friends, say horrible things to each other, are spiteful, tease and jostle for places in the pecking order of school and family. Bullying is something beyond that.”

Keith Sullivan: The Anti-Bullying Handbook: 2001

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

- deliberately hurtful
- repeated over a period of time
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against

Examples of bullying behaviour

Bullying can take many forms, but three main types are:

- physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- verbal - name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- indirect - spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours

Particular forms of bullying include:

- racist bullying
- sexual bullying and bullying related to sexual orientation
- bullying because of special educational needs or disabilities

With younger children there must be a distinction made between bullying and bossiness and between bullying and boisterous play. Most young children grow out of bossiness as they become more self-controlled and learn the social skills of negotiation and compromise.

Research has shown that the school and the playground are the places where most bullying occurs. Bullying can take place several times a week/a day, for months or for years. It does not have to continue for a long time without damaging the victim and being a corrupting influence on other children or young people who witness it.

There are twice as many victims among boys than among girls, and three times as many boys are bullies. The different means of bullying used by the sexes, however, may make boy bullies more visible to adults. Both boys and girls use teasing as a means of bullying, but boys are more inclined to use more physical means whereas girls are more inclined to use more subtle means, such as exclusion from the social group. Many boy bullies pick on victims from both sexes, but girls predominantly bully other girls.

Usually one pupil starts bullying a victim. There are often other pupils present. These may help the bully by:

- joining in
- watching, laughing and shouting encouragement
- remaining resolutely uninvolved

In our school, we expect children to help the victim directly (NB not physically), tell the bully to stop, or fetch an adult

Consequences of bullying

Bullying affects everyone, not just bullies and victims. It affects children who may witness violence and aggression and the distress of the victim. It may damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school. Less aggressive children can be drawn into the taunting and tormenting of victims by group pressure and psychological pressures.

Victims may be reluctant to attend school and are often absent. They may be more anxious and insecure than others, having fewer friends and often feeling unhappy and lonely. Victims can suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures - feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive.

Being bullied affects people both physically and mentally. Symptoms include fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, paralysis, hyperventilation, visual symptoms, headaches, stomach aches, bed-wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide. It may lead to anxiety, depression, loneliness and lack of trust in adult life.

Victims of bullying

Any child can be bullied, and although none of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely:

- lacking close friends in school
- being shy
- an over-protective family environment
- being from a different racial or ethnic group from the majority
- being different in some obvious respect - such as stammering
- having Special Educational Needs or a disability
- behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a 'nuisance'
- possessing expensive accessories

Some victims may behave passively or submissively, signalling to others that they would not retaliate if attacked or insulted. Others may behave aggressively, sometimes provoking others to retaliate. Some pupils are both bullies and victims; approximately 20% of victims also act as bullies although tending not to direct their aggression towards their own aggressors.

Why does bullying happen?

Some children may become temporary bullies after a traumatic event, such as a divorce, the birth of a new baby, the death of a loved one or because of boredom and frustration.

Other children become chronic bullies because they

- like the feeling of power
- are spoilt and expect everyone to do what they say
- feel insecure, inadequate, humiliated
- have been abused in some way
- are scapegoats or bullied at home
- are under pressure to succeed at all costs
- don't fit in with other children
- feel no sense of accomplishment
- are not allowed to show their feelings

Bullies appear very powerful. They may even make it seem like the bullying is the victim's fault.

Possible signs of bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied.

Children may:

- be frightened of walking to or from school
- be unwilling to go to school
- beg to be driven to school
- change their route to school
- begin doing poorly in their school work
- come home regularly with clothes or books damaged
- come home hungry because packed lunch was taken
- become withdrawn, start stammering
- become distressed, stop eating
- cry themselves to sleep
- have nightmares and even call out 'leave me alone'
- have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts
- have their possessions 'go missing'
- ask for money, or begin stealing money (to pay the bully)
- continually 'lose' their pocket money
- refuse to say what's wrong
- give improbable excuses to explain any of the above

Bullying by race, gender, sexual orientation or disability

In racist bullying, a child is targeted for representing a group, and attacking the individual sends a message to that group. Racist bullying is therefore likely to hurt not only the victim, but also other pupils from the same group and their families. Incidents can include:

- verbal abuse by name calling, racist jokes and offensive mimicry
- physical threats or attacks
- wearing of provocative badges or insignia
- bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- inciting others to behave in a racist way
- racist graffiti or other written insults - even against food, music, dress or customs
- refusing to co-operate in work or in play
- cyber bullying, using mobile phones, email or instant messaging etc

Sexual bullying impacts on both genders. Boys can also be victims - of girls and of other boys. In general, sexual bullying is characterised by:

- abusive name calling, including the use of homophobic language
- looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- inappropriate and uninvited touching
- sexual innuendoes and propositions
- pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- sexual assault

Pupils with Special Educational Needs or disabilities may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied.

Monitoring incidents

Bullying often continues just because the victim is afraid to tell anyone. The victim may be afraid of making the bullying worse and being hurt more both physically and emotionally. He/she may be afraid of not being believed, of being seen as a 'trouble maker', of being blamed for provoking it. He/she may be afraid of getting the bully into trouble, of parents getting angry, of being ostracised by other children.

Children may not know that the behaviour is bullying. They may not realise that they have the right to tell someone about it. They may not know how to say what has happened or where to go for help. They may hope that the behaviour will go away or that the bully will find another target.

It is therefore important that staff and parents take steps to uncover bullying and that all claims of bullying are taken seriously.

Responding to incidents

Incidents involving bullying behaviour must be dealt with promptly and should be recorded. Children need to feel that someone is listening to their version of what is going on. Changing the behaviour of the bully and the victim takes longer.

The action to be taken will depend on the severity and frequency of incidents, the feelings of the children involved and the impact on the class/school. It is important that claims of bullying are taken seriously as a half-hearted response might make the problem worse.

Positive steps

Through assemblies and classroom work, through our response to incidents and through the examples we set, we aim to ensure that all children at Upton St. Leonards are aware that bullying is not tolerated in our school.

The curriculum can be used to:

- raise awareness about bullying and the anti-bullying policy
- increase understanding for victims, and help build an anti-bullying ethos
- teach pupils how to manage their relationships with others constructively
- explore issues about bullying

An Anti-Bullying Week was held in November 2007, coinciding with the National Anti-bullying Week.

Co-operative group work is a feature of class work throughout our school.

We use Circle Time at least fortnightly with each class, and this:

- creates a safe space to explore issues of concern
- explores relationships with adults and peers
- enhances effective communication
- affirms the strengths and enhances the self-esteem of each member

Participants in Circle Time listen carefully, make eye-contact with one another and address particular problems - for example, relationships, anger, fighting and bullying.

In some instances, Circles of Friends/Support Groups may be used to support individual pupils who may be lacking in friends and may therefore be vulnerable to bullying as a victim or an instigator.

We have started training our older junior children as Peer Mediators. They will be involved in negotiation and conflict resolution. Although our Peer Mediators would not be involved in dealing with sustained bullying behaviour, they may sometimes be called upon by children to resolve more minor disputes such as isolated instances of name-calling.

Strategies for working with incidents of bullying

Five key points:

- never ignore suspected bullying
- don't make premature assumptions
- listen carefully to all accounts
- adopt a problem-solving approach
- follow up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed

Working with bullies

It is important to remember that awareness-raising is more effective than anger or sarcasm. Any punishment must not include anger, aggression or humiliation. Punitive treatment towards the bully may well reinforce their view that when they get big or powerful enough they will be able to use bullying tactics again.

Children exhibiting bullying behaviour should be told "you know that at Upton St. Leonards School that behaviour is unacceptable".

Bullies are often happy enough to talk about what has happened so long as they think that the response will be reasonable and empathetic. They may be able to offer useful suggestions for improving the situation. When talking to bullies, the situation should not be exacerbated by an angry, sarcastic or indignant response. The goal is to try to get the person who is using bullying behaviour to feel concern for the recipient.

When challenging a bully about their behaviour and working towards a resolution try asking questions about what the person knows about the situation. Remain silent until the perpetrator answers. This may take a long time. While the bully tells you their side of the incident, do not interrupt but encourage them with nods, phrases such as, 'Oh', 'Really', 'that's interesting', 'Mm', etc.

When you detect in the bully a note of concern for the recipient, stop the conversation. Reinforce the notion that you both agree that something is wrong. Elicit constructive solutions - 'What shall we do about it?' talk to the child responsible for the bullying about the recipient's perception of it and how it differs from their own. Accept the bully's suggestions, if reasonable, then tell them that you will meet in a few days to discuss how things have gone. Arrange a time to meet.

Aim to bring the bully and the recipient together for a constructive talk. This may take some time to achieve and is not always advisable. Give children involved in bullying behaviour constructive and challenging tasks to do during break and lunchtime

Working with bullying victims

It is important to believe the recipient's perception of what happened in the first instance and to assure them that they have acted correctly in coming to see you. Actively listen to their account - respond by nodding and by making supportive sounds. Ask them to explain what happened - ask them neutral questions.

It is not helpful to anyone if you conduct an interrogation or if you make comments or ask questions that make them feel in some way they were responsible for the behaviour, or that their complaint is trivial or time wasting. Do not convey the impression that the recipient should feel guilty about being bullied and needing to seek help

The actions being taken by the school should be made clear to the parents of the victims and the bullies. They should be aware of why these actions are being undertaken and what they can do in support of them.

Bullying victims can be given a task to do in playtime to break the cycle of taunts. They can be encouraged to ignore taunts at the time and be helped to develop skills to be more assertive. It is important to build the self-esteem and confidence of recipients of bullying behaviour, and they can be given activities to help this.

The behaviour of certain pupils can contribute to bullying, though this in no way justifies it. Some pupils find it hard to concentrate in class, are hyperactive, or behave in ways that irritate others. They may get angry easily and fight back when provoked. They may also bully weaker pupils. Such children need improved social skills - assertiveness, conflict resolution and stress management are all worth developing. Friends could give feedback on annoying behaviour. Adults can encourage such friendships. Other professionals may work with the pupil or family.

When tougher measures are needed

When pupils do not respond to preventative strategies, we recognise that tougher action is needed in order for persistent and violent incidents of bullying to be dealt with. Sanctions used will include:

- removal from a group in class
- withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum
- fixed period exclusion

In the case of serious violence then a child may be permanently excluded.

Procedures for responding to incidents of bullying at Upton St. Leonards School

1. Discuss the incident with the recipient of bullying behaviour and make a record on an incident sheet.
2. Discuss the incident and the record with the Head Teacher (or the Deputy Head).
3. Class teacher, T.A, Deputy or Head Teacher to follow up the incident with the victim and the instigator as appropriate. Records of conversations should be kept.
4. Parents of victims of bullying behaviour and instigator will be informed (by telephone, meeting, letter or the yellow School Diary) as appropriate.

Bullying happens.

It is very hard to tell when and where it is happening.

It can be easy to misconstrue and ignore.

**Every effort should be made to create an environment in which
bullying does not happen.**

When bullying is recognised it should be stopped.

This Policy was approved by the Governing Body in October 2007