

Spittal V.C. School

Respecting Others – Anti-Bullying Policy



Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Policy

This school believes that bullying is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. All members of the school community share a collective responsibility for tackling bullying should it occur and in working together to promote positive behaviour.

“All children, whatever their race, sex, beliefs and abilities have the right to be safe and to be free from oppression, humiliation and abuse” (The Children’s Act 2004).

Aims of the policy:

Our Policy is a working framework to support our whole school ethos which is to ensure that children feel safe, secure confident and happy. It is designed to prevent bullying behaviour wherever possible, to respond consistently in line with agreed procedures should it occur and to provide support to those involved as appropriate. Our children's health and well-being is of paramount importance.

Prevention includes sending out a clear message that negative behaviour is anti-social, unacceptable and will not be tolerated here. **This school policy is based on the Welsh Government initiative and Guidance “Respecting Others: Anti-Bullying Guidance”. It can be accessed from www.wales.gov.uk/respectingothers**

What is Bullying behaviour?

Bullying is deliberately hurtful and designed to cause distress. It is usually repeated over a period of time and is difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves against. It involves an imbalance and abuse of power and is not age dependent. It may have a racist or discriminatory motivation and can focus on ethnicity, culture, class, religion, learning difficulties, gender, sexuality, long term health conditions and disability. It may be based on small differences between children which are not always clear to us and may shift and develop as relationships change. Bullying behaviour may be shown by individuals or groups. It may not always be clear who is manipulating the behaviour we see. Some children can be 'provocative victims' eg by behaving in a tiresome way which eventually triggers a response which may then be seen to be bullying.

Bullying is not falling out with friends, choosing not to play with someone, disliking someone, one off aggressive behaviour such as a fight between children who disagree, accidental physical contact, or the normal rough and tumble of playground life.

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

- Physical – e.g. hitting; kicking; punching; spitting; biting; sexual harassment; having belongings damaged, stolen or removed.
- Verbal – e.g. name calling; teasing; insulting; sarcasm; threats; offensive remarks; sexual/racial comments.
- Emotional / Psychological – e.g. excluding, humiliating, dirty looks; making distressing comments about family members, spreading stories/malicious rumours.

- Cyber / Hi-Tech e.g. malicious emails or comments in internet chatrooms or text messages on mobile phones; distressing comments about family members; posting stories, pictures etc. on the internet; silent phone calls; using someone else's name to spread unpleasant gossip and rumours; happy slapping.

There are also specific types of bullying relating to identities that should be part of these existing strategies.

Schools may benefit from some additional support when devising preventative and responsive measures to different types of identity-based bullying. To this end, the Welsh Government has produced a set of type-specific anti-bullying guidance for schools. The set includes:

- bullying around race, religion and culture
- bullying involving learners with special educational needs and disabilities
- homophobic bullying
- sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying.
- Cyberbullying.

These specific types of bullying should be tackled by the school using the guidance materials on the Welsh Government's website at: www.wales.gov.uk/respectingothers

Bullying affects everyone, not simply the victims and the instigators. It has an influence on other children who may witness violence, aggression and the distress of the victim.

Our whole school approach to preventing bullying includes:

- Developing a positive ethos which includes knowing bullying is unacceptable here;
- Expecting positive behaviour which helps and supports learning and development;
- Promoting co-operation and expecting socially responsible behaviour;
- Encouraging those who witness bullying to act positively by alerting staff and exerting collective peer pressure to deter the bullies;
- Valuing and celebrating everyone's differences, skills and talents;
- Supporting the development of emotional literacy, self esteem and resilience through assemblies, Circle Time, PSE, the Healthy Schools programme, skills development, teaching pupils personal coping strategies (eg. with Dr Emily Lovegrove), School Council involvement, Buddy schemes and Peer Mentoring;
- Active involvement of our designated Police SCPO in the delivery of the all Wales School Liaison Core Programme;
- Showing respect for others;
- Making the information in this policy available to all stakeholders;
- Involving all members of the school community in designing /implementing policy.

Why should we be concerned?

Someone who is experiencing bullying will be upset and distressed and find it hard to concentrate on work or learning. There may be signs such as poor attendance, truancy, being late, being off school sick, becoming withdrawn and anxious, losing possessions and money, having mood swings, and showing untypical behaviour.

Encouraging reporting of incidents if bullying occurs:

- Pupils in this school can be assured that their concerns will be responded to with sensitivity. All reports will be taken seriously and investigated;
- Confidentiality for anyone who shares information will be respected;

- Opportunities for children to communicate concerns include a problem box, access to any member of staff, representation on the School Council and buddies/mentors who will pass on concerns;
- We have our 'Bocs Coch' or 'Red Box' where worries or issues can be reported confidentially
- Ensure a calm and consistent approach by staff to incidents.

If bullying occurs we will implement the following procedures, as appropriate:

- We will take all incidents seriously and record their occurrence;
- Investigate the incident / establish facts by independently talking to all involved;
- Use appropriate intervention techniques to manage difficulties between bullies & victims; encourage reconciliation where this is possible / feasible;
- Where bullying behaviour has been established, implement agreed sanctions consistently and fairly as necessary to prevent further incidents;
- Involve parents as early as possible where incidents merit it;
- Apply guidelines from the all Wales Police "School Crime Beat" partnership working document to determine whether official police involvement is needed; as indicated in these guidelines, deal with incidents internally wherever possible;
- Keep accurate, factual records of all reported incidents and the school's response to them;
- Always follow-up incidents after they have been dealt with and review outcomes to ensure bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Provide on-going support for those involved where necessary;
- Consider using a 'Restorative Justice' approach where appropriate.

Depending on the type of incident, if sanctions are used, these may include:

- Withdrawing privileges/free time; preventing access to parts of school; detention; lunchtime exclusion; short term exclusion; involving parents as / when necessary; involving appropriate outside agencies; including details on the bully's school record; exclusion.

Recording bullying incidents and implementation of sanctions

1. When an incident of bullying has been established, the name of the accused pupil, together with details of the incident, is recorded on a school behaviour form by the respective adult and a first warning is given verbally.
2. If a second bullying incident occurs, the same action is taken and the accused child receives a second warning. In this instance the parents of the accused child are informed of the incident via the home/school diary and telephone call. Any essential information is recorded on a school behaviour form. Copies can be found in the Safeguarding file in the staffroom and on the Safeguarding board. The head teacher is informed and the report circulated to relevant personnel.
3. If a third bullying incident occurs, it is again recorded and dated on a school behaviour form. At this stage, a letter is sent from the head teacher to the respective parents, inviting them in to discuss the way forward. Sanctions imposed may include exclusion from an event or having certain privileges removed.
4. A fourth incident will result in the head teacher sending out another letter to the parents inviting them into school for further discussions. At this meeting the class teacher will be present and further sanctions will be imposed. It is anticipated that very few incidences of this severity will occur.
5. If the situation remains unresolved, the head teacher will work in partnership with the parents, the ALNCO and relevant outside agencies (eg behaviour support service) to identify lasting solutions. Where appropriate, the Governing Body will also be involved. Policies complied by the LEA and WAG will be adhered to and advice sought if required.

Helping the Bullied Child

As a school we feel that we are able to support the bullied child. We understand the victims of bullying may end up believing that somehow they deserve to be bullied. They may feel vulnerable and powerless and their self-esteem has been considerably damaged, especially if the bullying has gone on for some time.

At school we aim to:

- Keep telling them that they are liked/loved and that we will support them;
- Reassure them that bullying is not their fault;
- Minimise opportunities for bullying ie. don't bring valuable possessions to school, stay with a group even if they are not your close friends;
- Make time to sit down and talk to the child; encourage them to tell you how they feel;
- Discuss their feelings;
- Praise them when they accomplish something or behave well;
- Make opportunities for them to do well;
- Give them responsibilities to make them feel valued and important;
- Encourage them to do something that they particularly good at to build self-confidence;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the child's situation and of strategies in place to support this child.

Helping the Bullying Child

There are plenty of reasons as to why a child may become a bully. Some children may turn to bullying as a way of coping with a difficult situation: death of a relative, parent's divorce; some are victims of abuse and take out their humiliation and anger on others; some want to be leaders and are prepared to use aggression and violence to command obedience and loyalty.

Whatever the causes of bullying, bullies pick on others as a way of making life better for themselves. They are frequently bigger and stronger than their victims and they use intimidation to get what they want. They are often not happy and use bullying as a way of trying to achieve popularity.

Bullies have to learn that bullying is unacceptable and that, if they continue to behave unacceptably, then there are consequences. Although they should be given plenty of encouragement and help to change, bullies must not be allowed to get away with tormenting others.

At school we aim to:

- Reassure the child that it is their **behaviour** that is unacceptable, not the child and that we aim to help them change this behaviour;
- Work with the child to help them understand why they bully others and encourage them to find ways to help themselves;
- Explain the difference of assertive and aggressive behaviour;
- Set limits. Give the child time to work out and practice non-aggressive strategies. Stop any sign of aggression immediately and support them to use these strategies;
- Work out a way for the child to make amends for their bullying;
- Set up a rewards system for positive behaviour. Set up opportunities for them to succeed;
- Communicate to all staff the strategies being put in place to help the child and encouraged them to support these strategies.

SUMMARY: Strategies and preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of bullying in this school :

- A whole-school approach involving everyone (staff, students, parents & governors) in developing and implementing this policy;
- Awareness raising of the issues, procedures, sanctions and method of monitoring bullying, eg. assemblies, pastoral work, PSE, parents meetings, newsletter, website;
- An ethos of personal responsibility where students are encouraged to tell if they experience bullying themselves or see others being bullied – knowing that not taking action condones the behaviour;
- Having a system in place for students to inform staff in confidence when bullying occurs; ensuring staff are appropriately trained and supported to respond to this.
- Developing our understanding of collective responsibility through Support Groups, Circle Time, School Council, Peer Mentoring/ Support, appropriate curricular work (eg PSE and our Healthy Schools initiative; sessions with School Community Police Officers);
- Having a clearly understood and implemented Playground / Safe Environment Policy;
- Having a clear, explicit link with the school's Behaviour and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policies;
- Including bullying in our home-school agreement.
- Providing clear information and guidance on dealing with bullying and the help which is available for students, parents and staff.

Reviewing the policy

The final details of this policy have been drawn up in consultation with pupils, parents, staff and members of the school community. It will be discussed, reviewed and revised annually.

Additional information

- Advice to pupils – what to do if you are being bullied.
- Advice to pupils – what to do if you see / know someone is being bullied.
- Advice for parents.
- Information for pupils and parents on strategies, procedures and sanctions.
- User-friendly guide for children developed through consultation with them.
- Guidance for staff and others working in the school environment.
- Guidelines for Governors.
- Examples of different types of bullying behaviour.
- WG Anti-Bullying Toolkit / Checklist informs this policy.
- Pembrokeshire Local Authority bullying survey

Reference documents and useful links:

- "Respecting Others : Anti-Bullying Guidance" Sept 03 National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 23/2003.
- Respecting Others Anti Bullying Guidance September 2011; Circular 050/2011
www.wales.gov.uk/respectingothers
- "Evaluation of Anti-Bullying Policies in Schools in Wales" Cardiff University Report 2006
- "School Anti-Bullying Policy Self-Assessment Tool" Welsh Assembly Government Nov 08
- Be-SMART Resource file / Pembrokeshire County Council Internet Safety Group
- All Wales Police School Liaison Core Programme and All Wales Police "School Beat" guidelines for schools
- www.schoolbeat.org for links to Police School Liaison Programme outline and documents.

This policy will be reviewed and updated annually, in line with the school policy review schedule, unless changes of circumstances or legislation requires it to be amended earlier.

Signed

Headteacher

Chair of Governors

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