

Michaela Community School

Preventing Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction

This policy has regard to the DfE guidance 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for school leaders and governors'. It also draws on the previous guidance, 'Safe To Learn - Embedding Anti-Bullying Work In Schools'.

'It is a basic entitlement of all children that they receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is compulsory in our society and therefore it is the responsibility of all adults to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective.' D P Tattum

2. Aims

The overall aims of this policy are the prevention of bullying and should instances of bullying occur, to help staff and pupils to deal with it effectively.

In this respect the school seeks:

- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of the nature and types of bullying that may occur, both in and out of school; their causes and effects
- To ensure high expectations of pupils' behaviour, as detailed in the school's behaviour policy

- To use all pupils, staff and parents as a positive resource in the elimination of any form of bullying, drawing on peer pressure as a means of preventing bullying
- To ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware that bullying is totally unacceptable
- To ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in addressing bullying issues
- To provide regular staff training in relation to the prevention of and response to bullying
- To develop effective strategies to prevent bullying
- To provide a consistent school response to any bullying and have clear procedures for dealing with incidents
- To provide support for both victim and bully

3. Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, by an individual or a group, which intentionally hurts another individual, physically or emotionally, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is often difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It can happen anywhere, both in and out of school.

Bullying can have a negative life-long impact. It can make it difficult for children to learn and can have a lasting detrimental effect on their lives. Young people who have been bullied can become anxious and withdrawn, depressed or aggressive. Some turn to substance misuse as a way of dealing with it emotionally and, at worst, bullying has been a factor in suicide.

(Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Bullying can take various different forms, including:

- Racial/Religious/Cultural – where someone is made to feel inferior because of their background, culture or religion
- Sexual/sexist - bullying based on something specifically linked to gender
- Homophobic - bullying based on sexual orientation
- Disability - any exploitation of a particular aspect of a child's disability and/or special educational needs
- Cyber-bullying via technology. For example, internet/mobile phones, email, social networks, text messages, photographs

Bullying can include name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings, inappropriate touching, producing offensive graffiti, spreading hurtful and untruthful

rumours or regularly excluding someone from groups or games. It is also bullying when a young person is pressured to act against their will by others or is harassed by unwanted conduct, which violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading or humiliating environment.

4. Signs and symptoms 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 should investigate if a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school
- Is frequently absent from school
- Regularly has homework which is not done or lost
- Changes his or her usual routine
- Becomes anxious, withdrawn or is lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries him- or herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to achieve less well in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has pocket money or other money continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Stops eating
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous or jumpy when a cyber message is received
- Is evasive or gives improbable excuses in relation to any of the above

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

5. Action against bullying

It is essential that all adults in the school community know what to do when they suspect that a child is being bullied and which member of staff to contact.

Staff will have a range of appropriate strategies on which to call:

- Skilled observation to recognise and respond to the symptoms noted above

- Ready receipt of reports of bullying behaviour, which are then investigated, acted upon and the information relating to the alleged bully and their victims reported as appropriate
- The school curriculum, for example in subjects such as
- English and history, to embrace the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs
- Use, as above, of other elements of school life, including assemblies, tutor time, school council and visiting speakers
- Focussed training, for example in safe use of the internet. (The school has an e-Safety policy)
- Availability of this policy on the school's website to enable parents to understand the school's approach and work together with staff
- Close parent/teacher liaison to ensure that both home and school work together to help and support the victim and moderate the behaviour of the bully
- Where appropriate and following discussion with the Head engagement with outside assistance, such as an educational psychologist, social worker or the police - in helping children who bully others
- Ensuring that staff are fully aware of times and places when bullying is most likely to occur; organisation of the school day and supervision arrangements reduce the likely incidence of bullying. This includes supervision and monitoring the use of toilets at all times and the regular coverage of secluded areas at break times by duty staff
- All children given the opportunity to speak to their form tutor. This person is someone they feel comfortable with, who knows the child well and understands that the child may turn to him or her. Where it is recognised that a child may not be comfortable turning to his form teacher or tutor, alternative arrangements will be put in place
- Familiarity of all staff with this policy; staff will sign to say that they have read and understood this policy
- Raising the awareness of all staff to the dangers of bullying and how to prevent it, through staff training and by regular discussion at staff meetings
- Dove-tailing this policy with the school behaviour policy so that all concerned are aware of the appropriate procedures and sanctions

6. Procedures

This policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not to be tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken both to prevent and to respond to bullying.

The Role of the Head

The Head will be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that all incidents are thoroughly investigated and properly logged. The Head will then collaborate with the ST in ensuring that an investigation takes place in every case and each situation is treated seriously. If bullying is found to have definitely occurred, the parents of any children involved will be contacted and informed of what action the school will take by the

Head. The Head will ensure that the ST and all staff undertake appropriate training in taking action against bullying.

The Role of ST

The main roles of ST in respect of bullying are:

- Managing and monitoring practices to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and procedures
- Maintaining a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the school's anti-bullying prevention and response strategies
- Liaison with the Head and between all parties involved, including parents
- Ensuring that incident slips are completed by staff in all cases and that a copy is stored in the incident file
- On a regular basis, analysis of the incident file so that patterns and trends can be identified and the analysis used to improve policy and practice
- Promotion and co-ordination of anti-bullying initiatives and projects both within the curriculum and in the wider aspects of school life (as highlighted in 4 above)
- Deployment of appropriate strategies to ensure that bullies change their behaviour

All Staff

It is essential that all members of staff contribute to create a school ethos which does not tolerate bullying and minimises the likelihood of incidents ever occurring.

Staff must ensure that they have read and understand this policy.

Staff must ensure that their training in taking action against bullying remains up to date. Staff will be aware of and exploit aspects the curriculum and wider aspects of school life where they can include the topic of bullying, including its dangers, how to prevent it and the steps to take when it occurs.

In any case where bullying is reported or suspected, staff must follow this procedure:

1. In most cases the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who is approached
2. Listen carefully and intently
3. Reassure the child that you are sympathetic and that the problem will be resolved
4. Do not ask any leading questions
5. Do not promise to keep the issue confidential – it is important to maintain the pupil's trust by remaining honest

6. Make a clear account of the conversation on an incident slip as soon as it has ended, but try to avoid taking notes during discussion
7. Report the matter as soon as is practical to the Head of Pastoral Care. In his or her absence, report the matter to the Headteacher
8. Discuss with the Assistant Headteacher how to proceed with, for example, further interviews, liaison with parents and what action is to be taken, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy
9. Continue to address the incident as agreed with the Assistant Headteacher
10. Ensure that the incident continues to be fully recorded on the incident slip, together with details of what action has been taken
11. Liaise with the Assistant Headteacher to ensure that all staff are kept informed of the incident and action taken, as appropriate
12. Remember that staff must only ever use physical intervention as a last resort, and at all times it must be the minimal force necessary to prevent injury to another person. Staff should refer to the section in the Behaviour Policy on physical restraint
13. Ensure that appropriate support is provided for all parties concerned

Information and guidance for pupils

As a member of the school, you will not have to put up with any form of bullying behaviour. We can and will help to put a stop to it.

You should feel free to speak out to your mum or dad or any teacher if you are being bullied. We can help you to cope with it straight away. When someone else is being bullied or is in distress, inform a member of staff immediately.

Do not be afraid to report any incidents. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. If you wish to inform the school of an incident involving bullying or perceived bullying but want to remain anonymous, you can write a note and put it in the main post box in the main office.

Do not put up with bullies in your group of friends. Bullies will soon stop if they are left out or are by themselves. Take care how you speak and act towards other pupils. Always aim to be considerate and helpful.

Information and guidance for parents

You may not recognise that your child is being bullied. However, changes in their manner, behaviour and general state of health can sometimes be explained by bullying.

Encourage your child to talk about it, but be patient. It is quite natural for him or her not to want to discuss the matter and not want you to do anything about it. Listen and try not to interrupt.

Reassure them that you are sympathetic and that it is a problem that can be solved. It happens to most people at some time.

Ask him or her if there are ways of changing things and help them to try to develop strategies to cope, strategies which should then be practised. Try to keep the situation in proportion and so remain good-humoured.

Encourage your child to talk to their form teacher or tutor about the matter.

You should feel free to contact your child's teacher to discuss the matter if you are concerned.

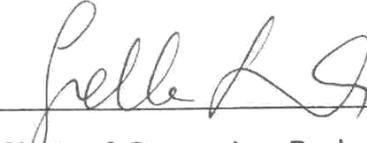
9. Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be considered, possibly amended and then ratified by Governors and then reviewed annually.

Approval by Governing Body and Review Date

This policy and plan has been formally approved and adopted by the Local Governing Body at a formally convened meeting.

Signed:


Chair of Governing Body

Date: 3 July 2017

Review Date: 3 July 2018

End of Statement