

## 3-5 Anti-Bullying policy

*This Policy applies to the entire setting including the EYFS.*

The DfE defines bullying as:

*'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually **repeated** over time, that **intentionally hurts** another individual or group either **physically** or **emotionally**.'*

Bullying can be extremely serious. It can be physical or emotional (which can cause psychological damage).

As a result of this DfE definition, the school makes the following clear statements:

- The school has a **zero-tolerance** approach to bullying.
- The school categorises bullying as a form of physical and/or emotional abuse.
- All staff treat bullying incidents as seriously as any other safeguarding matter.
- All types and symptoms of emotional and physical (including sexual) abuse should be considered as possible in relation to peer to peer abuse/bullying.
- The school is committed to reaching a full and lasting resolution to any bullying incident or accusation.

Bullying typically includes derogatory remarks, deliberate isolation or violent conduct. It can be on the grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational need and disability, because a child is adopted or is a carer (or for no specific reason). It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs or email).

Staff are trained on the contents of this policy and methods of identifying and dealing with bullying during staff inset training (at least annually). Bullying concerns is a standing agenda point on the weekly staff meeting. Parents are expected to sign our e-safety code of conduct on an annual basis and safeguard their children against all forms of bullying at home and immediately report any concerns to the school.

### A child-centric context

Learning to manage and foster relationships is a fundamental part of child development, particularly in the primary age range. From 3 to 11 years old, children steadily become increasingly self and socially aware. This natural development inevitably leads to normal levels of anxiety, stress and conflict and it is the responsibility of the adults around a child to guide them through this development. During this period, children rapidly develop personal, social and emotional skills which allow them to deal with conflict and emotional difficulty and therefore develop personal resilience and self-confidence as well as robust and positive relationships with their peers. These are skills which most adults take for granted.

It is therefore vital that all adults involved in early education (parents and professionals) view the behaviour of young children through this child-centric context. The intention of this policy is therefore not to prevent conflict and emotional difficulty for our children. Giving children the chance to resolve conflict and compromise/reconcile with each other is vital for

their development and happiness. Equally, children making poor choices need to be supported and educated and given the chance to learn and put things right. The school therefore aims to engage with relationship difficulties in a proactive and positive fashion. It is our responsibility to guide our children in developing good relationships and to know our children well enough so that normal levels of conflict and poor choices during childhood development do not develop into bullying concerns.

## **A culture of compassion and collaboration**

Rather than aiming to create either a conflict-free or mistake-free environment, the school aims to create a culture of compassion and collaboration.

Through assemblies, our pastoral curriculum (including online safety) and role modelling, we aim to give our children the social skills and moral awareness they need to make increasingly positive social decisions and to reconcile poor decisions, both individually and collaboratively. Compassion is a core value for the school and it is discussed in every year group on at least a weekly basis. We teach the children to treat each other as they would wish to be treated: with kindness, respect and honesty.

Class teachers talk to the children about their school experience on daily basis as a class and on a regular basis as individuals or in small groups. In addition, Senior Leaders talk to the children on rotation to ensure they and their friends are happy at school and to encourage open discussion about any social issues. This also happens naturally during whole class PSHEE lessons.

The aim of this culture of open communication is that relationship issues can be discussed and 'nipped in the bud' before they might escalate to a bullying issue. Children are encouraged to view mistakes (both socially and in their work/performance) as learning opportunities and that they have a role in supporting one another in learning from mistakes. We therefore take time to listen to children's concerns/conflicts and help them learn from the experience and find resolution. This culture of compassion and collaboration is intended to undermine the danger of unkind behaviour going unreported which is a likely outcome when unkind behaviour is either dismissed or met with a solely punitive response, thereby encouraging those responsible to resent those to have reported the concern. Being 'caught' in an unkind act is an opportunity to learn to be a better version of yourself and all conversations between staff and those children who make such mistakes must follow this positive ethos.

## **The Threshold for Bullying**

An unkind act is not necessarily an act of bullying. An isolated act of unkindness is managed by our Behaviour Policy. Repeated acts of unkindness by one child towards a broad and random group of peers may also not reach the threshold for bullying, as it is not necessarily targeted or specific, and so, will be dealt with according to our Behaviour Policy.

The threshold for bullying is reached when **an individual or group deliberately and knowingly targets an individual or specific group with the intention of hurting them (emotionally or physically) repeatedly. This can be done in person at school, off-site or online (please refer to the school's e-safety policy for measures designed to help prevent**

**cyber bullying) and the school will deal with bullying in the same way, regardless of the location or method.**

Within the context of this threshold and given their age and level of brain development, it is highly unlikely that an Infant (aged 3-7) child's behaviour would reach the threshold for bullying. Teaching children how to behave appropriately and with kindness in a social setting is a fundamental and daily exercise during the early years of school. They will make numerous mistakes during this learning process and they certainly have the capacity for unkind behaviour. However, young children invariably do not have the level of awareness needed to plan a deliberate and targeted bullying campaign against a peer or specific group. The procedure below is therefore most likely relevant to children from years 3 to 6 however the school will review potential cases of bullying in the Infants whenever they arise.

### **Investigating Bullying**

Any potential bullying incident must first be proven to meet the stipulated threshold and so, for every potential case, a bullying investigation will be carried out. Each bullying investigation will be carried out by the most appropriate class teacher who will be delegated the investigatory role by the Head of Pastoral (Mr Agnew). It will involve a review of all data and records, observations of the children and interviews with children and teachers. Special Educational Needs as well as the age of the child will be considered during the investigation process.

The conclusion of any bullying investigation will be shared with the parents of all children involved. It will include the school's view on whether the threshold was met, any planned sanctions and an action plan on how more positive relationships can be built between the children involved moving forwards.

A bullying concern can be raised by a child, teacher or parent. Each concern will be taken seriously and investigated. Parents are asked to book an appointment to speak to their class teacher if they notice a change in behaviour or contentment for their child. Class teachers and SLT speak to the children regularly on rotation and so any concerns raised may lead to more regular scrutiny for a particular group or individual. Concerns may also be flagged as a result of the school's pastoral drop-in sessions and the regular communication between staff and children.

Bullying concerns will also be raised automatically via the school's sanction system. If a child receives two thinking slips for unkind behaviour towards the same child or specific group then a bullying investigation will be actioned. If the conclusion is that the unkindness does not constitute bullying then Mr Agnew and the child's class teacher will meet with the child responsible and make it clear that any further thinking slips for unkind behaviour towards the same child or specific group will potentially represent an act of bullying as, following on from the chat, any further unkindness could be proven to have been carried out deliberately and knowingly.

### **Dealing with Bullying**

If a bullying investigation finds that bullying is taking place then the school will report this conclusion to the children and parents involved. The school's initial action will invariably be

to hold a 'restorative justice' meeting between victim and bully. This will be overseen by the Head of Pastoral (Mr Agnew) and the children's class teacher(s). This is an opportunity for the victim to explain the impact of the bully's actions, for the bully to explain their actions and apologise to the victim and for staff to make it clear that the bullying must stop with immediate effect. The victim's class teacher will produce a Pastoral Care Plan with action points designed to prevent any further incidents and promote a positive school experience. Mr Agnew will work with the bully and their parents in producing a Behaviour Plan to help guide them in making good future decisions and set out clear consequences for poor choices.

For each case, the Head reserves the right to immediately escalate a bullying incident to the level of serious sanction if deemed appropriate.

All bullying concerns and bullying incidents are documented centrally and securely by the Head of Pastoral in the school's Bullying Log. The log is reviewed termly by the Head and Head of Pastoral and any overall trends/concerns reported to Governors at the termly Safeguarding Meeting so that necessary action can be planned and minuted.

STAFF: A Webster (Head), J Agnew (Head of Pastoral Care)

AMENDED: December 2019

NEXT REVIEW: September 2020