

SHEFFORD LOWER SCHOOL **Anti-Bullying Policy**



(To be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy)

Rationale

Every child has the right to feel safe, happy and confident in school and to be valued as an individual. Bullying undermines a child's confidence and security and is unacceptable at any time. We believe our duty to prevent and address bullying in all its forms is integral to our duty to safeguard children in school.

Principles and Values

As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Bullying will not be tolerated. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or in the local community. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

Objectives of this Policy

- To ensure that governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- To ensure that bullying is effectively prevented and addressed by following this policy.
- To ensure that pupils and parents know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It usually involves a perceived imbalance of power within the relationship between the bully and the victim.

Bullying can be:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, intimidating
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racial	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic	because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
Direct or indirect Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber Bullying	All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse Mobile threats by text messaging and calls Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities, ipad, games consoles

Bullying can happen for any number of reasons, but may be related to:

- Race
- Religion
- Culture
- SEN or disability
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances
- Sexual orientation, sexism, or sexual bullying

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from school, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place during the school day, in the classroom, in the corridor or toilets, on the playground, out of school, whilst on residential visits, day visits, in group activities and between families in the local community.

Bullies and Victims

Someone who is usually capable and confident can find themselves in a situation whereby they feel bullied. Staff should be open minded and vigilant. Bullying takes place where there is a perceived imbalance of power of bully over victim.

This may be achieved by:

- The size of the individual
- The strength of the individual
- The social standing of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts etc

Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; they may be too young or vulnerable. Children who are victims of on-going abuse may not recognise that they are being abused. They may also allow a situation to continue in hope that it will stop/ because they feel embarrassed or because they are afraid of the consequences of telling someone.

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Staff are expected to be pro-active in preventing bullying by educating children and in taking steps to avoid it happening.

Staff should be able to identify children who may be vulnerable and who could fall victim to bullying as well as those who may demonstrate bullying behaviour and must take preventative action, working with other staff, children and with the child's parents.

Why is it important to respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving so that they can also have healthy relationships.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning on a regular basis
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing" on a regular basis
- asks for/ takes or loses money
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises

- is bullying other children or siblings
- changes in appetite or eating habits
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received
- unexplained changes in mood or temperament
- change in attitude to people at home/ school

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

Outcomes

- All known/reported incidences of bullying will be reported to the Headteacher.
- Known/ reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher or by a senior member of staff.
- All children who have been involved in the incident or who have witnessed the incident will sit separately to record in their own words what has happened.
- The member of staff dealing with the incident will meet with the Parents of the victim to discuss any incidents and actions being taken.
- The member of staff investigating will meet with the parents of the bully to discuss the incidents, the school's approach and consequences.
- Following an allegation the children will be spoken to and closely monitored.
- If bullying is found to be happening, staff will initiate support for both/ all children and will continue to monitor over a period of time.
- The bully (bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologise.
- The Child/ Family Support TA will be involved in any follow-up action and in some cases, outside agencies may be requested to support the school or family in dealing with bullying e.g. police, counsellor, Behaviour Support Service etc.
- In serious cases, fixed term or even permanent exclusion will be considered.
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded in the Bullying Log and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

At Shefford Lower we use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying through Values Education, class assemblies, PSHCE, Anti-bullying week focus, friendship bench, E-Safety Day, Worry Box, Children are also consulted through in-school pupil questionnaires .

Our ethos and Values Education means that everyone is expected to treat each other with respect and to show respect for other people's property. Showing our Values and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

Staff will discuss bullying with children. This will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss bullying.

Staff will consistently reinforce behaviour expectations in line with the school's behaviour policy.

Participation in Anti-Bullying week.

Staff follow the equality policy; welcoming every child to our school. Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.

Staff will be mindful of the times and areas in which bullying might occur, notifying senior staff and ensuring effective steps are taken to reduce the risk.

Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of children together e.g. gatherings of children in the playground should be monitored and any issues addressed. Groups/gangs can bring about the imbalance of power.

Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings.

Children are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate, this may include:

- writing a set of school or class rules
- writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying
- 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 about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters that bullies are dealt with quickly
- creating an item for the school VLE/ website

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Use an assertive voice and body language and tell the bully to stop
- Tell an adult you can trust in school
- Tell a parent or adult who you can trust at home
- Go to an adult and ask for help
- Shout for help
- Write your concern down and post it in the 'worry box'
- Discuss it in circle time
- Ring Childline and follow the advice given
- Visit the VLE or school website for ideas of what to do next

Recording of Bullying Incidents

Allegations of bullying, reported incidences of bullying and concerns raised by parents should be immediately reported to the Headteacher and will be recorded in the Bullying Log. Resulting follow-up, outcomes of any investigations and any further action taken will be also be recorded. Confirmed cases of bullying must be recorded on the school's electronic Behaviour Log.

All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that bullying may be prevented from happening in the future. Incidents of bullying will be reported to the Governing Body within the Headteacher's report.

Advice to Parents

If you suspect your child is being bullied:

- Inform your child's teacher of your concerns/ the incident. The teacher will inform the Headteacher who will monitor the investigation and its outcomes.
- The Deputy Headteacher is also available to discuss any concerns with you.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- Your child will be supported.
- The bully (bullies) will be helped to change their behaviour.
- Please do contact the Headteacher if you are not happy with the manner in which an incident is managed or responded to.

Please do not:

- Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be the bully or by speaking to their parents.
- Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.

HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 020 7354 8321
Children's Legal Centre 0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri 10-4) 0845 1205 204
Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222
Youth Access 020 8772 9900
Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

Visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk for further support, links and advice.

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Headteacher	Tracey Callender
Chair of Governors	Mark Liddiard