



ANTI BULLYING POLICY

This School Policy has regard to:

Preventing and Tackling Bullying DfE July 2017

Cyberbullying: Advice for Headteachers and school staff 2014.

Aims and Objectives

At Ayscoughlee Hall School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Every student has the right to be safe and happy in school and to be protected when they are feeling vulnerable. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. When bullying occurs, all pupils should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a staff member.

The purpose of this policy is to inform all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, parents and pupils what bullying is, how seriously we take it and the school procedures when bullying is reported. Pupils and parents are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. Staff awareness is raised by discussion and training. Bullying is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable and clear anti-bullying strategies are in place e.g. the school's focus on 'kindness' which is promoted strongly across the school throughout the year.

Definition

Bullying is repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer - it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email);

Bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. It can be a barrier to their learning and have serious consequences for their mental health. Bullying which takes place at school does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting impact on their lives well into adulthood. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, we can help to create safe, disciplined environments where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential. The school will respond and take action against any concern raised regarding bullying, this may be a single incident and not necessarily repeated. This will assist the school to spot patterns and to ensure the single incident does not become the first of a series.

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Cultural** - discriminating on the grounds of a person's background or different views
- **Cyber** - the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else.
- **Disability** - discriminating due to someone's physical or mental disability
- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Homophobic** - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Religious** - discriminating on the grounds of a person's religious beliefs

- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Gender** - targeting another for being a member of a particular gender - impacting on the individual person and on all men and women
- **Social Isolation** - behaviour leading to social isolation, including gossip spreading gossip and encouraging others to ignore another
- **Verbal** - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing and the use of banter.
- **Extortion** – demanding money / goods with threats

The Seriousness of Bullying

Bullying is unacceptable in any form and the school will always respond to concerns and take appropriate action. The impact of bullying, both physical and emotional, can have extremely serious consequences for a child, including psychological damage and loss of self-esteem. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; the Headteacher will make her own judgement about each specific case. Bullying includes cyberbullying and prejudice based bullying.

Some Signs and Symptoms

A pupil may indicate by signs or patterns of behaviour that he is being bullied. They may;

- be unwilling to go to school
- feel ill in the morning and complain of tummy / head aches
- begin to do poorly in school work
- become withdrawn, start stammering
- regularly have books or clothes destroyed or stolen
- become distressed, stop eating, overeat
- cry easily or have nightmares
- become tired and listless due to inability to sleep
- become disruptive or aggressive
- have possessions go 'missing'
- be frightened to say what is wrong
- have frequent injuries and unexplained bruises
- run away
- self-harm

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

The school has an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. That culture extends beyond the classroom to the corridors, the dining hall, the playground, and beyond the school gates. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and Year 5 & 6 pupils who set a good example to the rest.

Procedure to Follow when Bullying is Reported

The procedure for dealing with any incident of poor behaviour is detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy. Should an investigation into an alleged bullying incident be found not to be bullying, then this does not mean that the incident is closed. It will be dealt with under the Behaviour Policy. Patterns of behaviour that may lead to bullying are recorded by class teachers on half termly behaviour logs which are passed to the Headteacher. These incidents are monitored and may be discussed at staff meetings.

Children can be reluctant to 'tell' on their friends and classmates and victims of bullying can be reluctant to come forward. Although this is addressed in the PSHEE and Assembly Programme, teachers must be vigilant at all times and report a bullying incident, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school, or any concerns they may have about a child to the Headteacher immediately. The Headteacher will record any incidents of bullying, liaising with staff and ensure this is monitored.

Class Teachers

A Class Teacher is best placed to talk to a child who is displaying any symptoms of being bullied or about whom they have concerns. They should first report their concerns to the Headteacher and discuss the best course of action. The conversation with the child should take place in a familiar place, which could be the classroom, but with no other children present and without the likelihood of interruption. However, the teacher should take sensible steps to protect themselves from allegations (*see Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*).

Parents

Parents may be the first to notice symptoms that their child is being bullied and may report their concerns to the Class teacher or Headteacher. Parents are made aware that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied, including support for the child. Parents should feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and we expect parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour at home. However, great care should be taken that the term 'bullying' is not used out of context or incorrectly. Children can find life in a large community quite hard and do not always behave as we may wish. There is a wide band of 'naughty' behaviour that is not bullying. It is bullying if the intention is to hurt another, either physically or emotionally on repeated occasions.

Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and it is important that all concerns about bullying are reported to her immediately. The Headteacher works closely with the Deputy Head who may assist the Headteacher in the investigation of any incident. Once a case of bullying has been reported, the Headteacher will discuss the matter with the victim's Class teacher and decide on the course of action in order to ascertain the facts. The Class teacher may ask the child to talk to the Headteacher and will if possible be present during the talk.

The Headteacher or Class teacher may need to interview other children, including the alleged perpetrator. It may be that asking all children to write down their account of an incident is helpful in getting a clear picture of an incident, and frees the children from the fear of 'telling'.

Once the facts are clear, the Headteacher will discuss the incident with the parents of all children concerned. Should it emerge that this is a case of bullying then the Headteacher will see the perpetrator's parents in person and will discuss with them the school's response. The child will also be asked to join the discussion and will be informed of the Headteacher's decision. The Headteacher will also discuss the bullying incident with the victim's parents and later with the victim present. The Headteacher, with the Deputy Head and the Class teacher will put in place a programme of support for the victim.

Ideally, the victim and the perpetrator will meet in the presence of the Headteacher and will share their feelings and shake hands after an apology. For minor incidents, the school tries to avoid the label of 'bully' and will give the child who is at fault guidance and support to help them modify their behaviour.

The incident will always be recorded on the Behaviour Log, and if the incident has been deemed 'bullying' then it must be recorded on a Serious Behaviour Form as such with a record of the sanctions imposed. Records are kept in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified.

If there is reasonable cause to believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm, the school Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy should be implemented. If there is a disclosure about pupil on pupil abuse, all children involved whether perpetrator or victim are treated as being 'at risk'. An external agency such as Lincolnshire Children Services, Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or Police may be contacted.

After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the matter will be discussed at a Staff Meeting and any necessary measures put in place to prevent any repetition.

Sanctions (see Behaviour Policy)

Disciplinary sanctions will be imposed that reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect. Should a repetition occur, the nature of the sanction will escalate. For minor incidents, a letter of apology or the return of property may be sufficient, but other sanctions such as time off the playground may be appropriate. However, a serious or persistent case of bullying may result in a fixed term or permanent exclusion (see the Exclusion Policy). Where incidents of bullying arise in relation to protected characteristics, sanctions will be applied as per the Equality and Diversity Policy. All incidents of this nature will be recorded and reported to the Governing Body.

Prevention

Bullying is wrong and can cause serious psychological damage to individual or groups of children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. We actively celebrate the importance of being kind to each other. Our Year 6 Kindness Ambassadors give weekly kindness certificates to Infant and Junior children, they meet regularly with the Headteacher to discuss ideas for promoting the message that if we are kind to each other we should not have bullying in school. The awarding of House Points, Star of the Day and Stars of The Week are not only for academic success but can be seen as small acts of kindness, rewarded for a general helpful attitude, fundraising efforts or for generosity of time for example. In this way, the importance of personal and moral values is celebrated.

Training

Training raises the awareness of staff, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and available sources of support are understood. The school invests in specialist training to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) pupils. Staff also lead by example, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance.

Discussions at Staff Meetings includes places where bullying is most likely and the need for staff vigilance. In the event that a **potential** bullying incident is observed then the member of staff must not let it go unnoticed. A gentle reprimand, the separation of a group, the calming down of horseplay or sending for the Headteacher can prevent situations escalating, and also give the children a message about the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

The message to staff is: If in doubt – act!

Pupils

All pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders. Responsibility is given to children such as Infant Help in Year 6 or returning young children from the dining hall, which encourages children to be responsible and show a kind and caring attitude to others.

The Classroom

Children need to know the difference between right and wrong, although very young children will often not distinguish between the contexts in which words such as 'right' and 'wrong' are used, e.g. sometimes the word 'wrong' will refer only to socially unacceptable behaviour, like poking your tongue out; whilst at other times a moral absolute is involved, like bullying. Nevertheless, children need to be introduced from an early age to concepts of right and wrong, so that moral behaviour becomes an instinctive habit.

An atmosphere of trust, caring and respect in the classroom is essential. This is augmented by the use of educational elements such as personal, social, health and economic education, (PSHEE) and with discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. As well as assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events and current affairs to stimulate discussion. We take part in Anti bullying week and children in Year 6 have led assemblies and put up posters on bullying. (See Appendix 1).

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber bullying includes bullying by electronic means (social websites, mobile telephones, text messages, email, photographs etc.) and is equally unacceptable. Examples of Cyber-Bullying include:

- sending threatening or abusive text messages
- creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- 'trolling' - the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- encouraging young people to self-harm
- creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- sending explicit messages, also known as "Sexting"
- pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations.

At Ayscoughfee Hall School, we do not allow pupils access to their own email accounts and mobile phones are not permitted to be brought into school. Social networking sites are similarly not allowed in school. Pupils are given strict guidance within PSHEE and Computing lessons about the use of the internet, and are made aware that any inappropriate use within school or off-site may well be treated as a serious offence and will incur the standard school sanctions. It may even be treated as illegal and police may be informed of certain types of behaviour. Staff should report any instances of inappropriate internet use to the Headteacher, and pupils are reminded that if they receive unpleasant text messages or become involved in unkind comments on social network sites, they should never delete the message but save it and then show it to a responsible adult.

Bullying Linked to Disability

At Ayscoughfee Hall School, we are aware that a child with a disability, be it physical or mental, may be subject to bullying from other pupils. These children will be continually monitored to ensure that they are not the subject of ridicule or bullying in any way. By nature of their disability, e.g. autism, some children with a disability may be seen to provoke other children into an act of aggression or verbal abuse. However, this is still not acceptable and to prevent this, teachers and teaching assistants must impress on all pupils, the need to be kind and thoughtful to everyone.

Bullying Linked to Ethnicity or Faith

There is no place for either of these in our school culture, which embraces different ethnicities and faiths. Each family is welcomed into the school community and is valued for their contribution to our happy and stable environment. As our youngest children may be intrigued by differences in the physical appearance or customs between themselves and others, this is covered in our PSHEE programme.

The Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and also covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Schools are now required to comply with the Equality Duty.

Communication

The school's policies on behaviour and bullying are communicated to parents, and are available on the School's Website. Parents are therefore aware of the school's attitude to bullying and feel confident in coming to report any concerns that they may have.

The Headteacher with the Senior Management Team will review this policy every year; with reference to any incidents of bullying, how they were dealt with and the success of the school's policy on prevention of bullying.

This policy is available to current and prospective parents upon request in the School Office and on the School Website. It should be read in conjunction with other related School Policies:

Acceptable Use of IT Policy

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Behaviour and Parental Complaints Policy

Equality and Diversity Policy

Exclusion Policy

Any reference to the word 'School' implicitly includes all its associated clubs/activities including Kids Club. This policy also applies to EYFS

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WE DON'T ACCEPT BULLIES AT AYSCOUGHTEE HALL SCHOOL

Ayscoughfee Hall School is not prepared to accept pupils who are unkind in what they say or do.

You have the right to lead your life without being upset by bullies.

Bullies are people who keep worrying you by pushing, punching or teasing you, either inside or outside School.

Bullying is any form of unkind actions or words.

Cyberbullies use text messages, nasty web sites and emails.

Pupils must help each other by telling if they know of others being bullied or cyberbullied.

If you are worried about bullying and are not sure what to do:

Tell a teacher or teaching assistant
or tell your parents
or tell the Headteacher

TELL SOMEONE!

Telling about bullies is not 'telling tales'.

We will find time to listen to your problem, or your friend's problem, and can help you.