



Overthorpe C of E Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Overthorpe C of E Academy: Anti-Bullying Policy

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- to define bullying
- to set out a strategy to discourage and prevent bullying
- to enable bullying to be recognised when it does occur
- to allow bullying to be dealt with effectively

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community are expected to be vigilant for signs of bullying, to report bullying and to respond to bullying in accordance with this policy.

Policy

At Overthorpe C of E we recognise that bullying can occur, but we make it clear that bullying is always unacceptable. We take bullying seriously and everyone should be assured that they will be fully supported when bullying is reported.

Where bullying does happen, we aim to teach bullies how to act differently and to develop empathy, conscience and self-control. As a Church school it is our duty to protect those who are vulnerable, and to enable all pupils to understand the impact of their actions and to develop compassion and empathy for others.

Definition of bullying

Bullying may be defined as 'A pattern of repeated negative behaviour directed from an individual or group towards another individual or group where there is an imbalance of power.' If two pupils of equal power or strength have an occasional fight or argument, this is not bullying. Bullying behaviour always has three components:

1. Cruel, negative actions
2. Repeated aggression
3. Power imbalance

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, spreading rumours, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, teasing, graffiti, ridiculing, vicious comments.
- Cyber - all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, e.g. camera & video/ webcam facilities.
- Sexual - sexual abuse, unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments.



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It can be in relation to:

- Race
- Gender / gender identity
- Sexuality
- Disability
- Faith
- Physical differences- spectacles, hair colour, height or weight

Bullying may also occur for no apparent reason other than for the bully to experience a feeling of power.

Why do we tackle bullying?

We tackle bullying as an issue because we aim to create a safe and secure environment where all pupils feel a sense of belonging and well-being.

Persistent bullying can result in:

- depression
- low self-esteem
- shyness
- poor academic achievement
- isolation
- threatened or attempted suicide

Unchecked bullying also damages the bully, who learns that he or she can get away with violence, aggression and threats.

Recognising bullying

Early recognition is the key to successfully preventing and dealing with a bullying situation. A child may not feel able to report bullying as bullies intimidate their targets into staying silent. However, a child may indicate by signs or changes in behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged



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- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- 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 & jumpy when a cyber-message is received

Vulnerable Pupils

The school takes a pro-active approach to identifying vulnerable pupils as this can prevent bullying before it starts. This is no way condones the bullying behaviour as acceptable; everyone has a right not to be bullied, harassed, assaulted or abused. People who are targeted by bullies often have integrity, are respectful, non-violent people who will go to great lengths to resolve conflict by dialogue, unaware that this does not work with bullies. Recognising pupils who may exhibit bullying characteristics is also important. Bullies are generally emotionally immature and compensate for this weakness with aggression. They may have no thought for consequences but also be manipulative and able to provide many excuses and justification for their behaviour.

Bullies are often surrounded by other children, not through popularity but through fear. The bully is rarely able to sustain a friendship (which is based on trust, dependability, loyalty and mutual respect) but instead form a gang or clique as part of their strategy for power and control. Some children side with the bully because they gain sufficient bravado to act like bullies themselves but most children side with the bully for fear of otherwise becoming a target. Those children who do not join the gang or clique are then targeted by the bullies who gain power from numbers.

As a Church School we are proactive in promoting understanding, respect and enjoying of the differences of all people, cultures, beliefs and different ways of life. We embed the philosophy of do unto others as you would have done to unto you. We also actively encourage pupils to support others when they have a need.

Prevention

The school employs many strategies to prevent bullying occurring:

- School staff proactively monitor issues between pupils which might provoke conflict
- All classes explore Christian values and differences and promote/celebrate it is ok to be and think differently from others



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- Collective worship and exploration of Christian values and teachings from the bible, promote helping others being compassionate and speaking out when things are wrong.
- Bullying is discussed throughout the school including teaching the language of bullying (ringleaders, colluders, bystanders)
- The behaviour policy promotes and rewards/ reinforces positive behaviour and restorative practices
- Assertiveness teaching - everyone has the right not to be bullied
- The golden rule is a constant reference point in school "Treat others the way you would like to be treated"

Reporting Bullying

Bullying can only be dealt with effectively if the school knows that it is happening. We encourage everyone to report any form of bullying or potential bullying and we have strategies to help this to happen:

- Poster reminders around school
- Ethos that ensures availability of all staff to listen
- Pupils are encouraged to speak to an adult if they see bullying behaviour
- CPOMS logs completed by teachers record minor events that can built a picture over time
- Teachers are encouraged to share small concerns with SLT so a big picture is not missed

Responding to Bullying

We expect everyone in the school community to know how to respond when they witness bullying. It is everyone's responsibility to report bullying when it occurs. The school ensures that pupils are empowered to stop bullying and teaches bystanders how to safely intercede to prevent a bullying situation occurring.

We teach that bullying should never be ignored. Once it is reported the school takes a stepped approach, based on the degree of intent and frequency that mirrors the series of consequences in the school behaviour policy. The class teacher or lunchtime supervisors provide the initial response to complaints of bullying. They will use a 'no blame' approach although this does not equate to 'no accountability' and the bully is always held fully responsible for his or her actions. Care is taken to ensure that the bully cannot manipulate the situation and attempt to reflect accountability back onto the accuser and to plausibly portray the target as the guilty party. The perpetrator is given an opportunity to resolve the situation and to acknowledge that their behaviour is unacceptable;

- Possible reasons for the bullying are investigated (does the bully have poor anger management, lack of social skills, lack empathy or want power?) This may result in the development of an SEMH Plan for that child;
- A review is held one week later with regular contact with the target in between;
- The incident is logged;
- Headteacher and class teacher informed immediately and whole staff team are informed as appropriate;



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- If there is no resolution after one week the issue is escalated to the head teacher.
- The head teacher will be aware of the situation and discuss the issue with the target and perpetrator separately.
- The incident is logged on CPOMS.
- Possible involvement of parents made clear to perpetrator at this point.
- Review held in one week after initial meeting, with regular contact with victim in between.
- The parents would be invited to discuss the bullying behaviour and possible consequences in line with the school behaviour policy with the Head teacher.

Every incident of bullying is different and some may require a different response to that detailed above. The school will always give the bully a chance to change their behaviour. It is often difficult to confirm that bullying is taking place and that the incident is not a disagreement between two people of equal power. It is essential that the repeated nature of the behaviour is also confirmed. This requires full investigation at stage 1 and hence it may be necessary for this stage to last longer.

Resolution

For resolution of a bullying issue:

- The bully/bullies will acknowledge that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- The bully/bullies will apologise to their target(s)
- The bully/bullies will receive a consequence in line with the Behaviour Policy
- Staff will continue to monitor the situation

The bully/bullies will receive help to change behaviour, including the use of SEMH(s) if necessary.

Bullying Incident Records

Bullying Incident Records will include details of:

- Nature of incident (s) – outline of what happened, where, when, type
- Names of those involved – those bullying, those being bullied and bystanders
- Analysis of seriousness – severity of impact, frequency, duration, intent, imbalance of power, empathy (remorse)
- Action (s) taken
- Monitoring - feedback from those involved including parents