

Policy for responding to and preventing incidents of bullying



"Love to Learn; Learn to Love"

May 2015

Introduction

A child's definition of bullying,

'People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which is difficult to stop.'

An adult's definition of bullying,

'Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:

Physical eg. hitting, kicking, stealing

Verbal eg. name calling, racist, religious and homophobic remarks

Indirect eg. spreading rumours, excluding others from social groups, cyberbullying.'

In all schools there will be incidents of bullying. During their school life many children will at some point be bullied, bully others or will witness bullying.

We at St. Paul's School are committed to ensuring that every child is educated in a safe, happy and caring environment. We believe that everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Bullying is likely to adversely affect a child's sense of well being as well as the learning environment. As a consequence a child's educational progress and achievement can suffer, in some cases significantly, if bullying is not addressed.

We take bullying very seriously. Our school Aims, our Values Statement, the Discipline Policy, The Equal Opportunities Policy, the Code of Conduct, the Home School Agreement and the School Rules all support the need for good behaviour, brought about through working in partnership with parents. They also place much emphasis upon the caring, Christian ethos that we work so hard to maintain.

All school staff must be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly against it in accordance with school policy. Pupils who are being bullied may show change in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

A more recent form of bullying that staff and parents need to be aware of is cyber bullying. This is unlikely to take place within our school setting but may have a close link with relationships in school. Our staff are trained in e safety awareness and information is reported to parents on how they may assist in preventing their child being a victim.

Aims

In establishing an Anti-Bullying policy we aim:

- To reduce and, where possible, eradicate incidents of bullying in school.

- To further strengthen home/school links through a shared approach to responding to and preventing bullying.

- To ensure that all pupils, staff, parents and governors have a clear understanding of what bullying is and are aware of procedures to follow, in order to fulfil their responsibilities.

- To provide children with strategies and to teach them skills that may be helpful when responding to and challenging bullying behaviour.

This policy has been written in consultation with staff, parents and governors and is in line with the Hertfordshire resource on anti-bullying policy and practice (November 2008). The children's views have been sought, considered at length and, where possible, implemented.

Systems and Procedures

School takes a firm stance. This policy is available to parents on request. Parents are informed about the school's anti bullying initiatives including information on e safety.

To do nothing could be seen to condone, therefore if we are made aware of bullying we are committed to investigating and taking appropriate action. Staff cannot promise to take **no** action once information has been passed to them either by children or parents.

Classroom assistants and other members of staff who become aware of bullying inform the class teacher or the headteacher who will then record the incident and date it. This is to ensure they are true bullying incidents and not one off behaviour issues.

Children are encouraged to speak out if they are being bullied or if they witness bullying. Victims of bullying often need reassurance that intervention by staff will not worsen the problem.

Opportunities for teaching children about the effects of bullying and strategies for dealing with bullies are predominately built into assemblies and PSHCE sessions, which include Circle Times. These sessions can also help to build confidence and self-esteem. Staff have bubble time and feeling flowers as strategies for children to be able to speak with them without their friends being present. We have an anti bullying week each year during which we have special assemblies and PSE sessions to look at bullying. Our values programme includes dealing with bullying and respect for others and we promote developing emotional literacy throughout the school.

Lunchtime supervisors are made aware that bullying often takes place during the lunch hour when there is less supervision than in lesson time. Incidents causing concern are written down and passed on to the class teacher immediately after the mid-day break. Class teachers are informed so that further action may be taken in line with the agreed playtime behaviour procedures.

Children are regularly praised and rewarded for positive behaviour and their efforts are publicly celebrated. As part of our values programme we promote positive behaviour each week and choose "Stars of the Week" from those children who demonstrate those behaviours.

When there have been incidents of alleged or apparent bullying, the following sanctions shall apply;

- **Informal Discussion.** Staff act quickly to establish facts and to speak to all concerned, if possible on the same day. This informal discussion will involve the class teacher, the headteacher or both. The discussion will aim to explore the possible causes and consequences of the action as well as the feelings of those involved. A flexible approach is essential as each situation will be different. Suggestions for improving the situation are made.

- **Warning and possible consequences.** Subsequently, the child will be given a warning by the headteacher or class teacher informing them that their behaviour is unacceptable. Depending whether the behaviour was judged 'little' 'medium' or 'big trouble', children will lose time on the playground and will spend this time with a senior member of staff discussing their behaviour and ways to improve it.
- **Parental Involvement.** The headteacher informs parents about the incident/s and their child's behaviour and seeks their support.
- **Meeting with parents.** An appointment is made for parents to meet the headteacher and class teacher at school to discuss strategies for immediate behaviour improvement.
- **Exclusion.** In the most serious of cases procedures for partial removal and fixed term exclusion will be considered and, if necessary, implemented.

Monitoring and Recording

The teaching staff and the headteacher record significant bullying incidents. Within the classrooms, these records are kept in a purple 'Incident Book' . Details of the incidents are kept along with dates and the names of those involved in both the incidents and the investigation. These books will move on with the class each year so the new teacher will be aware of any recurring incidents to look out for.

Children are periodically asked to comment upon bullying in the school in an attempt to assess any improvement or deterioration. The Playground Patrol and School Council have an important part to play in this process.

Dedicated curriculum sessions play an important part in the monitoring process.

Improving Playtimes

The children are given opportunities to share their views about improving playtimes. As a school we work hard to ensure that as far as possible playtimes are happy and incident free and we do this in the following ways:

The Friendship Stop is an option for children who have nothing to do and no one to play with at playtimes. By waiting there, they will be cared for by another child who will find them something to do.

Lunchtime supervisors are encouraged to teach the children how to use equipment. They might also teach them new games.

A variety of large apparatus is used in rotation by every class.

Markings on the playground are maintained to encourage games. (Autumn 2009 the playground was extended to give the children more room and new markings drawn out to define different types of play areas.)

A 'Quiet Area' of picnic benches, wooden seating areas and tables provide for alternative activities.

Football is permitted on a rotation basis making playtimes fairer and safer for everyone.

The grounds and the playground furniture are continually being developed in order to enhance the playtime environment.

Rules appropriate to different situations are prominently displayed around the school, indoors and outdoors, to remind the children what is and is not acceptable behaviour.

Playground Patrol and Pupil Support *Developing co-operative behaviour.*

Both Year 5 and 6 have training at the beginning of each year to help them support positive relationships in the playground.

Volunteers from Year 6 undertake to be members of the Patrol. They are recognisable by their distinctive purple bibs. Their duties are as follows;

- To monitor the Friendship Stop and to look after children who wait there.
- To look out for children who are having difficulty or who are unhappy at playtime and to help them.
- To collect and tidy playtime equipment.
- To inform lunchtime supervisors about incidents which they have not seen.
- To pass on helpful information and advice to subsequent patrol members.

Peer Mediation is another support method led by Year 6. The children are trained to help solve minor problems on the playground eg children falling out. They help children to solve their own problems without telling them what to do. Coupled with this the Year 6 children are also part of 'Playground Patrol'.

Year 5 are 'Equipment Leaders' and are responsible for bringing out and collecting equipment in again at lunch times. Along with Year 6, they are trained to play games with other children and ensure a policy of inclusion.

The School Council :

The Council is made up of representatives from each class who bring the views of others to meetings. They will discuss a range of issues with staff and these will be prioritised and addressed as appropriate. All staff and pupils are informed of decisions and outcomes.

We feel that the Council is a good vehicle through which to raise and discuss pupils' hopes, opinions, expectations or concerns.

This policy will be reviewed every two years. Any changes made will be reflected in documents that refer to the policy.

Policy Reviewed: May 2015

Next review date: May 2017

Appendix

A racist incident is

"any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person."
'If the child feels the incident is racist, it is'.

Cyberbullying can be defined as

"the use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else."

Homophobic Bullying

'Homophobic language and abuse can start in the primary school where pupils may call each other "gay" or "lesbian" without really understanding what it means. If such usage is not challenged at this stage it can appear acceptable, making it more difficult to address in secondary school. Children may also experience verbal

bullying because they have a gay relative.' (p31, Training the trainers - a resource on anti-bullying policy and practice, 2008)