

SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING

Introduction and Definition

Bullying is part of a complex process of social interaction which is rarely straightforward. For this policy to be effective there needs to be a clear definition:

Most consider it to be: deliberately hurtful (including aggression), repeated often over a period of time and difficult for victims to defend themselves against [it]. (Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence, DFEE 12/00)

A 'bully' is not always one person, it could be a group or even an 'institution', but it has to be recognised that this kind of behaviour is unacceptable, and will not be tolerated at Hawkes Farm. Every member of the school community has a duty to help prevent bullying, to be vigilant where incidents arise and to act swiftly in protecting the victim and dealing with the bully. Bullying is less likely to occur where there is a positive ethos in which each individual is helped towards building a positive self-image, realising the value of their talents and the important contribution they play in the life of the school community. However, direct teaching and personal example of the values of trust, mutual respect, care and consideration for others need to be addressed frequently.

Whilst dealing with and being aware of bullying incidents, there needs to be a sensitivity towards the needs of the bully(ies) and the victim(s).

Possible acts of bullying which may occur in Primary Schools are:

Physically hurting people over a long period of time.
Hurting people's feelings on purpose.
Using threatening behaviour towards others.
Picking on people because they are different.

Aims

- ❑ To continue to promote a positive ethos and caring attitude to the needs of staff and pupils.
- ❑ To inform all those concerned within the school about the implementation and procedures of the policy document.
- ❑ To praise and build on good behaviour.
- ❑ To ensure that incidents of bullying are recorded, in the class Behaviour Journal, with a note of who was concerned, what the incident was and what action was taken. This is important if further incidents arise. Serious bullying needs to be recorded in the child's PSE notes and the Behaviour Journal needs to be passed onto the child's next teacher.
- ❑ To establish confidence amongst children and their parents, our actions need to be prompt, fair and in line with our policy.
- ❑ To continue establishing class rules.
- ❑ To apply a staged approach to tackling bullying which may involve:
 - Midday Supervisors
 - Class Teacher
 - Senior Management
 - The Head
 - Parents

Strategies

All children (and adults) want bullying to stop but in seeking help they are often afraid of making the situation worse. The following steps outline how to deal with incidents of bullying.

Stage 1

Talking to the victim and the bully and monitoring the bully's behaviour for a week is sometimes enough to stop the child using the unacceptable behaviour. The behaviour needs to be reviewed at the end of the week.

Stage 2

- a) Talk to the victim about his/her feelings to find out who was involved. Record the incident in the Incident Book.
- b) Meet with the victim and bully/bullies and discuss the reported incident. Allow children to impose their own sanctions with suggestions from the teacher where appropriate. Arrange a meeting for a week later to discuss whether these sanctions are working.
- c) If bullying continues, use the following sanctions: miss playtimes, write lines, write letters of apology or set up a behaviour chart. Ensure these sanctions are monitored carefully. Either send the child to the Team Leader or inform them of the incident.
- d) Further incidents must be reported to the Head, who will talk to the child or children as well as inviting the parents to become involved. They will then agree on the certain strategies which are to be applied, such as the Incident Book being completed regularly by the class teacher, pupil contract between school and home. These should be monitored after two weeks and again before the end of the half term. If necessary, some children (bully or victim) may require additional professional support from outside the school and this is available through such agencies as the Behaviour Support Services.

There may be times when this staged approach may be leap-frogged, e.g. by direct approach from a parent to the teacher or the Head. In each case it will be for the member of staff concerned to carry things forward, but at the same time it will be essential to investigate why the matter was not dealt with at an earlier stage, e.g. was the victim too frightened to tell anyone and if so, how can this be addressed.

Implementation/ Maintenance

For the policy to be implemented, consideration needs to be given to the ways in which it can be meaningfully communicated to all relevant parties. Care should be taken to ensure that pupils understand the policy and parents have access to the procedures outlined above. The policy will be sent to parents at each review, so they have a chance to refresh their understanding of the procedures. The bullying behaviours and a Charter for Action will be displayed in the school to enable the children to see what will be done about bullying. There will be access to the bullying policy on the school website as well, and teachers must ensure that once a term they address the subject with their classes.

All Incident Books must be passed on to the child's next teacher so that previous incidences of bullying can be referred to.

Monitoring/Review

For the policy to translate into effective practice, regular reviews by the PSHE co-ordinator will be necessary. However, there must be an opportunity for all involved to express an opinion. The School Council will take a proactive role in this discussion.

To help with the review, the following need to be done:

- ❑ A record will be kept of all incidents and where possible the rate of success, so that progress can be measured. It must be noted that initially there may be an increase in the amount of reported incidents when the policy is first taken on. However this will hopefully reduce in time.
- ❑ Where action has been unsuccessful an analysis of contributory factors should be undertaken and recorded.
- ❑ There should be regular meetings of the key people involved in the process so that information can be shared and the opportunity is given to learn from each others' experiences during the year.

The results of any review should form part of an overall evaluative process which will ensure that the policy is kept on a variety of agendas during each year. This should help to make the policy a living part of the work of Hawkes Farm School.

Many issues related to this policy link with points that appear in other policy documents, e.g. the 'Policy for Personal, Social, Spiritual, Moral and Cultural Education', and 'The Procedures for Playtimes and Lunchtimes' etc.

March, 2005
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