



## **Anti-Bullying Policy Whitehall Infant School**

At Whitehall Infant School we strive to promote the health and wellbeing of our whole school community, supported by National Healthy Schools Policies. As a school we know we have a responsibility to keep children safe in line with Every Child Matters agenda.

In this school we aim to tackle bullying by, in the first instance, preventative measures. Through this policy we aim to tackle any reports or observations of bullying consistently, fairly and effectively.

We believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied or intimidated.

**Bullying, either physical or verbal, is not tolerated in school.**

### **Introduction**

We believe bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, as we recognise that more passive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure.

**Bullying is NOT an inevitable part of school life or growing up.**

It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/ threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence can be found in all aspects of our society. The pupils need to know that no one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this kind of behaviour. They need to be able to recognise and label these types of behaviours and know the channels of communication available to them. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at school.

## What is bullying?

In this school we believe that bullying is any type of unkind behaviour and can include physical harm, isolation and damage to property, both school and personal. We do not tolerate or allow unkind or cruel behaviour.

We do recognise that not all unkind behaviour is bullying and that in certain circumstances there are special considerations. The key characteristics that turn unkindness into bullying are:

- that it is repeated and goes on over time;
- that it is deliberate and not accidental;
- that it involves the person doing the bullying having some sort of power over the person experiencing the bullying.

We believe that most children both use and experience bullying behaviour at one time or another, and that all children can change their behaviour, with appropriate behaviour support.

## Identifying Bullies

One way of identifying bullies is through observing the way they act when they have caused emotional or physical pain. At this age the common reaction is to admit their actions immediately or after a very short period of time, then try to make up for it. Usually people feel genuine remorse and will apologise. However, bullies have difficulty in accepting that they have done something wrong. They struggle with the cause and affect aspect of the incident. They suppress their natural guilt, and because they often do not feel remorse, have no hesitation in repeating the same hurtful action.

All bullying is damaging to those who experience it and to those who perpetrate it. Recent studies suggest that the consequences of bullying can last for many years and in extreme cases undermine a person's confidence for life.

At Whitehall Infant School we find behaviour of this sort unacceptable and will do our best to prevent it through ensuring that everyone in school is well aware of how dangerous and damaging it is. We will reward caring and considerate behaviour, and support victims of bullying by taking firm action against those who are responsible for bullying in line with our Behaviour Steps.

## Signs of Bullying

Children may:

- Be frightened of walking to or from school.
- Be unwilling to go to school.

- Change their attitude to work in class.
- Come home regularly with books or clothes damaged.
- Become withdrawn, start stammering.
- Become distressed, stop eating.
- Cry themselves to sleep.
- Have nightmares.
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts.
- Have their possessions go missing.
- Refuse to say what is wrong.
- Constantly complain of headaches or appear anxious.
- Give improbable excuses to explain any of the above.

### **Procedure for Investigating Alleged Incidents of Bullying**

Pupils should always be taught how to tell someone, preferably a trusted adult, if they are being bullied.

- Bullying will be taken seriously.
- Bullying will be investigated and appropriate action taken as determined by the Behaviour Steps.

#### *Investigation*

1. Reports of bullying will be investigated by teachers or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
2. All staff, but more especially the SMSAs, will be informed so that they are aware and can keep watch at lunchtimes.
3. SIMs Behaviour management programme will be monitored for repeated incidents at playtimes and lunchtimes.
4. Staff working in the classroom will monitor any suspected and confirmed situations.
5. Should more than one person be involved, each child will be interviewed individually and then the group will meet with the teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
6. Instances of bullying will be recorded in SIMs Behaviour management programme.
7. If it is concluded that a child has engaged in bullying behaviour it will be made clear to them that this is breaking the Golden Rules and action will be taken in line with our Behaviour Steps. This will include letters home to the parents/carers of those involved.
8. The teacher or member of the Senior Leadership Team will feedback to the parents/carers of the victim.

## **Intervention**

- Clear expectations will be set that bullying will never be ignored.
- The child who has been bullying will require coaching and may receive a behaviour plan addressing areas of difficulty.
- The victim should be reassured and offered support.
- Sanctions will be applied in line with the school Behaviour Steps.

## **The Role of Parents and Carers**

Parents/carers of victims and those of bullies will be informed so they will be in a position to help and support their children.

Parents/carers should always encourage their child to report any incident immediately to a member of staff or act as their advocate.

What can parents/carers do to help the bullied?

- Take a sensible approach.
- Listen and investigate. Try to find out the full story from their child.
- The child should be told that he/she is undoubtedly not the only victim and that there is nothing wrong with him/her.
- Every opportunity should be taken to enhance their self-esteem.
- Bullied children should not be encouraged to hit back.
- The parent should encourage their child to report the incident immediately.
- Children must be encouraged to tell their parents/carers.
- The child or parent must tell the class teacher.

Teachers will work to educate children on the difference between "telling tales" and telling on bullies. Children, especially the younger ones, do not always understand this. If their children see bullying, the parents/carers should encourage them to tell. By telling they are helping the victim and the bully.

## **What parents/carers can do to help the bully?**

While it is distressing for most parents/carers to discover that their child is the victim of bullying, it can be equally upsetting for the parents/carers to learn that their child has been involved in bullying.

- Reasons for the bullying should be investigated.
- Communication should take place between parents/carers, teachers and the bully.
- A monitoring procedure should be set up to ensure that the bullying incidents have stopped and to keep everyone informed.
- The bully will learn that he/she need no longer to be a bully.

## Prevention

We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Our children are still at the stage of learning to manage their responses to new people and experiences, and will notice and comment on things that are 'different'. This should not be discouraged. But we teach our children that the differences are part of what makes the world so exciting and interesting, not a reason to treat some people unfairly.

One way of doing this, is to encourage our children to develop good interpersonal skills through the SEAL programme. This includes teaching them to show respect for others feelings and develop good emotional literacy.

However we also need to be clear how we will deal with instances of bullying, if and when they occur. One week a year in the SEAL programme is set aside to raise children's awareness of what bullying is, and how they should respond if it happens to them. (Anti-Bullying Week). This is not the only opportunity the children have of developing their understanding as the anti-bullying message is reinforced regularly through the PSHE schemes of work.

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