

## Langtree Community School

### Anti-Bullying Policy

At Langtree School we believe that all pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. We promote good behaviour. We recognise the effects that bullying can have on a child's life and it is made clear that it is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is the responsibility of every member of the school community to present positive role models and to work together to make it clear that no form of anti-social behaviour will be condoned by anyone. From the day a child joins our school he/she is an important member of our small school community and we encourage older children to look out for them without stifling their independence.

At Langtree School, at all times we avoid permanently labelling pupils as either victims or bullies. It is important that pupils who have been the targets of bullying behaviours are able to see that this experience will end and that it is not the result of something about themselves that has attracted or deserved such treatment by others. Similarly children who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be expected to resolve the matter and change their behaviour. It should be remembered that there is no typical "bully". Many children may use bullying behaviours from time to time.

#### What is Bullying?

Bullying can be described as sustained deliberate acts done with the deliberate intention of hurting another child, either physically or emotionally. Not all acts of unkindness or physical hurt are bullying. These will be dealt with according to our Behaviour policy.

The following 3 dimensions collectively help us to define bullying behaviour.

#### 1. Bullying is intentionally hurtful

It is the deliberate, unjustifiable and unprovoked use of aggressive behaviour. It includes actions that cause physical, emotional or mental hurt to the victim and actions that violate another person's freedom and rights.

#### 2. Bullying is a repeated experience

Being bullied is the experience of persistent or repeated unacceptable behaviour. However, occasionally there can be single incidents which constitute bullying because of the fear and intimidation that projects beyond that initial incident.

#### 3. Bullying also involves an inequality of power.

The person/s being bullied finds it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour, or those involved in the bullying behaviour have power over the victim. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time, but more common examples include that they are bigger/stronger/older, have more friends, are more established in the school or care less about the consequences of their actions. Bullying behaviour can involve individuals or groups.

#### Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

- Cyber All areas of internet ,such as email & internet chat room misuse  
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls  
Misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities

## Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child suddenly and unexpectedly:

- 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
- 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
- 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

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility.

## What Can Children Do If They Are Being Bullied?

Each term or when incidents occur, class teachers will discuss bullying and reinforce the following strategies:

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout "No!". Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back may make things worse.
- Find an adult who you trust will take you seriously. They will find a way to deal with bullies which will not make things worse for you.

## What Can Children Do If They Know Someone Is Being Bullied?

- Take action! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult immediately. Teachers will deal with the bully without getting you into trouble.

c) Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

### **School Strategies for Dealing With Bullying**

The first point of contact for parents is likely to be the secretary or a class teacher. It is important that all staff know the school policy and who to advise parents to speak to. Good practice includes:

- recognising that the parent may be angry and upset
- keeping an open mind - bullying can be difficult to detect, so a lack of staff awareness does not mean no bullying occurs
- taking a calm, unemotional, problem solving approach, making clear that the school does care and that something will be done
- explaining the school policy, making sure procedures are followed
- Recognising that bullies are often victims too – that is why they bully.

In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way.

### **If bullying is suspected:**

a) We will talk to the suspected victim, and any witnesses. to determine;

- Who was involved,
- In what way the victim suffered,
- Was the incident spontaneous or premeditated,
- When and where did the incident take place,
- If there was any background to the incident,
- Why those involved consider the incident to be bullying, and
- What the victim wishes the outcome to be.

b) We will identify the bully and talk about what has happened, to discover why they became involved, making it clear that bullying is not tolerated at our school.

c) If the bully owns up then they may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place which may include

- removal from the group ( in class)
- withdrawal of break or lunchtime privileges
- withholding participation in a school trip or sports event that is not an essential part of the curriculum
- In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered.

d) Incidents of bullying will be recorded as such in the School Incident Log and, in the case of serious incidents, all parents whose children are directly involved will be notified

e) If the suspected bully does not own up, we will investigate further. If it is clear that they are lying, we will continue with the procedure as outlined above.

f) When incidents have been dealt with, all parties should be supported and enabled to move on positively. It is our aim that in the resolution of incidents, pupils should wherever possible be reconciled.

g) We will continue monitoring the situation to ensure no repetition. The follow-up findings will be recorded in the monitoring section of the school Incident Log.

In the first instance, incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to and will be dealt with by the class teacher. (The head teacher will be kept informed of any incidents dealt with by the class teacher so that she holds the overview across the school.) Follow up and ongoing monitoring will

be conducted by the class teacher whilst keeping the head teacher informed at all times, even if it is felt that the matter has been resolved. If the behaviour dealt with by class teachers continues it will be referred to the head teacher.

### **Prevention**

All staff will be proactive in using preventative measures. These include:

- Personal, Social and Health Education programmes
- Circle time and Family Groups
- Out of class supervision during eg break and lunch times
- Social Skills groups (Circle of Friends)
- Themed assemblies
- Counselling
- Support from named adult or student
- Enlisting support from parents
- Worry box

### **Monitoring**

Our annual pupil questionnaire provides valuable information on:

- how frequently pupils have been bullied
- in what ways it has happened
- how often they have bullied others
- whom they tell
- what action was taken and by whom
- where bullying takes place

### **Role of Parents**

Parents have an important part to play in our Anti-Bullying policy. Parental support is often a key to success or failure in anti-bullying initiatives. Though not always apparent, parental approval is important to children and because of this parental response to reports of bullying can be pivotal to the successful resolution of any problems. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school. The parents of a victim are likely to have one main concern: that the bullying stops – but some may also want the perpetrators punished.

We ask that parents:

- a) Look out for unusual behaviour in your children – see Signs and Symptoms above.
- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, etc.
- c) Inform your child's teacher immediately if you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour. It is best to do this as soon as you have concerns.
- d) Reinforce the school's policy concerning bullying and make sure your child is not afraid to ask for help.
- e) Inform us if you know your child is involved in bullying and please discuss the issues with them.
- f) Ensure that children are made aware of the difference between bullying and disagreements. Not all hurtful behaviour is bullying, but all hurtful behaviour is unacceptable in school. The following are examples of hurtful behaviour which may not be bullying.
  - Children may fall out with their friends and engage in hurtful behaviour. Such experiences can be extremely distressing to the individuals involved.
  - Children may retaliate against the hurtful behaviour of others.
- g) If a child has bullied your child, please do not approach that child on the playground or involve an older child to deal with the bully. Please inform your child's teacher immediately.

- e) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse and can cause conflict in a child's mind when they are told to do something which they know is wrong and which they are perhaps afraid to do.
- f) Most importantly, tell your child that it is not their fault that they are being bullied.

Parents should raise any concerns about bullying or other hurtful behaviour directly with the school and not with the parents of other parties, involved or otherwise. While we recognise that parents may wish to resolve matters informally, they are advised that the school should always be made aware of tensions and difficulties between children so that they can be supported appropriately. The best place to resolve conflicts between children in school is in school where all sides can be heard and all aspects of incidents can be explored.

**Parents are expected to exercise reasonable confidentiality around incidents in which they are involved. In particular, parents are requested not to spread stories about incidents. Partial information may be inaccurate, affect the reputation of the school and of individual children, damage the atmosphere in the school community and may actually aggravate the problem.**

We will inform parents of any significant incidents involving their children in order to enable them to support their child. We would expect all parents to support the school in seeking resolution and restoring a safe environment for all children.

### **Summary**

**By embracing the "whole school" concept we ensure that everyone, pupils, parents, carers, teachers, support staff, governors, and outside agencies are brought together to develop a culture which openly disapproves of bullying and responds to it appropriately.**

**Some claims of bullying may turn out to be false or exaggerated. However, all reports will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately. Appropriate measure will be taken to reassure and support the victim and modify the behaviour and attitude of the bully.**