

Hamilton Primary School



HAMILTON
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by Governors :

Review Date :

Hamilton Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Aim

At Hamilton School we strive to provide a happy, healthy, safe and secure environment in which all children and staff are valued and respected as individuals. Every child has the right to expect to be able to learn in a safe environment, and not to be bullied just because they are seen to be a little different.

Objectives

- To endeavour to eliminate all bullying.
- To reduce to a minimum the number of incidental cases of bullying.
- To encourage all members of the school community to feel a sense of responsibility in telling an appropriate adult when they feel someone is being bullied.
- To instil a commitment to the School's Code of Conduct and Core Values in all members of the school community.
- To develop all children's self-esteem so that they are less likely to be bullied or to bully.
- To support those children with poorer social skills to realise the impact of actions and words on others.
- To take seriously any reports of bullying, including inappropriate use of homophobic language and to take appropriate and immediate action.

Background information

All schools experience incidents of bullying, but all are unacceptable, whether a one-off incident or a persistent problem affecting one or more children.

Bullying is a complex issue and it is felt that if it is to be dealt with effectively this policy must dovetail with our other pastoral policies, particularly our Behaviour and Equal Opportunities policies.

As it is such a serious matter, it is important that we are always open about incidents occurring and do not try to ignore or minimise a problem.

Bullying is a community issue as it affects pupils, families, teachers, other members of staff and governors and the solution will necessitate the involvement of several and sometimes all of these groups.

What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice

against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating. Since September 2014 a greater focus on how well school leaders tackle low-level disruption was included in Ofsted inspections.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police. If a staff member finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation

to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

School Approaches

We are determined to confront and eliminate any bullying that occurs at Hamilton School. We encourage both parents and children to inform us of any incidents, and bystanders should know it's their duty to do so. Those children who report such incidents are to be reassured that they won't be accused of telling tales.

Teachers and other staff are constantly vigilant. Midday Assistants have a special role in this and are briefed and trained accordingly. The emphasis is on encouraging and developing positive approaches throughout the School in all members of the school community, but particularly in those pupils who find it difficult to adopt the School's Code of Conduct and Core Values.

Hamilton Primary School reserves the right to become involved in incidents that take place outside of the school grounds. School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises. Sections 90 and 91 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 say that a school's disciplinary powers can be used to address pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff, but only if it would be reasonable for the school to regulate pupils' behaviour in those circumstances. This may include bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The headteacher will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

While school staff members have the power to discipline pupils for bullying that occurs outside school, they can only impose the disciplinary sanction and implement that sanction on the school premises or when the pupil is under the lawful control of school staff, for instance on a school trip.

In order to prevent cyber-bullying Hamilton Primary School has in place a number of strategies to support pupils and staff. Children are not allowed to use Mobile Phones on the school site. Once on school property they are to be handed in to the class teacher at the beginning of the day and collected at the end of the school day.

The school uses Essex County Council to provide its internet access. This is a filtered service which has built in protection for children and staff.

Children are educated about the impact and effects of cyber-bullying through the school's Computing Curriculum. In addition to this, Year 5 and 6 pupils attend an annual workshop, taught by a Senior Leader, on how to deal with being safe online. Parents are also invited to attend an annual evening event on the dangers and benefits of the internet.

In all cases of cyber-bullying, victims need to report the concern and the school's rewards and behaviour policy will be actioned.

Hamilton School encourages all bullying targets to tell a teacher, but when they are reluctant to do so, bystanders should know it is their duty to do so.

Implementation Strategies

Stage One

For relatively minor episodes, or for situations in which it is difficult to attribute blame, one or more of the following strategies will be used:

Circle Time

Children sit in a circle and play games or do something enjoyable for a short time, and then they can discuss matters as a group, including bullying. This is a way for everyone in class to take part in a structured way. However, teachers need to use this strategy with caution in cases of bullying as some children may feel humiliated or distressed at having to discuss how they feel about being bullied in front of their class, including the bullies.

Support Group

The victim is interviewed and asked to draw a picture or write a poem about the effect bullying has had. A meeting is then held between a teacher and a group of children including the bullies, those who may have seen the incidents and others who are not directly involved and are perceived as positive role models, but not the victim. The teacher explains to the group how the victim is feeling and the group then offers suggestions to find a solution. This approach encourages the bully to see the impact of their behaviour on the victim, whilst making the bystanders aware that by doing nothing, they are condoning the behaviour. Again, teachers need to use this strategy with caution as some parents may view this method as the bully 'getting away with it'.

Restorative Justice

The two children talk issues over with a mediator, usually the class teacher, and find a way forward to end the cycle of bullying and complaints. This strategy is most effective when dealing with children who are friends but have fallen out, but may not be appropriate if the bullying is more serious.

For any of these strategies, support for the victim will be given through a counselling approach and the child may be offered a 'safe place' if they are anxious about future bullying.

We are very much aware that the degree of success depends on the positive support of parents, so we will involve them wherever appropriate or possible in any of the above strategies.

Stage Two

For recurrent cases of bullying, or a serious offence:

1. The name of the child to be documented in the 'Behaviour Log' and the school's rewards and behaviour policy to be applied.
2. Steps to be taken immediately to prevent reoccurrence of the bullying.
3. Communicate to all parents involved and request a visit to the School. If the matter is serious enough, the Headteacher or another senior manager is to be involved.
4. Communicate to all other 'interested' parties.

In some instances it may be relevant to put in place a behaviour support plan and agreed targets for future behaviour and sanctions if applicable.

Set a time/date for reviewing the situation to ascertain whether agreements have been kept. If they haven't, refer to Headteacher.

Stage Three

The Headteacher must always be involved at this stage and special measures will be implemented depending on the circumstances. As a last resort, the Headteacher may need to consider some form of exclusion. (Please refer to the school rewards and behaviour policy)

Preventative Strategies

- Constant and rigorous supervision and close vigilance, particularly if there are concerns; particularly in out-of-the-way places; particularly when children are not in the classroom.
- Encouragement of a positive, caring and safe environment by all members of staff through consistent reinforcement of the School's Code of Conduct and Core Values.
- Adequate facilities/activities at playtimes, lunchtimes and wet playtimes in the classroom to avoid boredom and potential trouble.
- Good communication between all members of staff, but particularly between teachers, midday assistants, learning support assistants, so that all staff working with children know when to be vigilant and support specific children.

- Dealing with bullies quickly and immediately, communicating to all involved how serious this is.
- Supporting children with low self-esteem, or where it is suspected there is potential for bullying, teaching them about assertiveness and dealing with difficulties.
- Good communication with parents, particularly if there are any concerns, whether about a bullied or bullying child.