

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION / PHILOSOPHY**

The staff and Governors of Whickham Comprehensive School believe firmly in the right of the individual and that the school community should be a place where this right is respected by all. We believe that in a Caring community, we all have a responsibility to ensure that bullying does not take place and then when it does it will be dealt with in an appropriate and sensitive manner, which recognises the needs of the individuals concerned.

## **AIMS OF ANIT-BULLYING POLICY**

- To heighten awareness and encourage constant vigilance to prevent bullying
- To define guidelines to deal with bullying when it occurs
- To ensure that all staff, parents, pupils and governors are aware that bullying is viewed seriously

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying is the wilful conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else.

It may be defined as the abuse of power by an individual or group in relation to another individual or group. It can be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological in nature and can occur frequently or infrequently but it should always be taken seriously even if it has only occurred on one occasion.

Bullying is not a phenomenon which occurs solely between children and can be seen to characterise some adult / adult, and child / adult relationships.

There are three elements, which may be present:

- The deliberate use of threatened use of aggression.
- An unequal power relationship between the bully and the victim
- The causing of physical pain and / or emotional stress

In more serious instances the abuse of power by an adult over a child, or by a child over a child, may be viewed, as child abuse and bullying should be seen within this context.

**Staff must refer to the schools Child Protection Policy and speak with the schools designated teacher John Bleasdale, if they have any child protection concerns.**

## **GUIDELINES FOR TEACHERS**

### Some Basic Principles

- Bullying in any form is unacceptable
- Early intervention is important
- Individuals must take responsibility for their own actions
- Parents must take responsibility for their own children
- Failure to deal with the bully will only encourage further aggression
- Peer support can help to combat bullying and allows the victim to find practical solutions. Self-help is best.

**To be seen to act is as important as taking action – silence and secrecy nurture bullying**

## **PREVENTION OF BULLYING**

Children vary a great deal in how they learn to be socially competent. Teachers, tutors, parents and mentors can help in the following ways:

- Setting an examples of good relationships
- Having good 'aggression control' themselves
- Making it clear that violent aggression is unacceptable
- Stopping any show of aggression immediately
- Identifying and naming the effects of aggression
- Describing how the victim of aggression feels
- Teaching caring and empathetic relationships
- Teaching appropriate assertiveness

- Providing firm, clear and consistent standards of behaviour
- Maintaining a predictable and regular routine
- Supervising all situations where aggression is likely
- Challenging aggressive behaviour
- Never allowing unacceptable aggression to produce beneficial results for children.

### **'ADVICE TO STAFF'**

#### **WHAT TO DO WHEN BULLYING OCCURS**

1. Encourage 'telling' to staff / PSM / parents
2. Remain calm: you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control of the situation.
3. Do not confront the bully in a time of crisis, show your disapproval and tell him / her that you will talk to him / her later.
4. If necessary remove the victim, give reassurance and deal with any distress of injury.
5. Take an account from the victim and **really listen**, making a special note of feelings encouraging the victim to express his / her feelings at length.
6. Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim.
7. No matter how trivial, **the incident should be recorded**, preferably by the victim and ask the bully to write his / her account of the incident, do not apportion blame.
8. Explain that there is a problem with which they might help, encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view. Recount his / her story and ask for their suggestions.
9. Do not extract worthless promises of improved behaviour but convey your belief that he / she can help to resolve the problem.
10. Stay alert; if the incident is trivial this is all that should be necessary.
11. If the bullying accusation has no foundation he / she has nothing to fear, if it is the start of a career in bullying then **the facts and the warning are on record**.

12. Punish the bully if you have to, but be very careful how you do this. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it's all right to bully if you have the power and it does not change the behaviour of the bully. Atonement on the part of the bully is preferable, especially when it has been negotiated and agreed by all.
13. Go public; involve the class (or those who witnessed the incident) in a discussion, which considers the feelings of the victim and others present. The aim is to talk things over and to consider the role / responsibilities of everyone who was there, not to blame.
14. Bully / victim could be referred to a Peer Support Mentor (via proforma in the staffroom).

Refer incident to Tutor, Head of Year, complete with written statements and referral to PSM group via form in staff room.

**It may be necessary:**

- To inform colleagues especially if the bullying involves particular groups of pupils or occurs in a particular place.
- For Heads of Year to inform both sets of parents.
- **Heads of Year must keep a separate register of bullying incidents.**

**Finally:**

- Make sure the incident doesn't live on through reminders from you.
- Try to think ahead to prevent a recurrence of the incident, if you uncover the trigger factor.

**THE BULLY AND THE VICTIM**

THE BULLY

The traditional stereotype of the bully is that it is a boy who is academically or personally inadequate, who may be bigger than his peers and who bullies to gain respect or power.

**If you rely on this stereotype to tell you who is bullying, you may well be wrong.**

There is no unique collection of characteristics that adds up to a bully. Pupils who bully are not easily recognised. Bullies can be the kind of pupils who are:

- Someone under pressure from others
- Academically achieving less
- Unpopular or insecure
- Quite secure and happy

### **Bullies can be victims**

- Both tend to have assertive aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control
- Bullies tend to lack empathy; they cannot imagine what the victim feels
- Bullies tend to lack guilt; they rationalise that the victim somehow deserves the bullying treatment

Research shows that the parents of bullies may have been over tolerant of infant aggression they may be people who are themselves aggressive, they may be people who try to keep their children under very tight control or they may reject the child.

Do not have any preconceptions about the bullies or the definition of bullying. Bullying may be discussed as bossiness, leadership or natural competition. If others see the bully at work and see no action taken by teachers, what will they think and how will they define what is acceptable in our school?

### THE VICTIM

The victim is more identifiable than the bully. The stereotype is of the weak, small, shy child, someone who is uncertain, anxious and different.

- Different in speech and manner
- Be new to the class or school
- Suffer from low esteem
- Demonstrate entertaining reactions when bullied e.g. tantrums, loss of control

- Be more nervous or anxious

It is also true that the victim may:

- Be the child who is in the 'wrong' place at the 'wrong' time and who reacts 'wrongly'
- Looks like any other child
- Be often alone
- Often 'forget' things e.g. books / equipment or money

**Vulnerability is not always visible to adults**

A quiet self-contained child may be suffering in silence, invisible unless encouraged to speak out.

Teachers need to be alert to the behaviour of ordinary pupils as well as supporting those evidently different from their peers.

Some victims may recover, some may bury the experience. There are others who suffer from emotional stress, which can lead to a range of outcomes such as:

- Absenteeism
- Obsessive behaviour
- Under-achievement
- Demanding a great deal of attention from teachers / nurse
- Childhood depression
- Physical symptoms
- Suicide

Victims may see themselves as inadequate and friendless or even worse they may come to believe that they deserve the treatment they receive from the bully.

