



Introduction

Thankfully, bullying is not a serious problem in our school - but we would be naive to believe it never occurs. However, a small problem within the school situation is a very large problem if you are the one who is suffering! The following advice is a guide to help staff become more aware of any occurrences of bullying and gives some useful pointers on how to deal effectively with it. The school has adopted the DfES Bullying – A Charter for Action initiative and this is displayed in school.

GUIDELINES

Bullying - a definition.

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

The Nature of Bullying

Bullying can be physical and/or verbal in nature. Physical assault to varying degrees of severity is distressing but verbal abuse is also painful.

Name calling, teasing and taunting are emotionally bruising and can include racial and sexual harassment.

A disturbing aspect of name calling is that adults can give it verbal or tacit support by the way they talk to children and young people.

Other forms of bullying include rude gestures, intimidation and extortion.

Bullying also includes threats and fear.

Research shows that most bullying occurs in the school playground. It can range from horseplay to vicious assault.

It can take place several times a day and it can go on for months or even years. But it does not have to continue for long to have harmful effects on its victim.

Some distinctions must be made:

Bullying or Bossiness? - a bully focuses on younger, smaller or timid children, whereas the bossy child will boss whoever is around at the time.

Most children grow out of their bossiness as they become more self controlled. By contrast the bully increasingly relies on threat and force.

Bullying or Boisterous Play? - Play is a natural part of childhood which becomes bullying when it spoils other children's activities or when violence or hostility is shown.



Preventing Bullying

We all have a responsibility for promoting high standards of behaviour and social responsibility - inside and outside - the classroom. Children who are secure and content are much more likely to fulfill their potential than those who are not. Whatever job we do in school (teacher, midday supervisor, support staff) we must not forget the importance of treating all pupils with a proper level of respect.

We must all be alert to situations where children's behaviour/ body language leads us to suspect that things may not be well (eg. deterioration of work, unexplained illness, the desire to remain with adults, erratic attendance, children who are in tears, who never smile, who are loners etc.). We should take seriously reports from other children about their friends and, if we do not feel in a position to deal with the problem, inform the deputy head or head teacher, and ask for feedback on the outcome.

We must make a conscious effort at all times to teach the values which form an important part of our school aims : responsibility for self and others; respect, and caring attitudes. We must teach social behaviour by drawing on incidents as they occur in the daily life of the class; reward non-aggressive behaviour; attempt to raise the self-esteem of all pupils and try to tackle everyday racist or sexist language.

We must be aware of the key areas of school - toilets, areas of the playground, and ensure they are supervised during playtimes and at the end of the day.

Dealing with an incident.

If you suspect someone is being bullied in any way remove them from the scene of the incident. Tell the bully he/she will be dealt with later. There is nothing to be gained by showing aggression towards the bully.

Inform the class teacher and the deputy or headteacher who should record the incident.

Dealing with the bully.

Challenge the behaviour, not the person. Get them to talk about the incident. Recognise "excuses" :

- "It was only a joke" -*did the victim think it was a joke?*
- "We were only playing" -*did everybody know it was a game?*
- "It was an accident" -*was it a non-accidental accident?*
- "I was only borrowing" -*did the owner know?*

Make it clear that their behaviour was unacceptable and must change. Listen carefully to all that is said and try to ascertain if there is a cry for help or an indication of another problem and report it appropriately.

Dealing with the victim.

Give immediate support and reassurance. Confirm that it is right that they should tell someone what has taken place. Try to build up self-esteem (through praise, rewards etc) and make sure that someone is available if the child needs to talk.



Activities in School to Prevent Bullying & Raising Self Esteem

Circle Time
Class Council
School Council
Merit and Reward Assembly
Class merits and rewards

Parental Involvement

The parents of bullies and their victims will be informed of an incident and the action that has taken place. They will be asked to support strategies proposed (with agreement) to tackle the problem. The bully will also be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions for repeated incidents will be clearly explained to him/her. (Persistent bullies may be excluded from school). A monitoring tool may also be used, usually incorporating a reward for achieving desired behaviours

Conclusion

Together, as a school, we should approach the problem of bullying openly.

We must recognise that the problem might exist and try to create an atmosphere where problems can be reported and discussed.

Understand that we all; teachers, parents and pupils, have to work together to ensure that each member of the school community feels happy and secure.

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Pastoral and Behaviour Committee of the Governing Body