



BEECHFIELD SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Introduction

At Beechfield we create a positive and caring ethos where individuals are respected and feel secure in a way which enhances their social and academic development.

We promote positive, co-operative behaviour to prevent bullying. Through this policy we ensure consistency of approach and set out measures to deal with any problem swiftly once identified.

Definition

Bullying involves:

- deliberate hostility and aggression towards the victim
- a victim who is weaker and less powerful than the bully or bullies
- an outcome which is always painful and distressing for the victim

Forms of bullying

- Physical – hitting, kicking, gestures
- Verbal – name calling, teasing
- A look or note
- Silence – ostracising
- Bullying may take place over a short period of time or over years.
- Bullying may be individual intimidation or involve groups.
- Bullying can involve girls and boys.
- Bullying can include racial and sexual harassment.
- Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone over a period of time. It can cause untold distress to the victim resulting in loss of confidence, low self-esteem, truancy, absenteeism or illness.

Prevention

- Bullying is discouraged by awareness-raising in staff discussions, assemblies, in PSHE sessions through stories, drama, books and the sharing of feelings
- Children are encouraged to report incidents to any adult. We do this by talking to individuals and classes, having bullying/being kind/friendship/co-operation as frequent themes in assemblies, in class circle time and in the curriculum
- Adults are encouraged to observe the children's interactions, listen to children's concerns and take action e.g by talking to the children concerned, telling a line manager, talking to parents/carers, recording incidents, setting up behaviour logs
- Playground, toilets and classrooms are overseen by adults and children are not to gather where there is no supervision
- Incidents of bullying outside the school boundaries which involve our pupils are treated in the same way in terms of concern and recording and reporting

Strategies

Once a case of bullying has been suspected, reported or identified:

- all staff are to be made aware of the individuals or group concerned (in staff meetings or by the Headteacher) and asked to observe carefully and record all incidents, with dates, time, place, children involved and action taken. These records are to be passed directly to the Headteacher (or Deputy in the Head's absence) and all written records will be transferred to the children's files
- the class teacher and Headteacher or Deputy will together discuss the next steps to be taken. These could include:
 - a) talking to the alleged victim(s) and/or bully(ies), to establish facts more accurately. Written records will be kept.

- b) talking to all parents/carers to raise awareness, gain support, discuss strategies. Written records will be kept showing agreed actions and outcomes.
- c) offer the victim(s) the opportunity to discuss how he/she/they are feeling with the bully(ies).
- d) offer the victim(s) private opportunities to talk to a named adult of their choosing to discuss feelings, gain counselling, discuss strategies to change any inappropriate responses and actions e.g walk away, positive self-talk, neutralising criticism.
- e) working out with parents/carers/children concerned a graded range of sanctions for any further incidents of bullying, according to the main Behaviour Policy of the school.
- f) support the perpetrator(s) by discussing what happened, establishing the wrong doing and the need to change, with the aim to re-channel their behaviour

It will not, however, be our intention to resort to bullying the bully. All strategies should be focused on:

- changing the behaviour of the bully(ies) **WHILST**
- empathising with and supporting the victim(s) **AND**
- promoting to everyone that we do not tolerate bullying

Guidance for children

What should I do if I see someone else is being bullied?

- If you witness bullying you should: Tell an adult straight away. Don't try and get involved as you might end up getting hurt or you could end up in trouble yourself. Don't stay silent or the bullying will keep happening.

If you are bullied:-

DO:-

- ☐ Ask them to STOP if you can
- ☐ Use eye contact and tell them to go away
- ☐ Ignore them
- ☐ Walk away
- ☐ Use the worry box if you are too nervous to speak openly about it
- ☐ Talk to a friend
- ☐ TELL AN ADULT

DON'T:-

- ☐ Do what they say
- ☐ Get angry or look upset
- ☐ Hit them
- ☐ Think it's your fault
- ☐ Hide it

What if bullying happens outside the school gates?

- We expect pupils to behave kindly outside of school and to not engage in bullying activities. Where a child or parent tells us about bullying that has happened outside of school, the school will talk to the children about how to avoid this and will monitor behaviour in school to make sure that it does not continue in school.

What happens when bullying occurs?

- Support will be given to children who are bullied.
- They will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and that it's not their fault.
- They will be encouraged to talk about their feelings and they will be involved in making choices about how to resolve the matter.
- They will be asked to tell someone if any bullying happens again and we will involve their friends for support.
- We will talk to the child (or children) involved in the bullying separately and listen to their version of what happened.
- We will talk to anyone else that saw the bullying.
- We will remind the child (or children) that bullying is not acceptable and expect bullying to stop.
- In line with our behaviour ladder, we will contact the child's parents accordingly.
- We will make sure we check that the bullying has not started again.
- Children that have been proved to be bullying others will be supported to make the right choices. Some sanctions may include - removal from the group, not be allowed out at break times and lunchtimes, not be allowed to join in with school events, placed on a Personal Support Plan or maybe excluded.

Our responsibilities

- Act in a respectful and supportive way towards one another.
- Tell someone if they are being bullied or have seen someone being bullied.
- Support each other and ask for help to make sure that everyone feels safe, and nobody feels left out.

Appendix 1: Hertfordshire Guidance

Defining bullying

While there is no single definition of bullying, the Department for Education provides the following guidance:

'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 or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted 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.' "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" DfE 2011

Most definitions include the following dimensions:

1. The behaviour is intended to cause distress
2. The behaviour is repeated
3. There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator of bullying and the target

However there are important issues to consider within these broad factors:

The first element, 'the behaviour is intended to cause distress', should not be taken to excuse behaviour which individuals or groups claim was intended in fun. It is reasonable for schools to expect that young people will develop age appropriate skills of empathy and will not be drawn into behaviour that for the perpetrators amounts to teasing but for the target becomes seriously distressing. Behaviour that impacts to damage the emotional wellbeing of others should be taken to be a matter of serious concern and individuals should be made to understand their culpability, regardless of their intention. The effect of the behaviour on the recipient – not just the intention of the perpetrator – is significant in deciding whether to treat an incident as bullying.

The second element, 'the behaviour is repeated', should be understood in terms of the number and degree of impacts on the target. A single posting of hurtful material on the internet has the potential to be seen by hundreds if not thousands of people and is therefore a very serious matter. A single act of physical assault, mental abuse or threat of the same can lead a child to be in a state of ongoing fear. Any incidents of deliberately hurtful behaviour that lead to fear of recurrence should be designated as bullying incidents.

The final element, 'an imbalance of power', can be subtle and complex. It should not be assumed that a larger child cannot be a victim, nor a smaller child a perpetrator. It is also often important to recognise the role of popularity as a factor that pertains to the balance of power. Equalities and issues of prejudice also need to be considered carefully within this dimension. A great deal of bullying is linked to difference, perceived difference or discriminatory attitudes towards certain groups regardless of whether the target is actually a member of these groups. For example, many children and young people who are not lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) may be targeted for homophobic bullying while others may be the targets of racist bullying based on inaccurate presumptions about their culture. These dimensions should always be recorded and monitored.

Hertfordshire County Council recommends that schools therefore reflect the following more complex aspects in defining and responding to behaviour.

Bullying is behaviour that impacts negatively on others in the following ways:

1. The behaviour is either intended to cause distress or results in significant distress
2. The behaviour is repeated or results in multiple impacts on the target
3. There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator/s of bullying and the target/s whether as a result of the prior context or the content or the experience of the hurtful behaviour

Schools are encouraged to develop their own definitions in collaboration with children and young people, parents/carers and staff. It is very important that there is a shared understanding of the strength of the school's stance against bullying and understanding definitions is an important part of this. It is important that young people and their parents know the definition that the school is working with.

Some schools will wish to evolve child friendly definitions of bullying. For example:

People hurting or upsetting you repeatedly and on purpose by doing nasty or unkind things.

Bullying behaviour can include the following hurtful behaviours

- ☐ name-calling, taunting, teasing, mocking and making offensive comments
- ☐ offensive, threatening or personalised graffiti or other written material
- ☐ excluding people from groups
- ☐ gossiping and spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours
- ☐ kicking, hitting, pushing
- ☐ taking belongings
- ☐ cyberbullying – including sending inappropriate, offensive or degrading text messages, emails or instant messages, setting up websites or contributing content to social networking sites that is designed to embarrass or upset individuals or collective exclusion of individuals from social networking sites.

It should be noted that not all hurtful behaviour is bullying, but all reported hurtful behaviour should be taken seriously and resolved at the earliest opportunity.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's report on the effectiveness of responses to 'Identity-based' (or 'Prejudice-based') bullying (Research report 64 2010) states that it **"is widespread and continues to blight the lives of many young people, affecting educational attainment and having a long term impact on their life chances."**

Schools should pay particular attention to ensuring that all prejudice-based hurtful incidents are identified and prevented from escalating. Ofsted will specifically look for evidence that this is the case in all schools in relation to special educational need, sexual orientation, sex, race, religion and belief, gender identity or disability. In addition, schools should be sensitive to wider issues of prejudice. Some children and young people can be singled out because they are overweight, deprived, in care, young carers, particularly able or talented.

Schools should also be alert to challenging the development of an environment which is hurtful and threatening to particular groups or communities. For example, casual use of homophobic, transphobic, sexist or racist language should not go unchecked whether or not it is targeted at an individual.

Appendix 2: Protective Behaviours

Protective Behaviours (PB's) is a safety awareness programme which helps children and adults to recognise any situation where they feel worried or unsafe, such as feeling stressed, bullied or threatened and explores practical ways to keep safe. Protective Behaviours also looks at identifying support networks for times when we need someone to listen and help. The programme aims for children to build self-esteem and an increased confidence and assertiveness relating to feeling and being safe.

Protective Behaviours is based on two key messages:

- ☐ *We All have the Right to Feel Safe all of the Time*
- ☐ *We can talk with Someone about Anything, no matter how awful*

The programme can be used in a wide range of settings by teachers, parents, women's refuge workers, the police, social workers, youth workers, health visitors and community workers. The approach therefore also provides a useful framework for working together to keep children safe.

The children are taught to:

- ☐ Understand what safety feels like.
- Explore times when it's fun to feel scared.
- Recognise our Early Warning Signs which tell us when we are not feeling safe (*Uh oh feeling*).
- Understand the difference between safe, risky and unsafe situations.
- Develop support networks.
- Practice problem –solving skills.
- Understand the difference between public and private and have an awareness of our own personal space.
- Recognise the need to be persistent in telling someone when we have the *Uh oh feelin*.