Anti-bullying Policy

Policy Originator: Inclusion Leader

Review Period: 3 years
Next Review Date: Autumn 2020

Introduction

At Frimley Church of England School we do not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. This policy explains the school's approach to preventing and dealing with bullying. It should be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Management Policy. All schools contain individuals with the potential for bullying behaviour. The policy and procedures described below aim to minimise the occurrence of bullying and should give clarity to parents, pupils and staff so that, if incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly. School staff members have received training and relevant guidance on tackling bullying.

We believe that every child has a right to learn in a supportive, safe and caring environment without fear of being bullied.

Aims of the policy

To help children, parents and staff know what bullying is and how to prevent and deal with it. The policy aims to prevent or reduce incidents of bullying and provide a clearly defined framework for dealing with victims and/alongside everyone connected with bullying.

What is bullying?

Bullying is repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a 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 the school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical, so we feel it is of utmost importance that this is swiftly dealt with too.

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 through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Pupils who join in with bullying by watching, laughing or shouting encouragement are considered bullies.

Bullying is not:

- Teasing and banter between friends without intention to cause hurt
- Falling out between friends after a quarrel or disagreement
- Behaviour that all parties have consented to and enjoy
- A single act of unkind behaviour

It should not be confused with 'relational conflict' whereby two or more children get into conflict but the dispute is equally provoked and both sides have been hurtful to the other.

Bullying can take a number of forms:

- Physical – hitting, pushing, gesturing, taking or damaging personal belongings or any unwanted physical contact
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, racist taunts, sexually abusive comments, comments related to physical/social disability
- Psychological – ignoring someone, excluding, glaring, isolating a person, graffiti, rumour spreading, sending unwanted text messages or emails, publishing hurtful material on social networking sites (cyber-bullying)

Bullying is different from the normal disagreements which sometimes occur in the playground or classroom, when children learn to deal with differences of opinion among peers. It is focussed anti-social behaviour directed intentionally at a 'victim' with malicious intent, usually over a period of time. It can happen in public – such as physical assault in the playground, or it can be very subtle and harder to detect – such as the spreading of rumours or deliberate social exclusion.

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 of school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day with a potentially bigger audience. In Computing and PSHE & C lessons, cyberbullying is discussed and children know to inform an adult if they have any concerns. In Computing lessons, children are also taught how to report cyberbullying online.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Signs and Symptoms

Pupils being bullied may show changes in behaviour such as:

Physical: Unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, soiling/bedwetting.

Emotional: Losing interest in school, withdrawn, secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.

Behavioural: Asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asks for more money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

Support for victims

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by

- Reassuring them that it is not their fault
- Counselling from a teacher, classroom assistant or the Inclusion Leader
- Trying to minimise the opportunities for bullying
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the problem
- Offer continuous support (from staff and/or children)
- Learning how to 'Say no' assertiveness
- Restore self-esteem and confidence
- Monitor and review
- Peer support systems/buddies

We will raise the awareness of bullying through circle time, assemblies, Computing and the PSHE & C curriculum. These activities along with this policy will be reviewed annually by staff, governors and the school council.

School Procedure

- If bullying is reported or suspected, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff approached
- An account of the incident will be recorded and forwarded to the class teacher, Inclusion Leader and Head Teacher
- All concerned will be interviewed and the meeting recorded
- Parents will be invited to discuss the matters with the appropriate staff
- Appropriate measures will be applied (see disciplinary sanctions)
- Victim will be consulted
- Agreed support drawn up between key workers for child/group etc
- Children concerned will be monitored over an agreed period of time

Support for the bully to change behaviour

- Discuss what has happened
- Write a letter of apology
- Discover why the pupil became involved
- Offer strategies to deal with their behaviour including anger management
- Establish the wrong doing and the need to change
- Inform the parents/carer to help change the attitude of the pupil
- Accept responsibility for harm caused to individual(s) being bullied
- Learn how to take steps to repair the harm they may have caused

Disciplinary sanctions

- Official warnings to cease offending
- Time out/thinking time
- Exclusion from certain areas of the school premises
- Exclusion from non-statutory activities or events
- Minor fixed term exclusion
- Major fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

Strategies for prevention and reduction of bullying

- Assemblies
- Anti-bullying week
- PSHE & C
- Online safety taught in Computing lessons
- British Values
- Whole school activities
- Emotional literacy support
- Group work/circle time
- Buddies
- Wellbeing Council
- Whole School values initiative
- Reward and sanction system (see Behaviour Management Policy)

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