

Solihull Junior School Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Whilst this policy is mainly specific to the Junior School, it should be seen in the context of the whole school policy and the Behaviour Policy. This policy reflects and supports the aims and ethos of our school and reflects and supports the principles of the Every Child Matters initiative. Bullying is the action taken by one or more person with the deliberate intention of hurting another, either physically, verbally or emotionally.

Aims and Objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We, therefore, do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, without fear of bullying. We aim to create a culture where bullying will not thrive.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur, to respond seriously to all complaints of bullying, to investigate reasons for bullying incidents in order to help all those concerned and to improve our own responses and strategies.

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school. We encourage open and honest reporting of any such incidents.

Definition of bullying:

The DCSF defines bullying as: *'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. Bullying is any behaviour that is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is usually unprovoked, persistent and can continue for a long period of time. It always reflects an abuse of power. It is often difficult for victims to defend themselves against.*

Bullying can mean many different things, but includes any behaviour that intentionally or thoughtlessly harms, threatens, intimidates or distresses someone else, for example:

- Insults/excessive teasing
- Cruel nicknames
- Making threats
- Isolating/rejecting someone from peer group
- Physical assaults
- Extortion or coercion by means of intimidating behaviour
- Damaging, taking or hiding property
- Writing or telling lies about someone
- Sending cruel text messages, video messages or e-mails

- Spreading rumours
- Being unfriendly and turning others against someone
- Posting inappropriate comments on websites

Bullying may occur for a variety of different reasons. The reasons may not be immediately obvious. It may be related to:

- Race, ethnicity, religion or culture
- Special educational need or disability
- Appearance or health
- Sexual orientation
- Sexual harassment
- Sexism

And can take a number of forms:

- Verbal, physical or emotional
- Homophobic bullying (looks like other sorts of bullying, but in particular it can include spreading rumours that someone is gay, or suggesting that someone is inferior).
- Sexual assault and threatening behaviour and may target any pupils or staff regardless of sexual orientation.
- Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. It can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging, email, photographs or abusive phone calls.

It is deliberately hurtful, (either physically or psychologically).

It is repeated often over time.

It is difficult for the person being bullied to defend himself/herself against it – he/she is weaker physically or psychologically.

Bullying can take many different forms. These include verbal intimidation, deliberate ostracism, sexist or racist behaviour as well as threats and physical attacks. Cyber bullying is becoming an increasing threat where modern forms of technology such as mobile phones and the internet can be used to target others, often anonymously. Bullying can also focus on the cultural or religious identities of other people, or reflect negative attitudes to others' sexuality, physical appearance or disability.

Bullying is often pre-meditated and persistent, and may involve one or more individuals systematically undermining the confidence and self esteem of others. Bullying can and does result in serious long term damage to the emotional welfare of its victims, or even self harming or suicide.

Signs of Bullying

It is important to be aware that children who are being bullied will potentially exhibit symptoms in many different ways. Staff and parents should always be vigilant and look out for the following:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged.
- Change to established habits e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to matron with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of self harming, running away or suicide.

The Role of the Head of the Junior School

It is the responsibility of the Head of the Junior School to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.

The Head of the Junior School ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school and will not be tolerated. The Head of the Junior School draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments, e.g. in assemblies, School Council meetings. Pupils are regularly consulted about the anti-bullying policy to develop effective strategies to deal with it. The School's policy on bullying is also made clear to pupils through PSHE sessions, circle time and the sensitive and caring pastoral care.

Awareness of the negative consequences of bullying are promoted during national Anti-Bullying week in November each year. Pupils create posters around school to emphasise that bullying is totally unacceptable and to promote tolerance and mutual respect.

Staff awareness of the issues surrounding bullying are raised and maintained through staff training and effective internal communication.

The Head of the Junior School sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and valued and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

The Role of the Teacher

Teachers in our school are vigilant for signs of bullying and ensure that instances of bullying are investigated and dealt with as soon as they are witnessed or reported. They take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. Staff watch out for children who are potential or known victims of bullying and try to ensure they are protected from further distress.

If teachers witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. The Form Tutor and the Head of the Junior School should be informed about such incidents. If these incidents persist, after consultation with the Head of the Junior School, the teacher informs the child's parents.

We keep an anti-bullying logbook in the staff room where we record all incidents of established or suspected bullying that occur outside lesson time, either near the school or on the children's way home or to school. If any adult witnesses an act of bullying, they should record the event in the logbook. Written records are looked at carefully to identify any patterns that might emerge in terms of victim, perpetrators, location and nature of incidents of bullying.

Victims of bullying are encouraged to report any problems immediately to a member of staff. All children are actively encouraged to report incidents of potential bullying that they witness happening to another child. The role of the bystander is very important and is regularly emphasised in assemblies.

Mentors are appointed from the J4s, nominated by the children in the school, to act as counsellors for children who experience bullying and need someone other than an adult to talk to. The Mentors are trained by Mrs Jenkins, a trained counsellor.

We have a "Samaritan" box for children, who feel unable to speak to anyone directly, to post information about any incidents of bullying which they have witnessed or experienced. The Head of the Junior School monitors this on a regular basis and deals with the incidents appropriately.

If, as teachers, we become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, we deal with the issue immediately. When a report of bullying is made, children should be assured that the member of staff will undertake a full and fair investigation into the allegations. It should be made clear that the child's wishes will be respected as far as good practice will allow, and according to School policies and procedures on confidentiality and child protection. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and sanctions applied for the child who has carried out the bullying, as well as appropriate counselling. We spend time talking to the child who has bullied: we explain why the action of the child was wrong, and we endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future. Whenever appropriate, parents are involved in the disciplinary procedures and in seeking effective solutions.

Every effort is made to find out why a child is bullying and to seek ways of helping with any problems that might lie behind the behaviour. Children who bully should understand that whilst we cannot tolerate bullying in school, we will do everything we can to support the child in his/her efforts to reform and to

involve the families in this process. A written record should be kept of what has occurred and of any meetings with parents.

The usual procedures of sanctions will be applied to promote good behaviour as outlined in the Behaviour Policy i.e. Yellow/ red slips, Report cards.

In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Head of the Junior School may contact external support agencies such as the Social Services and the Headmaster. Bullying is a very serious matter and repeated bullying can result in suspension or expulsion.

Incidents of bullying and behaviour management are discussed regularly in staff meetings and whenever the situation arises. However, incidents of bullying are relatively rare in the Junior School.

Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

Teachers use drama, role play and stories within the formal curriculum to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children and to realise the restraint required to prevent them falling into bullying behaviour.

Circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children and to create a positive atmosphere.

PSHE sessions are used to directly tackle bullying and the issues it raises, as well as to promote considerate and tolerant behaviour in general.

Internet access within the school is closely monitored to reduce the likelihood of cyber bullying. Guidance is offered to children to avoid the risk of this kind of bullying outside school, including advice on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phones numbers and other personal details safe and secure.

The Role of Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Form Tutor or the Head of the Junior School immediately.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Monitoring and Review

Our policies and procedures are regularly reviewed to minimise opportunities for bullying and to deal effectively with the problem whenever it arises.