



# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

**September 2015**

### **Mission Statement**

Our school in co-operation with parents and community members is committed to providing a happy, secure and caring environment where every individual is treated with respect, thus enabling each pupil to become an effective learner and to develop the skills, attitudes and values necessary for life.

### **Anti-Bullying Policy Statement**

From time to time pupils may be victims of bullying, in spite of our caring ethos and positive behaviour policy. They will be unable to learn effectively as a result. If we allow bullying to go unchallenged we are not providing our pupils with the safe and educationally stimulating learning environment they deserve.

Being bullied can result in fear, depression and feelings of worthlessness and anger. The school will promote positive relationships by encouraging pupils to report incidents and to accept responsibility for the welfare of other pupils. All staff, both teachers and ancillary staff should be respected, should manage behaviour positively, be alert to the dangers of bullying and aim to provide positive role models for our pupils.

### **School Aims and Objectives in relation to Bullying Behaviour.**

As a caring school our teachers and support staff will not tolerate bullying in our school. Our aim is to have a school, which is safe, secure and happy. We will act swiftly when a case of bullying occurs. Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

### **Our Definition of Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying can be described as being a deliberate act done to cause distress in order to give a feeling of power status or other gratification to the bully. It can range from a number of things which casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents.

1. Emotional bullying – being deliberately unfriendly, excluding an individual from peer group, tormenting, staring out, stealing, writing nasty notes.
2. Physical bullying – hitting, kicking, “horseplay”, stealing, spitting, biting, pinching, scratching, elbowing and tripping also hitting, damaging or destroying personal property.
3. Verbal/Written bullying – verbal threats, taunting, name calling, sectarian or racist remarks or writing, malicious rumours, verbal asides in class, teasing, spoiling games, annoying by interrupting, conning, writing on books or unkind notes.
4. Extortion bullying – demanding money, personal property or homework.
5. Non Verbal bullying – pulling faces, threatening gestures which carry intimidatory messages, being selfish, leaving out of games, giving dirty looks and talking behind back. Getting people into trouble, spitting, ignoring, irritating and wetting people.
6. Cyber and text bullying-the use of mobile phones to send threatening, offensive or upsetting messages.

## **Aims**

- Ø To clarify for pupils, staff and parents that bullying is always unacceptable and is regarded by the school as a serious offence. In some instances it can have legal consequences.
- Ø To create a feeling of confidence and safety throughout the school.
- Ø To encourage an environment where individuals, can develop without fear and fulfil their true potential.
- Ø To emphasise the importance of and to strengthen communication links between parents and the school.
- Ø To foster an ethos of responsibility and caring among staff and pupils irrespective of race, creed or age.
- Ø To value children's opinions and involve them, where appropriate, in determining school policy and rules.
- Ø To show an awareness of children's individual needs and to make an effort to meet these.
- Ø To involve all members of staff in creating a "listening school".
- Ø The school emphasises the importance of and encourages the earliest possible reporting of bullying by the victim, or fellow pupils to any member of staff.

In Fair Hill staff, parents and children work together to create and maintain a happy, caring, learning environment. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

## **Possible Signs**

We aim to educate staff and parents about the signs and symptoms of bullying. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming anxious or nervous, feigning illness, loss of appetite, withdrawn demeanour or become emotionally volatile. They may also show changes in their work patterns, may have damaged clothing or belongings, may lack concentration or even truant from school, may become irritable and aggressive and lose confidence.

We also aim to ascertain from teachers, parents and pupils the extent and nature of perceived problems, to establish clearly understood lines of communication both within the school and from home to school, so that those who are bullied know to whom they can go for assistance.

Teachers will be encouraged to incorporate materials into their teaching which will help pupils think about the problems of bullying.

## STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation.

The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too, that may be why they bully.

If bullying comes to the attention of any teacher these procedures should be followed:-

- Ø Teacher makes preliminary investigations.
  - Ø Teacher reports incident to Principal, Vice Principal or designated teacher as soon as possible.
  - Ø Pupils concerned will be interviewed following the set interview procedures.
  - Ø A full written report of the incident will be recorded as soon as possible after the event.
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- **Discussions at length with the victim.** This will require patience and understanding. Remember -LISTEN -BELIEVE –ACT.
  - **Identify the bully/bullies.** Obtain evidence from witnesses, if possible.
  - **Discussions with the bully.** Confront them with the details and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that any form of bullying is totally unacceptable at Fair Hill.
  - **If they own up** follow the procedure outlined below and in the Discipline Policy.
  - **If they do not own up**, investigate further. If it is clear they are lying, continue with the procedure. Children usually own up eventually if presented with all the facts.
  - Separate discussions with parents of bully and victim may be initiated at an appropriate stage.
  - Sanctions for the bully will be those outlined in the Discipline Policy.
  - Continue monitoring the situation by observing at playtimes/lunch-times and having discussions with the victim to ensure no repetition.
  - As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then sanctions may be removed and the child should be praised for good behaviour. This will rebuild the child's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after being caught bullying, or may have been low anyhow, hence the bullying.
  - Counselling may be recommended.

The Principal must be informed immediately of any serious episode, such as physical violence through which one pupil is hurt by another or any episode in which a group sets upon one pupil.

### Teachers dealing with these episodes should remain aware that:

- If a pupil has been involved in causing hurt it is vital for the counselling teacher to do everything in their power to help the pupil to acquire a deeper understanding of their motives and attitudes towards people and to become aware of and sensitive to the feelings and needs of others.
- While a pupil has been involved in bullying may appear to have ceased these activities, such behaviour patterns and character traits are hard to eradicate.
- Close but inconspicuous surveillance of the victim should be maintained for some time as trouble can erupt months after the original episode.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

- In order to identify incidents of bullying and the identities of bullies, at Fair Hill, we have agreed to carry out the following strategies:
- All staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils. All staff, listen, believe, act.
- I Have Something to Say/Worry boxes in school where children can put written notes if they feel they cannot speak about their problem.
- Posters in school advertising these measures and dissuading children from bullying. The Childline telephone number to be displayed clearly in school.
- In all cases of confirmed or suspected bullying the Principal should be informed immediately before any action is taken.

## **The School's Response**

- Staff, pupils and parents have a shared responsibility in any proactive strategy for counteracting bullying.
- Prevention and action taken in cases of reported bullying are two strands in the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Various means are taken to help prevent the occurrence of bullying.
- The academic as well as the pastoral curriculum is used to raise awareness of and to develop anti-bullying attitudes, values and skills among the pupils – in poetry, prose, drama, role play, surveys, etc.
- The pastoral programme includes work to help improve their self-esteem and social skills and to encourage them to have self-confidence to reject bullying behaviour by other people.
- Peer-group pressure is used to discourage bullying and pupils are helped to become more assertive without using threats and violence.
- All adults in the school play a vital role as role models, as reflected in their treatment of pupils and in their behaviour to each other.
- The school makes the expected standards and appropriate ways of behaving clear to pupils.
- The school premises are monitored regularly.

## **ADVICE TO PUPILS WHO FEEL THEY ARE BEING BULLIED**

### **When you are being bullied:**

- Be firm and clear -look them in the eye and tell them to stop.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away.

### **After you have been bullied:**

- Tell a teacher or adult in your school.
- Tell your family.
- If you are afraid to tell an adult on your own take a friend with you.
- Keep on speaking until someone listens.
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened.

### **When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about:**

- What has happened to you?
- How often it has happened?
- Who was involved?
- Who saw what was happening?
- Where it happened?
- What you have done about it already?

## **Individual Responsibilities**

The issue of bullying is a matter of partnership including all pupils, staff and parents.

### **SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES**

- To provide a safe environment for all children
- Promote an ethos of respect for the individual
- Encourage pupils to tell
- Take all aspects of bullying seriously
- Log all incidents
- Celebrate and promote good behaviour

### **Procedures for Dealing with incidents of Bullying Behaviour**

- 1 Children will know who to talk to in the first instance. This will usually be their class teacher, but it could also be
  - Principal or Vice-Principal
  - A lunchtime Supervisory Assistant

The children must be given every opportunity to report the bullying in the first instance, but it will be the class teacher who will follow up allegations. Therefore, any other adult in a position of responsibility should feed back to the class teacher as soon as possible.

- 2 The class teacher takes steps to discuss the problem with the bullies to understand the situation, establish the facts and talk through any issues. An early resolution is sought using these tactics.
- 3 Both bullied and bullying parties are informed that the situation is being monitored by the class teacher/s concerned.
- 4 If there is no improvement, or further bullying occurs, the parents of the child bullying will be contacted in order to come into school to discuss the problem. During this discussion it will be clarified and reinforced that:
  - A zero tolerance policy is being adhered to.
  - If further bullying takes place, there is a real risk that the bully will be suspended for a specified period of time in the first instance.
  - It is the behaviour that is not accepted, not the child
- 5 At the conclusion of the discussion clear expectations are laid down as to:
  - Expected behaviours and attitudes
  - Who they should report to and when
  - Who they should keep away from
  - What are the arrangements for daily routines
- 6 Individual circumstances will determine the precise arrangements to be made.
- 7 Support will be given to the bullying child to raise their self-esteem and develop appropriate social skills.

The school will reserve the right to enlist the help of outside agencies such as EWO or Educational Psychology, Child Protection Team.

**In extreme cases the use of child protection procedures will be considered.**

## **PUPILS' ENTITLEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

"Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence (physical and Mental). They must be kept from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them." (Article 19 UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1992.)  
In order to realise this, children need to be educated in an environment which:

- Is safe and caring;
- Provides challenges and is non-threatening;
- Encourages children to feel secure;
- Values children's opinions and involves them, where appropriate, in determining school policy and rules;
- Shows an awareness of children's individual needs and makes an effort to meet these.

### **Where schools create this ethos, pupils have a responsibility to:**

- Treat all pupils, teachers and other staff with respect; behave correctly at all times during the day;
- Respect school property and the property of other pupils; follow the rules of the school;
- Refuse to engage in any bullying situation; if present when bullying occurs should:
  - ✓ Where appropriate, take some form of preventative action;
  - ✓ Report the incident or suspected incident.
  - ✓ Help break the code of secrecy which surrounds bullying.

## **PARENTS' ENTITLEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Role of Parents**

Parents are expected to work in partnership with the school in order to achieve better relationships between pupils:-

- Ensuring that their child respects and co-operates with teachers, ancillary staff and other pupils.
- Seeing that their child upholds the rules of the school.
- Contacting the school to report any concerns over bullying behaviour or suspicion of bullying behaviour as soon as that are aware of it.
- Support all aspects of the school ethos.
- Should regularly take time to listen to their child, to talk to them about what is happening from day to day and be aware of any suspicion that the pupil is being bullied. If there is any evidence of bullying contact the Principal immediately.
- All such disclosures will be acknowledged quickly and dealt with firmly but sensitively.
- In cases of serious bullying parents of the bully will be asked to take part in discussions about which strategies should be used and to support the action being taken by the school.

### **Parents are entitled to expect that:**

- Their child will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring and not characterised by violence and intimidation;
- They will be informed promptly of any incident of bullying regarding their child and that this will be dealt with confidentially;
- The school will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying occurring;

- Any bullying incident which is reported will be investigated according to the school's guidelines;
- Any bullying incident that is found to have taken place will be dealt with in line with the school's guidelines;

### **TEACHERS' ENTITLEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY**

#### **All teachers and other adults in the school community have the right to:**

- Work in a positive environment where there is respect and fairness at all times;
- Truthfulness and honesty from pupils;
- Equal treatment from all staff and pupils;
- Co-operation from pupils and parents.

#### **Teachers have a responsibility to ensure:**

- The well-being of all the children in their care including:
  - Making them feel secure;
  - Bringing out their best qualities;
  - Treating them impartially;
- The rules of the school are implemented consistently, fairly and reasonably.
- They help children to acquire the knowledge, skills and values that contribute to the development of non-bullying behaviour.

#### **Links with other Policies**

This anti-bullying policy should be seen as being closely linked to the school's Pastoral Care, Positive Behaviour/ Discipline and Child Protection Policies.

#### **Monitoring and Reviewing the Effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy**

The policy in general will be reviewed annually. The reported incidents will be reviewed over the same period with a view to establishing any potential pattern. The ultimate responsibility for the introduction and implementation of the policy remains with the Board of Governors. However, it is important to remember that staff, pupils and parents have an active part to play in the evolution, development and maintenance of this Policy.