



Woodlawn Primary School

Anti- Bullying Policy

Designed: October 2017

Ratified:

Due to be Reviewed: October 2020

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale:

Woodlawn Primary School is completely opposed to bullying and will not tolerate it, as it is entirely contrary to the values and principles we work and live by in school. All members of the school community have a right to work in a secure and caring environment. They also have a responsibility to contribute in whatever way they can, to the protection and maintenance of such an environment.

Principles:

The school actively promotes positive relations between all members of the school community – pupils, staff and parents. We believe that all staff and pupils have the right to work and learn in an environment free from intimidation and fear; that the needs of children who have been bullied are paramount; that pupils who feel that they are being bullied will be listened to and any reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Every effort will be made to resolve any problems that are identified.

In Woodlawn Primary we will use the following terms: child who has been bullied and a child who is displaying bullying behaviour. This places the focus on the behaviour rather than the labeling the child as a victim or bully, which can be problematic terms.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is an abuse, or imbalance, of power that can be carried out by an individual or a group and is the repeated use of negative actions/aggression with the intention of deliberately hurting another person physically, emotionally or mentally. This results in pain and distress being caused to the child who has been bullied who may feel helpless to put a stop to it.

The Northern Ireland Anti-Bullying Forum definition of Bullying is: **“The repeated use of power by one or more persons intentionally to hurt, harm or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others.”**

The following is not an exhaustive list; however it is important to remember that some of these may be a one-off or irregular occurrence and would not therefore be viewed as being an incident of bullying. As stated above bullying is something that is sustained and repetitive over a period of time.

Bullying can be any one of, or a combination of:

Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, spitting, pinching or any other use of violence. Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.

Emotional - excluding, tormenting (hiding or damaging property, threatening gestures), belittling another's abilities or achievements, writing offensive notes, inappropriate use of new technologies e.g. email/text, excluding another pupil from a group activity, ridiculing a pupil's appearance or mannerisms etc.

Racist/Sectarian/Homophobic - racial/religious/homophobic taunts, graffiti, gestures.

Sexual - unwanted physical contact or abusive/personal comments.

Cyber – text, email or social media may be used to repeatedly send distressing or negative messages to cause distress to others

Possible Signs of bullying might include:

- Unwillingness to come to school
- Withdrawn, isolated behaviour
- Complaining about missing possessions
- Refusal to talk about the problem
- Being easily distressed
- Standard of work falling dramatically
- Rate of progress much slower than what would be expected for the individual
- Reports of bedwetting
- Damaged or incomplete work

This does not automatically mean that pupils showing signs, or aspects of the above are being bullied, as there may be other reasons causing such problems.

If unchecked, bullying can cause profound long and short-term damage to the victim, emotionally, physically or both, and can seriously disrupt the capacity to learn or develop. People react in varying ways to bullying, and it may not always be possible to tell if someone is hurt or upset.

Links to other school policies:

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following related documents/policy statements: Pastoral Care Policy, Positive Behaviour Policy and our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Main Features of our Policy

The main features of our anti-bullying policy of this school are:

- A caring and supportive ethos where the rights and well-being of the children are paramount.
- Clear procedures for staff, pupils and parents as to how concerns regarding suspected bullying should be handled.
- A determination that bullying will not be tolerated and that any incidents will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.
- Support for children who have been the target of bullying.
- Support for the child displaying bullying behaviour aimed at helping him/her to recognise and modify any anti-social behaviour.
- Whole school strategies to be employed to deal with specific bullying incidents.
- Classroom activities and strategies aimed at creating a climate where bullying becomes unacceptable amongst the children themselves.

The Responsibilities of Staff:

Our staff will:

- be consistent in approach when dealing with bullying concerns/behaviour;
- foster in our pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others;
- demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils;
- discuss bullying with all classes, so that every child learns about the damage it causes to both the child who is bullied and to the bully, and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens;
- be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying;
- listen to children who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them;
- deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively.
- keep a record of alleged/observed incidents and inform Mr Mullen of all incidents of bullying;
- check all the facts before determining whether or not bullying has taken place;
- keep parents informed;
- use of the curriculum to address issues of bullying and how pupils can deal with it (Circle Time and the Learning Area of Personal Development and Mutual Understanding are particularly relevant in addressing the needs of the children);
- make use of inter-board Anti-Bullying Week materials (NIABF);
- access agencies as required to support the school's position in trying to eradicate incidents of bullying. Examples of agencies/organisations that presently support the school in its anti-bullying programme include, PSNI, NSPCC, the Life Education Bus, the Education Welfare Service and 'Gateway'.

Designated Teacher For Child Protection: Mrs M Beattie

Deputy Designated Teacher For Child Protection: Mrs K Edwards

The Responsibilities of our Pupils:

We expect our pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of becoming temporarily unpopular.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying to help prevent any further occurrences.

The Responsibilities of Parents:

We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:

- Watching for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children, which might be the result of bullying.
- Advising their children to report any bullying to Mr Mullen/Mr McLean/their class teacher.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their children and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Keeping a written record of any instances of bullying and informing the school about these immediately.
- Co-operating with the school as it investigates the situation to establish the facts and endeavours to deal with the situation in an appropriate way.
- Understanding that bullying is a sustained and repeated action and realise that it is natural for children to have a disagreement or hit out on a one-off basis and that this may not be an instance of bullying.
- Not encouraging their children to respond in a manner contrary to the school rules in a bid to 'take the law into their own hands'.
- Not adding any further distress by constantly raising the matter with their child.
- Giving the perpetrator an opportunity to change.
- Not approaching the child who is alleged to have display bullying behaviour themselves but informing the school so that they can deal with the matter appropriately.
- Reporting any incidents that occur outside school to the PSNI.

Woodlawn's Agreed Procedures

- 1) It is essential that the staff are made aware of any suspected incidents as soon as they arise;
- 2) An investigation will begin immediately;
- 3) If evidence of bullying can be found then the child displaying bullying behaviour must be made aware that the behaviour is unacceptable and has caused distress.
- 4) The child being bullied will be made to feel safe and protected and must realise that revenge or "taking the law into one's own hands" is not appropriate in the situation.
- 5) Every effort will be made to resolve the problem through talking to both parties, and, where appropriate, sanctions will be applied as per the Positive Behaviour Policy.
- 6) Parents of both the child being bullied and the child displaying bullying behaviour will be informed of the situation and also how it has been dealt with depending on the seriousness of the bullying.

7) Detailed records will be kept and retained in the 'Behaviour File' located in Mr Mullen's office.

8) If the alleged bullying behaviour persists, further action will follow as per the Positive Behaviour Policy. Sanctions will be considered by the Principal in consultation with the relevant teacher, taking into account the nature of the incident.

9) The sanctions taken against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the case, but may include the one or more of the following:

- being subject to careful monitoring of behaviour/social interaction until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped;
- being kept in at break time and/or lunch time;
- losing any privileges or position of responsibility he/she holds in the school;
- being placed on report,
- being suspended in accordance with Education Authority's procedures;
- facing expulsion in accordance with Education Authority's procedures.

Depending on the needs of the pupils, it may be appropriate to provide staff support beyond that of the child's class teacher in the form of behaviour management programmes such as anger management and solution focused strategies.

Peer mediation may be appropriate when pupils have been trained in peer mediation techniques. Trained and supervised mediators through early intervention can help pupils resolve difficult situations and build trust between the children concerned. Training may be provided by outside agencies such as Childline, Education Authority North Eastern Region CASS, Education Welfare and the NSPCC.

How to prevent bullying:

Teachers and supervisors will always be vigilant. In some cases it may be appropriate to introduce a 'Buddy System' to assist children who feel anxious and need reassurance at break and lunch times.

It should be made clear to all children that bullying is unacceptable. We advocate a 'telling, listening and responding' environment where children should be encouraged to inform teachers or supervisors if they feel that they are being bullied and should be assured that their complaint will be taken seriously.

School rules should be stressed and children should be encouraged to look out for each other. 'Reformed' children who have displayed bullying behaviour should receive praise and encouragement.

Talking and listening, role-playing, Circle Time and PDMU activities should be used to help children to empathise with those who have been bullied and with those displaying bullying behaviour, and to develop skills for resolving conflict without resorting to violence.

School will highlight the aspect of bullying through awareness raising events such as Anti-bullying week or through teaching about cyber-bullying as part of our Internet Safety curriculum work.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Senior Management Team and the Board of Governors, in line with EA recommendations will review the policy every three years. All documentation relating to bullying issues will be collated and reviewed termly. This will allow the school to identify trends, eg. individuals/groups of pupils displaying bullying behaviour or hotspots where bullying behaviour is more likely to occur.

The School Council provides children with an opportunity to highlight concerns and collaborate with adults when discussing how bullying can be reduced or dealt with.

Worry boxes in school may highlight issues that can be addressed in class or in assemblies.

This policy will be reviewed in October 2020