



Feeling Safe to Learn: An Anti- Bullying Policy

Introduction

This policy has been written to support the Anti- Bullying campaign and leaflet designed by the School Council in National Anti- Bullying Week 2007. As the focus for the National Anti- Bullying Week 2009 was cyber- bullying, reference to this has been included in a review of this policy in February 2010.

It is the intention of the staff and governors to:

- recognise that bullying may occur in school
- provide advice and strategies for pupils to both prevent bullying and respond to specific incidents
- safeguard and promote the welfare of the children

Definition of Bullying

The working definition of bullying used in Holbrook Primary School has been written by the members of the School Council:

“Bullying is when you hurt someone, hurt their feelings or make someone feel scared, on purpose, to get a reaction or to use your power over them.”

There are other definitions of bullying:

“A person is bullied when he or she is exposed regularly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more persons.”

“Bullying can be distinguished from other unacceptable forms of aggression in that it involves dominance of one pupil by another, or group of others; it is pre-meditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident.”

“Any behaviour which harms others who do not have the skills or resources to counter this behaviour, could be seen as bullying.”

(Taken from Anti-bullying alliance website)

Unfortunately, the word ‘bullying’ can be overused or used in the wrong way. Incorrect use can detract from the serious nature of the issue. There will be many childhood upsets and incidents which are labelled as ‘bullying’ when they are not.

If two people of equal power or strength have an occasional fight or quarrel, this is not bullying.

Strategies

1. All reported incidents of bullying will be followed up.
2. All reported incidents of bullying will be recorded so that we can monitor the effectiveness of our responses.
3. Recording the incident involves who was involved, where and when it happened, what happened, what action was taken and how it was followed up.
4. A bullying log will be kept in the front office for use by members of staff.
5. Following up the incidents includes: talking to the child affected, talking to the child bullying or allegedly bullying, deciding on an appropriate action and deciding on which members of staff should be involved.
6. The member of staff will encourage the child doing the bullying to take responsibility for trying to solve the problem. Suggestions will be made by the child responsible of ways in which the other child could be helped to feel happier.
7. In some cases both children will be spoken to together, although the needs of the bullied child need to be taken into account and this type of one to one meeting is difficult for some children.
8. The member of staff will arrange a time (weekly) to review the situation and ensure there has been no reoccurrence.
9. The headteacher shall review the Anti- Bullying log on a regular basis and at least monthly.
10. Any further action will be decided by the headteacher.
11. All children must immediately report to the nominated person- in accordance with the school's E-safety policy, the receipt of any email or multi- media message that makes them feel uncomfortable, is offensive, threatening or bullying in nature and must not respond to any such email.
12. A CD Rom on E-safety has been provided to every family with a child at this school.

Prevention

Bullying and anti- social behaviour can be countered by teaching more appropriate behaviour. If children cannot relate properly to other children, we need to teach them to.

The best way to do this is to foster empathy with the feelings of others, in particular with the feelings of the bullied child.

Negative, punitive measures taken against the bully are likely to promote resentment and to aggravate, rather than solve, the problem.

The following strategies are useful:

- Raise issues in circle time and assemblies
- Involve pupils in defining behavioural expectations
- Develop peer support
- Provide a worry box system in the classroom
- Remind on-lookers that they, too, are involved
- Use the PSHE and SEAL curriculum to support work on dealing with bullying

School Council Priorities (Homophobic Language):

The School Council (November 2007) has given itself three actions for the year ahead:

- Buy a 'Buddy Bench' where pupils can go if they want someone to play with
- Have a School Councillor on duty each playtime, near the 'Buddy Bench'.
- Tell pupils that calling people 'gay' can be offensive.

In response to this a homophobic language log has been introduced alongside the anti-bullying log. The Staff Handbook contains the following statement:

"This issue was raised by the members of the school council during the Anti-Bullying week 2007 and needs to be taken seriously. We aim to record the number and type of homophobic bullying incidents so that we can monitor the effectiveness of our approach to diversity and education about difference. We owe it to all children to create an atmosphere where difference is accepted and tolerated. In any case, gender based assumptions and stereotypical images of masculinity and femininity need to be avoided as part of our equal opportunities approach.

There are unlikely to be incidents of homophobic behaviour based on the knowledge of any child's sexuality, so most incidents will be based on the use of terms in an abusive way (e.g. calling someone 'gay') as a way of undermining someone who does not fit the norm (e.g. calling a boy a 'girl') or isolating someone because of their personality.

Use the recording sheet for incidents of homophobic behaviour so that the overall effectiveness of the school's approach can be carried out and so that all pupils know that we will offer them protection. "

Signs of Bullying

A child may indicate by their behaviour that he/she is being bullied. If your child shows an unexplained change in behaviour and/or shows some of the following signs, bullying may be responsible.

Children may:

- Feel ill in the mornings
- Be frightened of walking to and from school
- Change their usual route
- Be unwilling to go to school
- Begin truanting
- Begin to do poorly in their school work
- Come home regularly with clothes or school work destroyed
- Come home starving
- Become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence
- Become distressed and anxious, stop eating
- Cry themselves to sleep and/or have nightmares
- Have their possessions 'go missing'
- Ask for money or start stealing (to pay the bully)
- Continually lose their tuck shop money
- Refuse to say what's wrong (too frightened of the bully)
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches and cuts
- Begin to bully other children
- Become aggressive and unreasonable
- Give improbable excuses to explain any of the above

(Source: 'Preventing Bullying: A Parents' Guide' from Kidscape)

Policy Development:

This policy will be reviewed annually in term one or two before the Anti-Bullying Charter is signed. It should be considered alongside other relevant policies such as the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy and the 'Be Bigger than the Bully' leaflet from the School Council, the E Safety Policy and the Safeguarding Children: A Child Protection Policy.