

# **Bedlington West End First School**

## **Anti-bullying Policy**

*West End First School is a supportive and caring school environment in which all children must feel safe and know that bullying is totally unacceptable and that any reports of bullying, either by children or adults, will be dealt with effectively.*

This policy should be read in conjunction with all school policies and specifically: the safeguarding, E-safety, anti-racism, discipline and behaviour, PSHE, Special Education Needs and disabilities policies and the school's equality objectives and action plan.

**West End First School seeks to provide a safe, secure and positive environment where:**

- Children and young people can achieve their potential, making full use of the opportunities available to them
- Children and young people are treated with respect and are free from intimidation.
- Children and young people have their property treated with respect

**West End First School seeks to ensure that all those responsible for the well-being of pupils :**

- Are proactive in setting up a range of preventative measures.
- Actively listen to children, young people and where appropriate their parents or carers.

### **Aims**

We believe all pupils have the right, without fear of intimidation, to a happy and secure education through which they can develop as confident, respectful, tolerant young people.

We seek to ensure that all pupils have this right upheld through the implementation of this and other relevant policies.

### **The nature of bullying**

Bullying may be defined as the abuse of power by an individual or group with the intent to cause distress to another individual or group. It is deliberately hurtful behaviour which may be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological in nature. It is repeated over a period of time on those who feel powerless to resist with the intention of causing distress or is a repeated behaviour by an individual or group on other individuals or groups.

Bullying should always be taken seriously. All bullying is unacceptable.

Bullying does not only occur between children. The above definition can also be seen to characterise some relationships between adults or between adults and children.

In more serious instances where adults abuse their power over a child or a child abuses their power over another child, bullying may be viewed as child abuse and should be treated as such.

**Bullying** is deliberately hurtful. It typically has seven elements:-

- *an initial desire to hurt*
- *the desire is expressed in action*
- *someone is hurt either physically or emotionally*
- *there is an imbalance of power*
- *it is without justification*
- *it is typically repeated*
- *there is evident enjoyment or self-justification by those who bully*

Bullying can also stem from thoughtlessness, such as in name calling, or stem from institutionalised attitudes, for example in relation to gender or race. That does not make it any less unacceptable.

**Bullying can typically take these forms:**

- Physical bullying     *hitting, kicking, taking belongings*
- Verbal bullying     *name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks*
- Indirect bullying     *spreading nasty stories, exclusion from social groups.*
- Cyber-bullying     *Causing distress to others by use of electronic communications e.g. text messaging, social networking sites, e-mail, interactive gaming*
- Targeted bullying     *Targeting someone because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour, sexual or gender orientation or some form of special educational need or disability.*

Bullying is always significant to the person being bullied.

### **Cyber bullying**

Cyber bullying can be used to target any victim and can take many forms including, but not exclusive to:

- Threatening or abusive text messaging or emails
- Threatening or abusive messaging on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, Whatsapp etc

- Threatening or abusive messaging over online gaming sites and consoles
- Sharing of private data, images or information about a victim over social networking sites, messaging systems etc
- Using private data or images to threaten or blackmail
- Using social media to make and share derogatory, insulting, hurtful or untrue comments about a victim, even if the victim is not included in the social network
- Participating in cyberbullying incidents even if you are not the instigator

School has a duty to take any bullying incident between its pupils seriously, including cyberbullying. School will investigate any reported cyberbullying incident between its pupils, even if it has taken place over networks outside of school and outside of school hours. Following the investigation action will be taken in line with the Anti-bullying policy. Parents will always be informed if their child has been involved in a cyber bullying incident.

### **Racist Bullying**

Following the Stephen Lawrence incident, the 1999 MacPherson report defines racist bullying as *“any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”*

A child or young person may be targeted for representing a group. Attacking the individual sends a message to that group. Incidents can include, but are not exclusive to:

- Verbal abuse – name calling, racist jokes, offensive mockery / mimicry
- Physical aggression or threats
- Wearing offensive or provocative badges or other insignia
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines into the school premises
- Racist inciting of others
- Racist graffiti or other written insults including against food, music, dress or customs
- A refusal to associate with someone of other ethnic origin in work or play
- Cyberbullying

### **Sexual Bullying**

Sexual bullying is characterised by, but not exclusive to, the following:

- Abusive name calling
- Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- Pornographic material
- Graffiti with sexual content
- Cyberbullying

In its most extreme form, sexual bullying takes the form of sexual assault or even rape. Under these circumstances police would normally be involved as these are criminal offences.

## **Bullying because of Gender Identity**

Pupils do not have to be lesbian, gay, trans-sexual, bi-sexual, trans-gender or gender neutral to experience this type of bullying. In most cases being different can be enough. Bullying activities may include but are not exclusive to:

- Name calling, mockery, mimicry
- Derogatory or deliberately upsetting comments about appearance or clothing
- Gender specific comments, e.g. boys shouldn't play with dolls, girls can't play football
- Physical aggression or threats
- Cyber bullying

## **Bullying because of Special Educational Needs or Disabilities**

Children and young people with special needs or disabilities are often at a great risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly. The bullying is usually about, but not exclusive to, their specific difficulties or their appearance. This is compounded by the fact that these children and young people may not be able to articulate their experiences. Staff must be particularly vigilant to possible bullying of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, especially where these impact on a child's ability to understand social situations, e.g. autism, or make communication difficult.

## **Recognising Bullying**

Both boys and girls bully and can bully as individuals or as members of a group. Children who bully others come from any kind of social or cultural background. Adult bullying of children also occurs and is equally unacceptable.

Bullying always creates inequalities and is damaging to all those involved. The person being bullied, the person who bullies and those who witness or know about the bullying are all affected in some way. Those who bully can experience difficult and unhappy relationships with both peers and adults and frequently need help to overcome these difficulties. Research evidence has shown that those who bully are more likely to engage in anti-social activities and have a greater prevalence of poor mental health.

A child or young person could have experienced both being bullied and having bullied others. Bullying is not a natural part of growing up and should never be accepted as such.

Those who bully may show aggression through for example, poor control of impulsive actions, a positive view of violence or a desire to dominate. They may exhibit anxiety through for example low self esteem or difficulties in making friends. They may be easily led in joining in bullying or in standing by whilst bullying takes place.

Those who bully may experience difficulty in admitting what they have done; be reluctant to admit that what they have done is wrong; suppress feelings of guilt; feel no remorse and repeat the hurtful action, especially if this goes unchallenged.

Those who are bullied may spend their lives in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and feel that they have done something to attract the bullying. Any child or young person can be bullied.

Those who are being bullied may experience:

- Unhappiness
- A sense of desolation and in some cases, desperation
- Reduced self esteem and self worth
- Poor academic performance
- Exclusion from normal social experience
- A strong desire to escape the situation which may result in absconding or truanting
- A desire to self-harm or even to commit suicide

Those who are being bullied may exhibit the following:

- Unwillingness to attend or participate in activities
- Unwillingness to venture into some areas of a building
- Fear of walking to school or of using public transport
- Underachievement
- Books or clothes destroyed
- Possessions and money going missing
- Signs of distress such as crying easily, lack of appetite
- Becoming withdrawn or disruptive and / or aggressive
- Stammering
- Stealing to pay the bully or replace missing possessions
- A variety of physical symptoms including cuts, bruising, aches, pain, faints, headaches, stomach upsets, bedwetting, disrupted sleep patterns
- A marked change in well established patterns of behaviour
- Secretiveness about school, friendships or social media

Those who are bullied are often reluctant to say what is wrong or to seek help.

Organisations that tolerate bullying are less effective; morale is lower and absenteeism is more frequent.

## **How do we prevent bullying?**

**To ensure that all children and staff know what is meant by bullying we will:**

- use SEAL materials (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) to promote self-esteem and social skills.
- use SEAL themes in assemblies
- provide E-safety lessons to raise awareness of bullying by electronic means (texting, e-mail, social networking etc)
- use Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) themes and circle time activities
- use drama and role play

- create displays of artwork and writing which promote aspects of the policy.
- Support more vulnerable groups and individuals through nurture activities, circle of friends activities and support from Inclusion Mentor
- participate in national Anti-bullying week and Safer internet day
- participate in Show Racism the Red Card activities

**To encourage children to tell staff about bullying incidents we will:**

- inform the children of procedures during PSHE, assemblies and themes week and remind them regularly
- teach the definitions of bullying in a language which they can understand.
- teach that in cases of bullying the children must: **shout, run, tell an adult, keep telling until the problem is dealt with**
- raise awareness of how to deal with bullying through displays of work and information posters
- investigate any report of bullying immediately and thoroughly
- praise pupils for informing staff about bullying
- inform victims of the steps taken against the bully and, where appropriate, ensure an apology is given

**To make every effort to supervise children carefully we will:**

- ensure all staff are on duty on time and back in the classroom on time after break.
- ensure that lunchtime supervisors supervise designated areas during lunch breaks.
- monitor cloakrooms and toilets closely.
- ensure children play in designated areas and staff are alert to any negative behaviour.
- ensure all staff are alert to possible bullying, both in the playground and in school.
- ensure all staff are made aware when a bullying incident has occurred and are informed of suspected bullying so that they can be vigilant in supervising the children involved.

**To develop children's ability to challenge bullying behaviour we will:**

- provide opportunities to rehearse how to deal with bullying e.g. role play.
- give the children some structure to use when dealing with 'bullying situations'.(shout, run, tell an adult, keep telling)
- teach children how to make assertive statements e.g. "Please go away. Stop. No" etc
- teach children how to respond to name calling e.g. "I would prefer you to call me by my correct name. I don't like that, please call me ..."
- give children the skills and confidence to leave a bullying situation.
- Give children the skills and confidence to be able to tell someone.
- Encourage children to support another child who may be being bullied by using the above strategies

**To promote school values which foster co-operative behaviour and reject bullying behaviour we will:**

- Develop a school ethos of acceptance of diversity, where everyone is valued
- Undertake whole school activities and theme days such as ‘smile and complement day’ to develop a positive school ethos
- Give pupils responsibilities such as lunchtime helpers and play leaders, particularly older pupils
- Establish an Anti-bullying ambassador team to keep the profile of anti-bullying activities high
- Participate in national and international awareness events, e.g. LGBT history month, black history month, autism awareness events etc.
- Visit places of worship, e.g. churches, synagogues, mosques
- Encourage visits from members of the local community representing different groups
- Recognise successes in both academic work and behaviour with house points, stickers and certificates, golden book etc.
- Encourage co-operative games.
- Promote the class and school rules
- Use thinking skills and co-operative and collaborative learning opportunities across the curriculum

**To promote staff and governor awareness of bullying and how to deal with it we will:**

- Hold regular staff training, including training on new technologies
- Provide induction for new staff on policies and procedures
- Provide annual reports to governing body on bullying incidents from log
- Regularly review the anti-bullying and other associated policies (e-safety, safeguarding, discipline and behaviour, equality objectives)
- Analyse data from bullying incidents (where appropriate)

**Procedures in case of a bullying incident**

- Any reported incident must be taken seriously and dealt with as soon as possible
- The member of staff informed of the incident must investigate with the children involved to discover the extent of the incident, unless time constraints render this impossible in which case the Headteacher or a member of the SLT must be informed
- The children involved will usually be talked to separately and then an outcome decided e.g. the children may discuss the situation together with the teacher or the Headteacher to resolve the situation.
- The member of staff dealing with the incident will make the bully aware of the outcome of his actions and that bullying will not be tolerated.
- Following investigation the bully will receive sanctions appropriate to the level of bullying, e.g. losing the following playtime, apologising to the victim (verbally or in writing as appropriate), staying with an adult on the playground during playtime

instead of playing with peers, losing treats, such as trips, golden time etc. In more severe cases a child may receive a fixed term exclusion(see Behaviour and Discipline policy). In the most severe cases, when all other avenues have been explored and there is no improvement in the child's bullying behaviour, a permanent exclusion may be sought; this course of action will only be taken as a last resort.

- The Headteacher must always be informed when bullying has occurred. The incident is recorded in a log and the follow up action is also recorded.  
Who was involved?  
Where did it happen?  
What happened?  
What action was taken?  
How was it followed up?
- Victims of bullying are informed of the sanctions taken against the bully.
- Further work may be undertaken with victims and/or the bullies to help prevent further incidents e.g. self-esteem work, circle of friends and nurture group work

Parents of both the bully and the victim will be informed of any proven incidence of bullying and they will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter at school. Please also refer to the discipline and exclusion policy.

### **Review of policy**

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or in response to any changes to expectations from the Department for Education or Ofsted or to any incident in school or the wider community which may require policy changes. It should be read in association with the following policies: equality objectives, e-safety, safeguarding, discipline and exclusion, Special Educational Needs.

**This policy was approved for immediate implementation by the Strategic Development Committee on 16th October 2019.**

**Vanessa Foster      Chair of Strategic Development Committee**

**Date of next review:      October 2021**