

KEELHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

February 2014

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement of Keelham Primary School

Children at Keelham can expect exciting, enjoyable and high quality learning opportunities.

Staff members treat every child as an individual with their own needs.

Parents and Governors of Keelham support and encourage the development of the school within the community.

Everybody within school is a learner and can reach their full potential.

Everybody feels valued and knows their voice will be heard.

Rationale:

Everyone at Keelham Primary has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only then will all members of the school community be able to achieve their maximum potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this being able to happen and prevents equality of opportunity. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent this happening.

Where bullying exists, the victims must feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems in the school to end the bullying. It is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and help build an anti-bullying ethos in Keelham School.

Aims:

- To develop awareness of the nature of unacceptable behaviours
- To develop and maintain procedures for communicating and monitoring unacceptable behaviours
- To develop and maintain procedures for recording unacceptable behaviours
- To develop long and short term actions appropriate to the nature of the incident(s)
- To develop procedures for communicating and working with parents/guardians of both the victim and the child responsible for the bullying behaviour.

Definitions of Bullying:

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. Bullying is persistent and deliberate.

Physical: a child is physically hurt (punched kicked, hit, spat at). It can be perpetrated by individuals or groups.

Verbal: name calling, threatened violence, ridicule, or indirect verbal abuse (spreading stories etc).

Exclusion: by isolation from discussion or activity

Damage to property or theft: pupils may have property damaged or taken forcefully.
Cyber-bullying; abusive messages via text, email or social networking sites.

Reporting and Recording Procedures

All non-teaching and teaching staff must report signs of suspected bullying to the Headteacher in the first instance; the Assistant Manager in the event of the Headteacher's absence.

The following procedures will occur:

- Suspected bullying will be recorded in writing, immediately on an Incident Report Sheet (Staffroom), by the teacher or supervisor on duty. Place the sheet in the Head Teachers contact file.
- The Headteacher will discuss the behaviour with the children known to be involved.
- Incidents established as "bullying" behaviour (use guidelines) will be recorded by the Headteacher or Assistant Manager on the Incident Concern Sheet
- The Headteacher or Assistant Manager will decide on the appropriate action to be taken.

Procedures for Action - with the child/ren responsible for bullying

- Make it known that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated
- Make it known that it is being recorded and filed and that parents may/will be involved
- Respond to the unacceptable behaviour by labelling the behaviour, not the children
- Give sanctions appropriate to the distressing nature and frequency of the behaviour
- Give sanctions which can be carried out within the guidelines of the behaviour policy
- Give sanctions which may involve further counselling (see Bradford "Guidelines")

Procedures for Action – with the child who is the victim

- Ensure the victim understands the sanctions given
- Ensure the victim feels that there has been "fair play"
- Involve the victim in discussion with other children, only if they wish to be involved

At all times, when dealing with an incident, all staff should maintain calm, ensuring that due care and control of pupils is paramount. Those staff trained in 'Team Teach' should deal with any serious disruption.

Roles and Responsibilities

Head teacher;

- The Head teacher will be informed of all incidents of bullying and will deal with events quickly and sensitively in line with procedures.
- Reported incidents will continue to be monitored after the situation has been dealt with to ensure there is no repetition of events.

Class Teachers

- To take all forms of bullying seriously.
- To support the Headteacher, non-teaching and teaching staff in working within the framework of this and the Behaviour policy
- To ensure consistency of approach to the implementation of the Anti-bullying Policy
- To plan for and deliver the anti-bullying curriculum to children.

Lunchtime Supervisors

- To separate the victim and aggressor, and act within the Behaviour Policy guidelines
- To inform the Headteacher, Assistant Manager and class teacher of the incident
- To complete the Incident Report Sheet
- To be available to discuss the incident with the Headteacher/ Assistant Manager after the break.
- To supervise closely any child/ren causing concern.

Role of pupils

All pupils will be informed of the anti-bullying policy and procedures in school during the Anti-bullying week. All pupils must let someone know if they are being bullied in any form. They have a responsibility to themselves.

Pupils with Special Educational Needs

The children who have behavioural modification programmes will be subject to the School Behaviour Policy, and the Anti-bullying Policy, as far as is possible. The SENCO will be involved in incidents involving pupils with behavioural modification programmes.

Child protection

If there are concerns about a child protection issue resulting from a bullying case, steps should be taken in line with the school Child Protection Policy.

Guidelines when Talking with Victims (these are available for all staff members)

The power of bullying and its prevalence in many ways can be found in its secrecy. This fact is well worth bearing in mind when a child first attempts to tell you about bullying.

Victims may also be anxious about the consequences of telling you. Will the bully find out? Are you able to stop it? Are they making a fuss about nothing?

It is very important that any victim disclosing bullying is taken SERIOUSLY, and from their perspective they are initially believed.

It is important that the situation is normalised as much as possible and the victim is not encouraged to blame him/herself. Highlight the school policy in that it recognises the problem of bullying and that it takes everyone together to resolve this difficult problem.

Focusing on the situation helps some victim avoid blaming him/herself by depersonalising the events.

Something needs to be seen to be done. This could be as little as using the reporting form. It is a record of events and the victim has their statement taken seriously by its inclusion.

Although you may believe victims make themselves vulnerable either by their posture, clothes or isolation, try to avoid blaming the victim. Allow the child time to try and come up with their own solution. Any change in behaviour from the victim can only be expected if the school is attempting to deal with the bullying. Do resist the temptation to ask why they think the bully picked on them, this is not relevant at this stage.

Although, with provocative victims/colluding victims work on this may need to be done at a later stage.

Do not make promises you cannot keep. At all times inform the victim of what you plan to do, if possible negotiate with the victim their agreement to the plan. However, on some occasions as a caring adult you may have to make decisions against the victim's wishes.

Towards the end of your time with the victim summarise the information you have and go over any plan of action and remember to keep them informed. Finally, and most importantly, stress to the victim how well they have done in telling you about the problem.

Guidelines when Talking with Alleged Bullies

Bullying is an emotive topic. Many of us can recall our own or our children's experiences of being bullied. Recent cases in the media have highlighted some extreme forms of bullying with tragic consequences.

It is therefore important that we hold on to our professional role and ensure it is the bullying behaviour which we disapprove of and not the bully him/herself.

Attempts should be made to remain calm and fair when handling situations. When talking with alleged bullies every effort should be made not to use forms of humiliation, intimidation or other aggressive means. Such actions may be interpreted as legitimising bullying behaviour. It is important to help bullies realise and own the implication of their behaviour.

The following section by Eric Jones from "Bullying – A Practical Guide to Coping for Schools" may be helpful in cutting through initial responses from alleged bullies.

Testing

Some quick tests might help to take the wind out of the sails of an assailant. Try these ideas to stop the aggressor in his/her tracks when s/he starts to make excuses for his aggressive behaviour.

- Beware the joke that isn't funny. "It was only a joke".

If one person was not party to the humour of it, but was rather the victim of it, then it wasn't a joke. Don't accept it as such.

- Beware the game that not everyone was playing. "We were only playing". Ask what the game was and check out everyone wanted to play.
- Beware the non-accidental accident. "It was an accident". This, too has a foolproof test. If a person did something accidentally to someone, then he/she should stay behind to help.
- "I found it" – we can ask the simple question, "Why did you keep it?"
- "I was only borrowing it". That is a poor excuse for taking money from someone. Always ask these questions instantly, "What's his name? Where does he live? What class is he in? What/s his birthday? Ask anything to demonstrate that the child knows nothing of the victim.
- The discussion with the alleged bully encourages him/her to consider if they could have handled it differently, and to learn that he/she is responsible for his/her own actions.

It is important that any major confrontation with bullies is done in privacy to ensure that they are not allowed to "milk" any situation for group attention or esteem.

Any action considered about facing the bully with the victim needs to be carefully thought through. Preparation for his needs to include the victim's safety and assuring that the bully would not gain further pleasure from this situation.

We recommend these approaches where the victim feels strong enough, the alleged bully receptive to such an exchange and you feel able to manage the complexities of interactions. (See No Blame Approach.)

General Counselling/Communication Techniques

- Be clear about how much time you have
- Find a place where you are unlikely to be disturbed.
- Position yourself slightly to the side of the person, try not to have desks or tables between you
- Use appropriate eye contact – (children tend not to like a lot of direct eye contact)
- Give re-assuring non-verbals, occasional nods of the head, etc
- Allow the person time to say what they have to say
- Summarise what you have heard so far – as far as possible use the person's own language and terminology
- Use open questions, "Who were there?" ... "What happened next?"...etc
- Avoid leading questions
- Avoid asking "why" questions – these are hard to answer as an adult never mind a child
- Do allow free expression of emotion, i.e. anger or crying. Allow the person to cry without feeling awkward. Try to avoid being protective and smoothing over superficially.
- Empathise with feelings, but be cautious not to prescribe feelings – you might get it wrong – check it out.
- Do not make promises you are unable to keep
- Be clear what you are going to do with the information

As members of a school staff team you already have many skills for communicating with children; please do not lose sight of these when reading through this section of the guidance notes.

