

Statement of Intent

All children and young people at Chaigeley School are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment. This means they should be free from all forms of bullying behaviour. Our Anti-Bullying Policy outlines how instances of bullying will be dealt with by the school and the strategies put in place to prevent occurrences of bullying. These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines a number of legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, our school must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst children. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour Policy which is communicated to all children, school staff and parent/carers.

All staff, parent/carers and children will work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at our school. There is a zero tolerance policy in place at Chaigeley School.

What is bullying?

Bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another. It is often difficult for a victim to defend themselves against bullying.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs but frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm. It is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

What does bullying look and sound like?

Many different kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying. Bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another child because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Categories of bullying include:

- **Verbal** – name calling, imitating, teasing, insulting, spreading rumours, swearing, and making threats.
- **Physical** – any unwanted or inappropriate touching, physical intimidation, hitting, pushing and shoving, kicking, pinching, poking, damaging or taking of belongings, threats of violence and extortion.
- **Emotional** – spreading rumours, deliberate exclusion from groups, tormenting, ridiculing, isolating, refusing to work with another child, revealing personal information, threatening, inciting others to treat in an individual in a manner that could be considered bullying.
- **Cyber** – online threats and intimidation, harassment/"cyber-stalking", defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images. (It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect).

Legal issues related to bullying

Under the Equality Act 2010, the school has a responsibility to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act; advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, schools could have charges brought against them if they allow the rights of children and young people at their school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The National Association of Headteachers has acknowledged this, adding to their guidelines that headteachers must “satisfy themselves” that their school’s anti-bullying policy complies with the HRA 1998. Headteachers cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications could be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988 it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or which conveys a message which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying, which are illegal and should be reported to the police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

Prevention

Staff will encourage child co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work.

Bullying will be discussed as part of the curriculum, and diversity, difference and respect for others should be promoted and celebrated through various lessons.

Changing and organising seating arrangements in class can help to prevent instances of bullying.

Potential victims of bullying should be drawn into working groups with children who do not abuse or take advantage of them.

Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, for example, drama productions, sporting activities, cultural groups.

All members of the school community should be made aware of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy.

All staff members should have received some training on identifying and dealing with bullying.

A safe, supervised place, such as the library, should be available for pupils to go to at lunch if they are involved in conflict with their peers or wish to avoid a bully.

Staff guidance principles

Prevention will be at the forefront of our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Staff will treat reports of bullying very seriously.

Staff will not ignore suspected bullying.

Unpleasantness from one child towards another will always be challenged and never ignored.

Staff will take action immediately. This applies to all staff, not only teaching staff.

Staff will respect children's privacy and information about specific instance of bullying will not be discussed with others, unless in a setting that the victim gives consent to.

Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and bully for a period of time following the incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible harassment of children and deal with incidents of bullying as the highest priority.

The governors will evaluate and review the Anti-Bullying Policy, and will ensure that it is non-discriminatory.

The Principal will review and amend the policy, taking account of new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures. The Principal will keep a record of all reported incidents and provide appropriate training for staff members.

Each Form Tutor will correspond and/or meet with parents where necessary. They will also provide a point of contact when more serious bullying incidents occur.

Each Form Group staff will be alert to social dynamics in their class and be available for children who wish to report bullying. They will also provide follow-up support following bullying incidents.

Teaching Assistants will ensure that they are alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the child's Form Tutor of such observations. Throughout the year, the composition of groups shows sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.

The First Aid Co-ordinator is often the first person to receive reports of bullying, and will offer emotional support to the victims, and will alert the Heads of Education and Form Tutors.

Parent/carers should inform their child's Form Tutor if they are concerned that their child may be bullied or be involved in bullying.

Children should inform a staff member if they witness bullying, or are a victim of bullying. They should not respond to bullying by making counter-threats, children should walk away from any dangerous situations and avoid involving other children in incidents. Children should be advised to retain all evidence of cyber-bullying.

Procedures for dealing with bullying

Minor incidents will be reported to the child's Form Tutor, who should investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator, and complete an incident sheet or a cause for concern form, putting the bullying on the Sexist, Racist, and Bullying Log on the staff server.

The procedure outlined below will be adopted by all staff in serious incidents.

Interviews

- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all to be interviewed separately.
- Try to ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the children interviewed, for example by texting.

- If a child is injured, take the child immediately to the First Aid Co-ordinator/First Aider for treatment and to log the extent of their injuries.
- Use a room that allows you to interview in privacy. A witness is recommended for serious incidents.
- If appropriate and/or necessary, ask all parties (bully, victim and witnesses) to write down details of the incident. This may need prompting with questions from you to obtain the full picture.
- Avoid making premature assumptions. It is important not to be judgemental at this stage. Listen carefully to all accounts, be non-confrontational and do not attach blame until your investigation is complete.
- Adopt a “problem-solving” approach, asking the bully to suggest ways they could have improved the situation, and, if the victim has provoked the bullying incident, helping them to understand more appropriate ways of behaving.
- Inform all children concerned that they must not discuss the interview with other children.

Record keeping.

- The person who conducted the interviews should write out a brief summary of the incident. A separate interview sheet should be completed for each child involved and the written statements of each part should be included.
- This record should then be forwarded on to the Principal, who is responsible for holding all records centrally.
- A copy should also be forwarded to the Heads of Education for each child involved in the incident, and any witnesses who the interviewing teacher is concerned may have been involved.

Action and sanctions

- Conventional sanctions, such as after-school detentions, may be pursued. In addition to this, the following actions should be taken. Discretion can be used.

Appropriate action to deal with the bully:

- If you are satisfied that bullying did take place, help the child to understand the consequences of their actions and warn them that there must be no further incidents. Inform them of the type of sanction to be used in this instance and future sanctions if the bullying continues.
- If possible, try for reconciliation and a genuine apology from the bully. This can be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate) or face-to-face, but only with the victim’s full consent. (Discretion should be used here; victims should never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully).
- Make them realise that some children do not appreciate the distress they are causing, and that they should change their behaviour.
- Try to reach an agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour.
- Prepare the bully to face their peer group – discuss what they will say to others.
- Inform parent/carers about bullying incidents and what action is being taken. Face-to-face meetings between the Form Tutor and parent/carers may be appropriate.
- The Form Tutor should informally monitor the children involved over the next half term.

Appropriate actions to deal with the victim:

- If the child visits the First Aid Co-ordinator, the First Aid Co-ordinator should check whether the bullying has stopped.
- The Form Tutor should informally check whether the bullying has stopped on a weekly basis for a month after the complaint of bullying.
- The Heads of Education should formally check whether the structures are in place and acted on.
- If necessary, break up group dynamics by asking staff to assign places in classes and in the form room.
- Encourage the victim to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.
- Encourage the victim to broaden their friendship groups.

Follow-up

- The progress of both the bully and the victim should be monitored by their respective Form Tutors. One-to-one sessions to discuss how they are getting on may be appropriate.
- If the incident was sufficiently serious, follow-up correspondence with parents a month after the incident may be necessary. This should be from the Principal.
- Children who have been bullied will be supported by:
 - Being listened to and having an immediate opportunity to meet with their Form Tutor or member of staff of their choice.
 - Being reassured
 - Being offered continued support.
 - Being offered counselling where appropriate.
- Children who have bullied others will be supported by:
 - Receiving a consequence to their actions.
 - Being able to discuss what happened.
 - Reflecting on why they became involved.
 - Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour.
 - Appropriate assistance from parent/carers.

Bullying outside of school

Teachers have the power to discipline children for misbehaving outside the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the teacher can only discipline the child on school premises, or elsewhere when the child is under the lawful control of the staff member.

The Principal has specific statutory power to discipline children for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Principal the power to regulate children's conduct when they are not on school premises and therefore not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

The Principal should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police in their local authority of the action taken against the child. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Source: SPD

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