

**BEECH
HOUSE
SCHOOL**

BULLYING

POLICY DOCUMENT

Bullying

1. Introduction

Bullying is an insidious social problem found in many occupations and walks of life. In the school environment it can be found amongst both pupils and the staff. The role of the headmaster, as manager of the school, is to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, that structures and procedures embedded in school behaviour policies prevent bullying. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the whole school community to eradicate bullying by ensuring the development of a caring and supportive ethos.

Pupils:

The headmaster is responsible for promoting good behaviour and discipline in line with the statement of general principles. A written policy should be drawn up which will include procedures for making and enforcing school rules. There are four major elements to those disciplinary rules:

- Promote self-discipline and proper regard for authority among pupils.
- Encourage good behaviour and respect for others to ensure as far as is reasonably practicable the prevention of all forms of bullying among pupils.
- Ensure pupils' standard of behaviour is acceptable.
- Regulate pupils' conduct.

It is good practice to indicate in the school prospectus the main tenets of the policy, which should be given to the parents on admission of their child.

The employer also has duties under the Health and Safety at Work, etc. Act 1974 to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all those using the premises. This includes pupils, parents and visitors. Headmasters have a legal duty to take measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils.

Staff:

Professional relationships between members of staff are best conducted with respect and in a non-threatening manner, but there is also a legal requirement for the employer to provide a safe place of work for employees and all others that use the establishment (the Health & safety at work, etc, Act 1974). The employer has the responsibility to ensure this legal responsibility is fulfilled. That responsibility cannot be delegated. However, the headmaster will be required to ensure that enactment of that responsibility within the school. The headmaster therefore has a duty to do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees. As bullying can irrevocably damage the mental health of an individual, it is clear responsibility extends the eradication of bullying in the work place.

2. Identifying the Problem

Pupils:

Children who are being bullied at school will not always be prepared to tell those in authority. However, when a disclosure is made, it should always be treated seriously. While others may not feel that certain actions or words are of a bullying nature, if the recipient feels that they are being bullied that is sufficient evidence to treat the case a prima facie bullying.

For those pupils who are unable to inform staff about their problem, observations regarding specific behaviour patterns can be routinely established within the school. 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 distracted.
- Damaged or incomplete work.

Where these difficulties are associated with a special needs pupil, a pupil from a minority racial or cultural background, or where there are indications of sexual harassment, these indicators may well confirm bullying is occurring. Investigation should be undertaken, checking with colleagues and maintain rigorous vigilance.

Staff will be able to use their knowledge of the pupils to identify changes in their behaviour that might indicate bullying. The school policy should identify the process to be pursued when staff have concern with regard to a particular pupil. Pupils should be encouraged to be open with their parents who can then pass on concerns to school.

Staff:

Bullies are often in positions of power or authority over their victims. They may behave as they do hide their own inadequacies or their personal envy of another colleague. Bullying may occur between professional teaching staff, support staff and voluntary workers. Overwork can also lead to bullying with the bully inflicting their frustration and anger on their colleagues. Tell-tale signs in victims are indicated in the following list, which is neither inclusive nor exclusive:

- General low morale.
- Increased level of staff turnover.
- High rates of absenteeism.
- Frequent disputes, complaints, and grievances.
- Isolated members of staff.
- Inefficient team working.

Firm Management style can often be given as an excuse for what is seen by others as

bullying.

3. Methods of Prevention

Creating a supportive climate:

- Victims of bullying, both pupils and staff, may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. They feel powerless and vulnerable. Self-esteem can be badly damaged and self-confidence needs to be re-established.
- The school should declare that bullying will not be tolerated and that all incidents will be taken very seriously.
- Investigations into bullying incidents should be thorough and involve both the bully and the bullied.
- The bully should be helped to recognise their unsociable behaviour and offered support to modify that behaviour.
- Bullying will not be eradicated if the behaviour of the bullies is not modified. Efforts should be made to identify why a pupil has bullied; support can then be offered to the bully to prevent reoccurrence.
- Ways of reporting bullying must be clearly established for both pupils and staff.
- Parents must be clear as to how they can ensure their concerns for their child are taken seriously.
- Consideration should be given to appropriate “assertiveness” training for the bullied and other vulnerable groups.

4. The School Policy

The school policy dealing with bullying may stand alone as a separate policy. There are elements that all schools should consider including in the policy:

- Take all bullying problems seriously, both of pupils and adults.
- Investigate all incidents thoroughly.
- Ensure that bullies and victims are interviewed separately.
- Obtain witness information.
- Keep a written record of the incident where a pupil is involved.
- Inform appropriate staff where a member of staff is involved.
- Ensure that action is taken to prevent further incidents. Such action may include:
 - Imposition of sanctions.
 - Obtaining an apology.
 - Informing parents of both bully and bullied.
 - Providing appropriate training.
 - Provide mentor support for both victim and bully.

Parents should be made aware of the school complaints procedure, and be assured that, should they make a complaint through that procedure; the matter will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly.

5. Anti-Bullying Measure for Pupils.

Safe environment for pupils:

Schools have a duty to provide a safe environment for their pupils and this duty is again emphasised in the government's five outcomes for children. "Stay Safe": safe from bullying and discrimination". The Children Act 2004 provides the legislative foundation.

The nature of bullying:

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
- Verbal: Name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect: Spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones.

"Kidscape" Include:

- Physical: pushing, pinching, and form of violence, threats.
- Verbal: Sarcasm, persistent teasing.
- Emotional: tormenting, threatening ridicule, humiliation.
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, abusive comments.

How should we address incidents of Bullying in Schools?

If pupils perceive they are BEING BULLIED IT RESTS WITH THE SCHOOL TO ADDRESS THE PROBLEM. Bullying is an intensely complicated issue, which involves a fear of "difference" as well as the difficult dynamics of pupils just growing up and the peer pressure they have to face. It is essential therefore, for school leaders to ensure that an ethos prevails within their schools, where pupils respect each other and accept differences.

Key to tackling bullying is trust. This means keeping the bullied child safe while working with the child who is bullying, to manage the situation and recognise when more radical action needs to be taken. Developing this level of trust not only helps in tackling individual cases, but ensures that children and their families believe that bullying will be dealt with properly.

Schools will have an anti-bullying policy, which covers procedures to be followed, but it is important to carefully log the headmaster's decision, the action taken and the reasons for that action, to ensure that the situation is monitored and to make adjustments to current practice.

THE SCHOOL POLICY

Approaching the problem of bullying forms an integral part of the schools' pastoral programme from the Nursery to Year Eleven. By having a school policy we hope to:

1. Raise awareness through the curriculum.
2. Develop a sense of responsibility in pupils in their dealings with other people.
3. Give pupils opportunities to talk about bullying in general.
4. Prevent bullying.
5. Develop procedures for investigating incidents.
6. Deal with bullying if it occurs.
7. Use appropriate sanctions as and when necessary.

It is approached at each stage of a child's education in an appropriate way, taking into account age and maturity. At each stage the needs of the bully and victim are given equal attention, with the aim of educating one about the other and so highlighting the awareness of the problem of the individual.

We operate within a policy of sanctions for bullying, but hope that guidance and counselling will prevent situations from reaching this final stage.

It is important that pupils feel confident about approaching staff with the problem of bullying, either of themselves or others. All reports, by pupils, staff or parents, of bullying are given serious attention and are investigated thoroughly. Sometimes the solution will be in bringing bully and victim together to discuss the problem. At other times, it will involve parental support to reinforce the school's standing on the issue. Action is swift and firm once the situation is brought to our attention and proved. Racial harassment, in any format, will not be tolerated.

PREVENTATIVE TACTICS

1. THE POLICY

All staff will act on the policy and discuss with pupils what counts as bullying in our school.

2. KNOWING THE SCHOOL

A school-wide observation exercise is carried out at regular intervals to chart trouble spots. This exercise involves:

- (a) Spot checks.
- (b) Getting pupils to write about (or to draw a plan of) areas of the school which are safe or unsafe and what should be done about this.

- (c) Asking pupils to write anonymously about bullying and what should be done about it.
- (d) Keeping full records of all incidents, discussion and any resolution.

SUPPORTING THE PUPILS

All teachers will be watchful and observe the social relationships between pupils in a class. All pupils should know that the school cares about bullying and that they should speak out about it, and to whom. Special care is taken with new pupils to ensure that they are fully integrated into the school.

We try to think ahead and support both potential victims and bullies by:

- (a) Training victims to be more assertive or more skilled socially.
- (b) Teaching bullies to control their aggression or be more empathetic.
- (c) Involving other pupils in helping victims and bullies.

USING THE CURRICULUM

Messages about acceptable behaviour get transmitted in the classroom through:

1. The pastoral programme.
2. Drama or role play.
3. Discussions or debates.
4. Games.
5. Assemblies.
6. Extra-curricular activities.
7. Example set by staff.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSES TO BULLYING

If a teacher comes across bullying, he or she will:

1. Remain calm.
2. Take the incident or report seriously.
3. Take action as quickly as possible.
4. Think hard about whether the action needs to be private or public.
5. Reassure the victim(s).
6. Offer concrete help/advice and support to the victim(s).
7. Make it plain to the bully that we disapprove.
8. Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.
9. Punish the bully if necessary.
10. Explain clearly the punishment and why it is being given.

The teacher will also:

1. Inform the relevant member of the senior management and the record the incident in a book.
2. Inform colleagues if the incident arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant e.g. unsupervised toilets.

The teacher will not:

1. Be over protective and refuse to allow the victim to help him/herself.
2. Assume the bully is bad through and through.
3. Keep the whole incident a secret because he/she has dealt with it.

SANCTIONS

Once a report of bullying has been investigated thoroughly by a Form Tutor and /or any Teacher, any pupil found guilty of the offence will be referred to a Deputy Head. The Deputy Head will notify the Headmaster and the parents of the child will be invited to the school for discussions.

Sanctions should be fairly and consistently applied. They include:-

1. Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges.
2. Detention.
3. Removal from class – internal suspension.
4. Fixed period exclusion.

The bully will, ultimately, be excluded from school, so that as well as punishing the bully, parents and children can see action has been taken.

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