

**Bedlingtonshire Community High School**  
**Anti-bullying Policy and Guidelines**



**Introduction**

*“An educationally inclusive school is one in which the teaching and learning, achievements, attitudes and well being of every young person matter.....*

*The most effective schools do not take educational inclusion for granted..... They identify any pupils who may be missing out ..... They take practical steps to meet pupils’ needs effectively and they promote tolerance and understanding in a diverse society”*

(OFSTED)

Whilst this quotation is taken from a general statement about educational inclusion, what is says is at the heart of any strategy to tackle bullying. Bullying by its very nature excludes pupils from their full educational entitlement and is therefore unacceptable in any form. Young people themselves highlight bullying as a matter of significant importance to them, including bullying by adults as well as by other young people. All schools should aspire to being inclusive and an anti-bullying strategy should be built upon an overall inclusive ethos which should underpin all that the school sets out to achieve.

All schools must by law have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying. This document is intended to support schools and other settings in formulating and implementing their policies. It will be followed up by further guidance, including references to other documents and sources of support and by a programme of support and training.

In drawing up these guidelines, Northumberland County Council has taken into consideration guidelines and recommendations from the DFE and a range of voluntary organisations working in this field.

This document takes into account the latest guidance from the DFE document [‘Preventing and tackling bullying in schools \(October 2014\)’](#)

This policy also takes into account the guidance from the recent [‘Working Together’](#) and [‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’](#) guidance from the Department for Education.

This document also takes into account duties and responsibilities that arise from the Human Rights Act 2000.

### **Statement of Principle**

Bedlingtonshire Community High 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 involved have the right to have themselves and their property treated with respect and to be free from intimidation.

Bedlingtonshire Community High School seeks to protect these basic human rights by ensuring that those acting on their behalf:

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

### **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.

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:-

1. an initial desire to hurt
2. the desire is expressed in action
3. someone is hurt either physically or emotionally
4. there is an imbalance of power
5. it is without justification
6. it is typically repeated
7. there is evident enjoyment 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 four forms**

1. Physical bullying *hitting, kicking, taking belongings*
2. Verbal bullying *name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks*
3. Indirect bullying *spreading nasty stories, exclusion from social groups.*
4. Cyberbullying *using the internet or other electronic devices to engage in name calling, insulting and other forms of bullying*

Name calling is the most common direct form. This may be because of individual characteristics. However, pupils can be called names because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour, sexual orientation or some form of disability.

The use of mobile phones to text insulting, obscene or threatening messages is both verbal and indirect bullying. The use of phones, including camera phones to harass or transmit derogatory text messages and or photographs must also be viewed as bullying.

Bullying is always significant to the person being bullied.

## **Bullying by Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Disability**

### **1. 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:

- 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 or organisation's 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

***For further information and guidance consult the Northumberland County Council anti-racism policy***

### **2. Sexual Bullying**

Sexual bullying is characterised by 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

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.

## **Sexual Orientation**

Pupils do not have to be lesbian, gay or bi-sexual to experience this type of bullying. In most cases being different can be enough. (In a survey 82% of teachers in 300 secondary schools in London were aware of verbal incidents. Only 6% of these schools referred to this type of bullying within their policy).

Factors hindering schools in challenging homophobic bullying include staff inexperience and parental disapproval.

*For further information and guidance consult the DfES publication on homophobic bullying "Stand Up for Us"*

### **3. 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 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.

## **Recognising Bullying**

A recent survey showed that bullying in schools is widespread. Although bullying can occur on journeys to and from school, most takes place in school. Research shows that 75% of bullying in primary schools takes place in the playground. In secondary schools it is also most likely outdoors but other hotspots are classrooms, corridors and toilets, especially when supervision is minimal.

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

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.

### **Policy Guidelines**

Head Teachers must by law have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. This policy must comply with the Human Rights Act 2000.

It is the responsibility of all staff to understand their establishment's anti-bullying policy and to support its implementation through a robust strategy. The systems and procedures of the organisation must reflect the policy. There must be effective monitoring, recording and analysing of the frequency and nature of bullying within the organisation. A policy will only be effective if everyone has discussed and understood the problem of bullying and reached agreement on what is good practice.

The following actions will ensure that the anti-bullying policy is successfully implemented:-

1. Name a member of staff to be responsible for the anti-bullying strategy
2. Consult appropriate children, young people and adults in the development of the strategy
3. Review and reflect on the policy and its effectiveness regularly

4. Specify those types of behaviours that are considered to be bullying and therefore unacceptable
5. Make explicit reference to bullying by race, gender, sexual orientation or disability
6. Keep children, young people and adults informed of the developments within the strategy through a variety of means
7. Raise awareness of the effects of bullying on the victim
8. Encourage peer support and mediation
9. Provide support to those being bullied and to those alleged to be bullies
10. Provide a means for concerns to be voiced anonymously
11. Access staff training on bullying
12. Ensure that there is adequate supervision in identified high risk areas
13. Identify hot spots in the physical environment and make the necessary changes
14. Use a wide range of intervention methods within the strategy

### **Monitoring the Anti-bullying Policy and Strategy**

Monitoring is essential to help assess progress and evaluate the impact of the anti-bullying policy. The results will inform planning so that action can be targeted.

Surveys can uncover a number of issues including:

- The frequency of the bullying
- The type of bullying
- Who young people tell
- Any actions taken
- Who took action?
- If young people bully others once they have been bullied

Issues arising from such surveys should steer further development of the anti-bullying strategy.

## **Policy Development and implementation**

### **Stage 1 - Awareness raising and consultation**

The school's position on anti-bullying and the use of discriminatory behaviour is shared with all staff through this policy and forms the basis of half termly staff training through the pastoral leads.

Students are made aware of significance of bullying and what to do if they suspect bullying is taking place through assemblies, specific lessons in the PSHE programme, the school website and guest speakers.

Student feedback on bullying is sought annual during governor's reviews and in local and national health surveys. The school nurse plays a key role in promoting anti-bullying.

### **Stage 2 – Implementation**

The school lead on the implementation of the anti-bullying policy is the Assistant Headteacher responsible for the pastoral system. Together, with heads of year and other pastoral staff, this person chairs the school's anti-bullying working group.

The school promotes anti-bullying practices through all staff interactions with students, uses restorative justice meetings, through PSHE, anti-bullying conferences, peer mentors, anti-bullying assemblies and weeks.

### **Stage 3 – Monitoring**

A termly report on the number and nature of bullying incidents is monitored and actioned by the assistant headteacher responsible for the pastoral system. Information from this is used to direct staff resources and is fed back to the governing body.

On a day to day basis, all staff are responsible for identifying, logging and tackling bullying incidents. Where appropriate, these are dealt with by all staff, but may be passed onto heads of year, learning mentors or the school nurse.

As part of the annual review of the pastoral system, the lead governor will ask groups of students about how the school tackles bullying and how effective this is.

Parents' views are sought through bi-annual surveys.

### **Stage 4 – Evaluation**

Information from the annual governor's review is shared with the governing body along with other review information.

The anti-bullying working group meets every half term to evaluate the effectiveness of procedures and to discuss forthcoming anti-bullying initiatives.

## **Strategies and Procedures for dealing with bullying**

**Preventative Work** – this is carried out by all staff and in particular pastoral staff. It is done through assemblies, PSHE lessons and general discussions with students.

### **Strategies to Deal with Bullying on School Premises**

1. All types of bullying are referred to within this policy
2. Bullying incidents are reported to pastoral staff by all staff
3. Bullying incidents are logged and patterns identified.
4. Staff training on bullying and other related issues as part of half termly pastoral CPD
5. School has a lead member of staff to offer advice to lesbian, gay and bi-sexual pupils
6. Recognise and consistently challenge sexual, racist and homophobic content within verbal abuse
7. Explore children's and young people's understanding of their use of homophobic language through PSHE and work with learning mentors
8. Explore sexism and sexual bullying through the PSHE curriculum
9. The school site is well supervised at all times of the day
10. We explore issues of difference and diversity
11. Children and young people are listened to carefully and opportunities are made available for them to express their views and opinions
12. We work with school health, LIST and the LA in to supporting the implementation of the anti-bullying policy
13. We use peer mediation to resolve conflict through our peer mentor scheme
14. Use theatre in education to raise awareness and seek solutions
15. We explore and rejoice in differences and diversity through use in our assemblies and curriculum
16. We deal promptly with incidents
17. Ensure the immediate safety and well being of those being bullied

### **Recommended Strategies to Deal with Bullying Outside of School Premises**

A head teacher's duty of care to prevent bullying is applied only within the precincts of the school (*Leah Bradford-Smart v West Sussex County Council*).

However, a good deal of bullying takes place outside the school gates and on journeys to and from school.

This bullying may involve young people from the school, young people from other schools or young people not at school at all.

Our anti-bullying policy encourages all young people to tell a member of staff.

Where a pupil reports bullying off the school premises, we may:

- Talk to the transport company about bullying on buses;
- Talk to the headteachers of other schools, where pupils from these schools are bullying off the premises;

- Plan safe routes to school with the pupils;
- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside school premises;
- Talk to the local police about specific problem groups and problem areas

We will also apply the same consequences for bullying off the premises as we do for bullying on the premises.

### **Who to speak to if you are worried about bullying**

If students (or parents) are worried about bullying (as defined in this policy), we ask them to:

- Contact a member of staff as soon as possible (ideally the form tutor or head of House)
- Go to the school website and make an entry in the electronic 'bully-box'
- Speak to a peer mentor at break or lunchtime

| <b>Revision Record of Final Versions</b> |                      |                |  |
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