

# THURLBEAR VA PRIMARY SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## 1 INTRODUCTION

**We seek to ensure that all of our children learn and thrive in an environment completely free from the fear of intimidation by others. Values such as compassion, respect and tolerance are key to our school.**

1.1 It is a government requirement that all schools have an anti-bullying policy. This policy reflects the guidance in the Education & Inspection Act 2006, and the DCSF publications 'Staying Safe - A consultation Document' 2007, 'Homophobic Bullying – Safe to learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in Schools' 2008, The Equality Act 2010 and 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying document' Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies July 2017.

1.2 DCSF guidance defines bullying as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (for example, being ignored or not spoken to). It can be motivated by prejudice eg race, gender, sexual orientation etc.

1.3 This policy will be reviewed by staff and the Governing Body (GB).

1.4 This policy should be cross referenced with the following policies: Online Safety, Behaviour, PSHE, Whistleblowing. It should also be cross referenced with the Code of Conduct for Staff.

## 2 OUR DEFINITION OF BULLYING

### **Bullying**

2.1 Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. We use the NSPCC definition of Bullying where hurtful behaviour is meted out to the victim Several Times On Purpose

Bullying can take different forms. It could include:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, intimidating or humiliating someone (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Racist/racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Homophobic - focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, undermining or constant criticism
- Non verbal – hand signs or text messages
- Exclusion – ignoring or isolating someone
- Controlling or manipulating someone
- Making silent hoax or abusive calls

The following types of bullying are also hate crime:

- Racial, sexual, transphobic or homophobic bullying
- Bullying someone because they have a disability

### **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place online. Unlike bullying offline, online bullying can follow the child wherever they go, via social networks, gaming and mobile phone.

Cyberbullying can include:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Creating and sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Trolling – the sending of menacing or upsetting messages on social networks, chat rooms or online games
- Excluding children from online games, activities or friendship groups
- Shaming someone online
- Setting up hate sites or groups about a particular child
- Encouraging young people to self-harm
- Voting for or against someone in an abusive poll
- Creating fake accounts, hijacking or stealing online identities to embarrass a young person or cause trouble using their name
- Sending explicit messages, also known as sexting
- Pressuring children into sending sexual images or engaging in sexual conversations

It is important to understand that bullying is not:

- teasing and banter between friends without intention to cause hurt;
- falling out between friends after a quarrel or disagreement;
- behaviour that all parties have consented to and enjoy;

2.2 Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the occasional name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

2.3 Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from the school. These behaviours, however, do not in themselves mean that bullying is taking place. Likewise, bullying may occur without these behaviours appearing. Children must be encouraged to report bullying at the school.

Our school staff are alert to the signs of bullying at all times and do not hesitate to firmly combat it in accordance with this school policy. No single sign will indicate for certain that a child is being bullied, but signs to watch out for:

- belongings getting 'lost' or damaged
- physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises
- being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously "ill" each morning, or skipping school

- not doing well at school
- asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever is bullying them)
- being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn
- problems with eating or sleeping
- bullying others

### **3 THE SCHOOL'S METHODS OF DEALING WITH BULLYING**

3.1 Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing an ethos within the school in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. We aim to promote a positive ethos of care and respect for all.

3.2 We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying and deal robustly with it should it occur.

3.3 This policy aims to produce a consistent response to any bullying incidents that may occur in school.

3.4 We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

We will provide support to pupils who are bullied:

- They will be reassured that they do not deserve to be bullied and this is not their fault.
- We will assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- We will encourage them to talk about how they feel.
- We will try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- We will engage them in making choices about how the matter may be resolved.
- We will try to ensure that they feel safe.
- We will discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We will ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- We will affirm that bullying can be stopped and that our school will persist with intervention until it does.
- We will involve their friends / older pupils in peer support / the buddy system/ mediation

We may then adopt strategies from the following list as appropriate:

- We will interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying separately.
- We will listen to their version of events.
- We will talk to anyone else who may have witnessed the bullying.
- We will reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop.
- We will seek a commitment to this end.
- We will affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We will adopt a joint problem-solving approach where this is appropriate, and ask the pupils involved to help us find solutions to the problem. This will encourage pupils involved to take responsibility for the emotional and social needs of others. This

approach will include restorative justice where the bully will be obliged to empathise with the victim.

- We will consider sanctions under the school's Behaviour Policy.
- We will advise pupils responsible for bullying that we will be checking to ensure that bullying stops.
- We will ensure that those involved know that we have done so.
- When bullying occurs, we will contact the parents of the pupils involved at an early stage.
- We will keep records of incidents that we become aware of and how we responded to them.
- We will follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again.

Other avenues to tackling include:

Special worships

PSHE lessons using jigsaw resource

Circle time

School rules

Class rules

Effective adult supervision

Anti-bullying posters

Playground buddies

Three Step Rule

Restorative Justice

Definitions for the above highlighted measures can be found at Annex 1.

#### **4 THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS**

4.1 The Governing Body (GB) supports the Head teacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from the school. The GB will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

4.2 The GB monitors incidents of bullying that do occur and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The GB requires the Head teacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the GB on request about the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying strategies.

4.3 A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the chair of the GB to look into the matter, in accordance with the Complaints Policy.

#### **5 THE ROLE OF THE HEAD TEACHER**

5.1 It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to implement the school's anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school's policy and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Head teacher reports to the GB about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

5.2 The Head teacher ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour within the School. The Head teacher draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. (Worships etc.)

5.3 The Head teacher ensures that all staff, including lunchtime staff, receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.

5.4 The Head teacher sets the school's climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

5.5 Should investigations prove that bullying is occurring the Head teacher will be informed and take responsibility for deciding the appropriate course of action. In most cases the approach used will be based on Restorative Justice. The Head teacher will discuss the 'problem' with a group of children including those involved. The Class teacher or Head teacher will notify parents of all parties if deemed appropriate.

Feelings, actions and desires will be discussed by all the children and a plan of action agreed.

The children will then have a few days to resolve the situation and dates made to come back and discuss how things are going.

If this is successful, the group will be monitored over a period of time to check that the situation remains resolved.

If this fails parents will be called into school immediately.

## **6 THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER AND SUPPORT STAFF**

6.1 All the staff in our School take all forms of bullying seriously and seek to prevent it from taking place.

6.2 If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the Head teacher. Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then the matter is referred to the Head teacher.

6.3 Each teacher may raise concerns at teachers' meetings once a week and pass to the SENCO. Incidents are logged on CPOMs. The teacher will log further action taken as appropriate.

6.4 When any bullying takes place between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve support for the victim of the bullying, and sanctions for the child who has carried out the bullying. Time is spent talking to the child who has bullied: explaining why his /her action was wrong and that child is encouraged to change his/her behaviour in future. If a child is repeatedly involved in reported bullying, we inform the Head teacher, parent and all staff involved.

6.5 Any report of bullying will be checked with class teachers/TAs to establish if there are any previous, relevant incidents.

6.6 All members of staff attend training as appropriate, which equips them to identify bullying and to follow the school's policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management. The Behaviour Policy should be referred to for further details.

6.7 Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of school and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories etc. within the formal curriculum, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Circle time/ PSHE is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere. Worship is used both as an opportunity to promote positive Christian values which oppose bullying behaviour and as a way of allowing organisations such as NSPCC to come in and talk about ways in which bullying may be understood and combatted by our school community.

## **7 THE ROLE OF PARENTS**

7.1 Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be bullying others, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Head teacher. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the School's Complaints Procedure.

7.2 Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.

## **8 THE ROLE OF PUPILS**

8.1 Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. If a pupil is upset he/she should:-

Use the three step rule

Tell an adult

Pupils should be encouraged to keep on telling if the situation persists

8.2 Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in various forms. We will have special occasions such as worship, lessons and questionnaires when pupils are invited to tell us their views about bullying.

## **9 BULLYING OUTSIDE SCHOOL THE PREMISES**

9.1 School is not directly responsible for bullying that occurs off the premises, but we know that bullying can occur outside the school gates and on journeys to and from school. The bullying may be done by pupils from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent tells us of bullying off the school premises we will:

- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of school.

- Talk to the Head teacher of another school whose pupils are bullying.
- Talk to the Police.

9.2 The DfES says that "exceptionally, failure to take disciplinary steps to combat harmful behaviour outside the school might breach the school's common duty of care." Legal Services advise that schools can take disciplinary action against pupils for incidents that occur outside of school.

## **10 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

10.1 This policy is monitored on a frequent and regular basis.

10.2 This anti-bullying policy is the GB's responsibility. Its effectiveness will be monitored by asking for a report on the school's anti-bullying records.

10.3 This policy will be reviewed every two years.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy - Annex 1**

### **DEFINITIONS**

#### **The 'Three-Step' Rule**

This encourages a child to take a three-step approach to someone who may be treating him or her unkindly.

Step 1: Ask the person to stop

Step 2: Tell the person you don't like it.

Step 3: Tell an adult

The adult will deal with it once the three-step rule has been used.

#### **Restorative Justice**

The aim of Restorative Justice is to ensure communication and dialogue which restores and promotes reconciliation. Restorative justice can be defined by its fundamental principle, namely that when one person has harmed another, the most useful response is to try to repair the harm done. An adult will convene a meeting with the bully or bullies and the victim to enable the bully to empathise with the feelings of the person being victimised.