

Sturminster Newton High School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



Mission Statement

At Sturminster Newton we are committed to providing a warm, caring and safe environment for all, so that we can work, learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment. Everyone has the right to be treated as an individual and with respect.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school community. Students have the right to be able to come to school without fear of being victimised, intimidated or isolated. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. We acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time in school, as it does in every school. This is not acceptable. When it does occur, everyone should be able to **tell** and **know** that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school.

The lead people with responsibility for developing this policy are Mrs Miles (Assistant Head) and Mrs Quickfall (i/c Wellbeing)

1. Roles and responsibilities

The lead people will develop the policy in line with good practice, ensure that agreed protocols are followed and evaluate the progress the school is making in relation to the anti-bullying agenda.

School staff are responsible for the day to day implementation of practices and they will support the development of an appropriate culture in the school, support students who are experiencing bullying, respond to young people who have bullied and model appropriate, respectful behaviour.

The students in the school will embrace a culture that respects difference, support young people who have experienced bullying behaviours and model appropriate, respectful behaviour.

Governors are responsible for monitoring the above.

2. Participation

At every stage of the development of this policy recognition has been given to the importance of ownership. The students, staff, parents/carers, governors and other members of the community have been involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of the policy.

3. Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The aims of this policy are to develop and maintain:

1. a culture of respect where difference is valued
2. a system of support for young people who have been bullied
3. a system of clear, fair and consistent responses to incidences of bullying.

The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone in which to learn and work. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy. This will happen in the following ways:

- The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that students stay safe.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents / carers will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents / carers will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- Students and parents / carers will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Whole school initiatives and pro-active teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur (see section 5)
- A positive, caring ethos is created within the school environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

4. What is bullying?

The school has adopted the following collaborative definition of bullying which is our shared understanding of what bullying is:

Bullying is any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for the victims to defend themselves (remember STOP – it happens Several Times On Purpose). Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victim/s.

Where does bullying happen?

It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, and in cyberspace, in the canteen, in the playground and on the way to and from school but schools are only legally responsible for bullying incidents which occur on the school premises.

However, at Sturminster Newton High School we are also concerned with our students' conduct and welfare outside school and we will do what we can to support and address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises. The following steps may be taken:

- Talk to the local Community Police Officer about problems in the community.
- Talk to the transport companies about bullying on school buses and in school taxis.
- Talk to the Head Teachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the premises.
- Talk to the Youth Club.
- Discuss coping strategies with parents.
- Talk to the children about how to handle, or avoid, bullying outside the school premises.
- To educate students and parents about safe use of cyberspace (see e safety policy)

Bullying of children with Special Educational Needs

- We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are.
- We have some children who have learning disabilities and / or communication difficulties. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are, therefore, particularly vigilant at all times.
- High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying as seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

5. Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying

Whole school initiatives and pro-active teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. These include:

- Involving the whole school community in writing and reviewing the policy.
- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- Providing a summary of the policy in student planners.
- Making national anti-bullying week a high profile event each year.
- Raising awareness through regular anti-bullying assemblies.
- Use of anti-bullying displays around the school.
- Training for staff to ensure a knowledge about diversity and issues associated with bullying
- Using praise and rewards to re-enforce good behaviour.
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another.
- Provide a planned approach in curriculum and tutorial programmes to the issue of bullying in a context which promotes self-esteem and confident relationships (e.g. SEAL in Year 7 and 8, Diversity Theme in Year 8)
- Provide safe and age-segregated play areas, quiet rooms and use of Learning Support Area.
- Involve students in procedures to deal with bullying including 'circle of friends', peer mentoring and other schemes where appropriate.
- Provide access to independent listeners for students (victim /bully) e.g. Locality Worker, School Nurse, Counsellor.

6. Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. The following procedures (which are a variety of options that could be acted upon) will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

- Report all bullying allegations and incidents to staff.
- Staff will make sure the victim(s) is and feels safe.
- Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
- Staff will listen and speak to all students involved about the incident separately.
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
- Staff will attempt to adopt a problem-solving approach which will move young people on from them having to justify their behaviour.
- Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
- Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions or support applied.
- If possible, the students will be reconciled.
- An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his / her / their behaviour.
- In cases of bullying dealt with by the Head of Year or a member of Senior Leadership Team, the incidents will be recorded on PARS as bullying. One off incidents involving verbal or physical abuse will be recorded on PARS under the appropriate category. This data will be reviewed every half term by the Pastoral Team.

- Where appropriate parents/carers will be informed and may be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- Bullying incidents will be discussed at tutor team meetings.
- If necessary and appropriate, the DSL in school, Family Support or police will be consulted.

The following sanctions may be used

- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing.
- Lose privileges/free time (stay with teacher, write lines or do extra work).
- Spend break and lunchtimes with an adult.
- Parents invited in to school.
- Go on report.
- Referral to the school counsellor.
- Be removed from class and work in isolation.
- Be withdrawn from participation in school visits, clubs and events not essential to the curriculum.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion.

7. Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated. (Use of questionnaires completed by the school community, together with surveys, focus groups, children's and parents' / carers' comments.) Following a review any amendments will be made to the policy and everyone informed. The policy will be available on the school website.

Appendix

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation
- Verbal name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture and religion
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Homophobic because of / or focussing on the issue of sexuality and/or gender identity including the use of homophobic/biphobic/transphobic language, LGBT+ prejudice
- Online/cyber/ text setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive text messages, e-mails and abusing the victims via their mobile phones, social media
- Any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to some relating to their disability or special educational needs

What is not bullying?

It is important to understand that bullying is **not** the *odd occasion* of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose (STOP).

Young people 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 student's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

Signs and Symptoms

A young person may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he, or she, is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a young person:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school bus / in the taxi
- begs to be driven to school
- change their usual routine / route to school
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to underperform in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go 'missing'
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/snack/sandwiches have been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbably excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you.

Some strategies to help:

- Try not to let the bully know that they are making you feel upset.
- If possible, try to ignore them, but if the bullying continues tell someone what you have tried.

- Be assertive – stand up to them, look at them directly in the eye, tell them to stop and mean it.
- Stay in a group; bullies usually pick on individuals.
- Get away as quickly as you can.
- See the school counsellor for a technique that seems to help build inner emotional strength.
- Tell someone you can trust – it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a lunchtime supervisor, a Youth Club worker, a parent/carer, a friend, a brother, a sister or a relative, school counsellor, school nurse.
- If you are scared, ask a friend to go with you when you tell someone.
- When you tell an adult about the bullying, give them as many facts as you can (What, Who, Where, When, Why How).
- Keep a diary of what has been happening and refer to it when you tell someone.
- Keep on speaking out until someone listens and helps you.
- Never be afraid to do something about it and quick.
- Don't suffer in silence.
- Don't blame yourself for what is happening.
- Call a helpline (Childline, NSPCC, Kids Scape).

**What can you do if you see someone else being bullied?
(The role of the bystander)**

Ignoring bullying is unfair to the victim. Staying silent means the bully has won and gives them more power. There are ways you can help without putting yourself in danger.

- Don't smile or laugh at the situation.
- Don't rush over and take the bully on yourself.
- Don't be made to join in.
- If safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop bullying.
- If you can, let the bully know you do not like their behaviour.
- Shout for help.
- Let the victim(s) know that you are going to get help.
- Tell a member of staff as soon as you can.
- Try and befriend the person being bullied.
- Encourage the person to talk to someone and get help.
- Ask someone you trust about what to do.

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