

Kingsbrook School

'A unique service for unique young people'

Anti-Bullying Procedures

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PROCEDURE STATEMENT

All young people need a safe space in which to develop physically, emotionally and psychologically, a safe place where they can learn, play and socialise. We aim to create an environment that does not tolerate the oppression of one person by another and where both victims and bullies are fully supported.

The young people in the community, their families and carers, the staff and other interested parties will be made fully aware that bullying is totally unacceptable either within the unit/school or by the young people in the wider community.

All forms of bullying will be confronted in an open and consistent manner by all members of staff. It is the responsibility of each individual within the community to challenge any form of bullying whenever and wherever it arises. It is important that the underlying issues are addressed.

Bullying thrives on silence and secrecy.

All forms of bullying or oppression, whether by reason of race, sexual orientation, gender, age, disability or any other form of social or physical difference, must be challenged by all members of staff. It is the duty of each member of staff to recognise that their own clearly stated attitudes and behaviour will influence the young people. The positive role model is a powerful educator.

The effects of bullying on the victims and the vulnerable can be profoundly harmful and long lasting.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

People can experience bullying for a variety of reasons. Bullying may be related to :-

- Race, religion or culture
- Special educational needs (SEN) or disability
- Health conditions
- Sexual orientation / homophobic
- Sexist or sexual bullying
- Being a young carer, being looked after or otherwise related to home circumstances.

Bullying is the abuse of power in a relationship. It can take place between pupils, pupils and staff, or between staff; by individuals or groups; face to face, indirectly or by using a range of 'cyberbullying methods'.

It is the wilful, conscious desire to distress, threaten, hurt, intimidate or frighten another and may take many forms, including:-

- Verbal e.g. name calling/unpleasant, nasty comments
- Physical e.g. being assaulted/ pushing, pinching , any form of violence (this may be disguised as 'rough and tumble')
- Emotional/ Psychological to conform e.g. tormenting, humiliation, threatening ridicule, pressure
- Social e.g. being left out/ no one talking to you
- Material e.g. possessions stolen/damaged/ extortion
- Sexual e.g. inappropriate comments, or touch
- Cyber bullying is a method of bullying rather than a type e. g. inappropriate texting and emailing, use of MSN and social networking sites, sending offensive or degrading images by telephone or the internet. It can take the form of any of the types outlined above.

It is important to be aware that bullying may take place between young people, between young people and adults and between adults. Verbal and social forms of bullying are particularly common. Some forms of bullying may be dismissed as bossiness, leadership or natural competition, leaving the victim unsupported. Some bullies act as individuals, some in groups.

The seriousness of the bullying depends on a number of factors including:-

- How much hurt was intended
- How often it happened
- For how long it occurred
- What the effect was on the bullied child
- How threatening the bully was
- How personal it was
- How many were involved
- The ability of the bullying child to understand the impact
- Was it provoked or unprovoked
- Was it planned
- Was the person trapped
- The perceived status of the bully
- The reaction of onlookers

Onlookers who ignore bullying will be seen to be condoning it.

Bullies tend to rationalise their own behaviour and to justify their treatment of the victim. A victim may in turn end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. The life history and psychopathology of a young person will influence whether that young person will seek to dominate others or whether he/she will seek victim status. It is important that members of staff develop an understanding of the processes involved. A victim may in turn seek to bully the more vulnerable.

SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

The following symptoms are given as examples of the effects of bullying upon a Young Person. It is not intended to be an exhaustive guide and further reading on the subject is recommended.

The signs may not in themselves indicate that bullying is taking place but sudden changes in behaviour are indicative of stress.

- **Withdrawal** The victim may appear quiet and sullen, refusing to join group activities or school, avoiding friends and others, refusing to say what is wrong or loss of confidence.
- **Over sensitivity** The victim becomes easily startled, irritable or aggressive, has an exaggerated sense of unfairness.
- **Aggression** Held in anger and frustration is acted out in interactions with peers and adults.
- **Loss of concentration and motivation** When in a state of anxiety or fear the victim is unable to concentrate in school or other activities in anticipation of further episodes of bullying.
- **Missing possessions** Sometimes a victim attempts to appease the bully by money or possessions. Implausible reasons for the loss of personal items are often given.
- **Stealing** A victim may resort to stealing goods or money to satisfy a bully's demands. Stealing may also be an external expression of the distress a victim feels.
- **Injuries** A victim of bullying often tries to explain away bruises, burns or other signs of abuse.
- **Low self-esteem** A victim may become painfully conscious of their given weaknesses, disability or appearance.
- **Disturbed sleep** Night time holds special difficulties for a victim. They may show anxieties and fears, become disruptive at bedtime, sleep poorly, have nightmares and suffer from fatigue. (This is especially difficult where a bully shares a room with a victim.)
- **Enuresis** Often a sign of anxiety, sometimes as part of a longer term problem. It is important to monitor any increased frequency or re-activation.

- **The victim becomes a bully**

This may occur as the victim tries to re-establish their damaged self-esteem.

- **Regression**

A frightened person may revert to earlier patterns of behaviour, becoming clinging and dependent and displaying symptoms of anxiety.

- **Depression**

Symptoms of depression or threats of suicide are the more serious outcomes of the internal struggle to be rid of intolerable fears.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BECOME VICTIMS?

There sometimes is no apparent reason why a person becomes a victim. Targets may be picked out by the way they respond to rough and tumble play. Over or under reaction may appear to make a person more vulnerable and the bullying can become more serious with others joining in.

Some people may become targets if they are seen as:-

- Vulnerable - They may look as if they will not stand up for themselves, they may be fearful or quieter, sensitive or shy.
- Different - This may be to do with gender, sexual orientation, colour, religion, height, weight, appearance, race etc.
- On their own - A person may be bullied if they appear to be a 'loner'.

WHY DO SOME PEOPLE BULLY?

There are a number of different reasons why someone becomes a bully, including:-

- They may lack confidence
- Unhappiness
- Jealousy
- Being a victim of someone else, possibly in the past
- They experience fear
- They feel weak

A bully may be trying to achieve some of the following:

- To feel superior
- To make themselves popular
- To gain attention or material things
- To get rid of their own fears
- To get rid of their anger or frustration
- To make up for low self esteem

- To make up for lack of success

DIFFICULTIES IN REPORTING BULLYING

There are a variety of reasons why bullying may go unreported, such as:-

- Fear of reprisal from the bully
- Not wanting to be seen to tell tales or 'grass'
- Shame at not being able to deal with it
- Not wanting to worry parents or carers
- Fear of losing friends or of being isolated

THE HARM DONE BY BULLYING

Bullying in its severest forms can have a devastating effect on those who suffer it. It can make their lives a misery by making them believe they are somehow less of a person than their peers. They will tend to lose confidence and as a result every aspect of their life will suffer. They may become depressed and ill as a result and in extreme cases may seek to take their own lives. Bullying may also act as a trigger to other problems such as truancy, hygiene problems and eating disorders.

When looked at from the aspect of the bully it is usually the antecedent to trouble, possibly in the form of exclusion or involvement with the police. Bullies usually become very unpopular.

Bullying also affects those who witness it or experience the pressure to join in for fear of becoming a victim.

Bullying has a detrimental effect in itself and can contaminate whole groups of people and communities.

ACTION TO BE TAKEN

- 1. Any incidence or allegation of bullying is to be treated seriously and promptly.**
- 2. Record the incident, investigation and outcome thoroughly and carefully.**
- 3. Report incidents to the Team Leader or Head of Education or Child Care Manager.**
- 4. Inform other staff.**
- 5. Support the victim especially in strategies to avoid further bullying.**
- 6. Ensure that the bully receives support and guidance.**

Bullying can be stopped through a combination of PREVENTION and RESPONSE.

PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTING BULLYING

- **Setting the right ethos:-**
 - Giving explicit and consistent messages that bullying is unacceptable
 - Seeking agreement between staff, young people and carers on what bullying is
 - Regularly reviewing life in the unit/school/community to identify factors which might allow or encourage bullying
 - Making sure that positive role modelling is inherent in good practice
 - Through a supported and established 'whistle blowing' policy amongst staff
- **Encouraging young people to report bullying by:-**
 - Providing complaints procedures for young people and parents/carers
 - Letting young people know how vital it is to report bullying they have witnessed
 - Providing opportunities for young people to communicate their concerns through such ideas as listening posts, confidential letters, suggestion boxes, bully boxes, opinion posters
 - Providing time for young people to talk with their keyworkers
- **Raising awareness by:-**
 - Using curriculum opportunities (including assemblies and tutorials) to contribute to anti-bullying work
 - Keeping anti-bullying issues alive in everyday communication with young people and staff
 - Displaying anti-bullying posters and help line information
 - Discussing the consequences of bullying for both victim and bully with the young people
 - Informing and co-operating with parents/carers, social workers and other interested parties on the issue
 - Making the issue a relevant part of the Care Plan
 - By including information to the young person on admission
 - Nominating a member of staff to monitor, measure and evaluate anti-bullying systems and procedures
- **Supporting those who are bullied by:-**
 - Reassuring them that they are not to blame
 - Creating systems for early identification of vulnerable young people
 - Providing opportunities for friendship formation for isolated young people
 - Encouraging groups of supportive peers
 - Advising them in developing strategies to avoid further bullying
 - Assigning particular staff to young people who are persistently vulnerable.
- **Involving bystanders:-**
 - Address the bystander's apathy by educating them that there are no innocent bystanders
 - Channelling the natural sympathy for people who are bullied
 - Developing a group ethos that disapproves of bullying
- **Dealing with problem areas and times:-**
 - Identifying the areas and times where bullying is most likely to take place
 - Ensuring that staff are aware of these and that effective supervision is maintained
 - Training and supporting all adults in contact with young people
- **Changing bullying behaviour by:-**
 - Making the young people who bully accountable for their actions

Making the young people aware of the consequences of bullying
Helping young people to communicate more effectively in conflict situations
Helping young people to develop the strategies needed to deal with potentially difficult situations
Develop individual plans of action for young people to develop greater self-esteem
Devise individual and group activity programmes to alleviate bullying being a consequence of boredom

- **Reviewing and developing procedures:-**

Develop and maintain a systematic approach to checking and analysing the level of bullying relationships and incidents
Devise, implement and maintain an in-house register
Develop clear procedures to follow after bullying incidents
Devise and implement a support system for staff and young people who experience bullying

KEY PRINCIPLES IN ADDRESSING BULLYING

- Search for solutions not problems
- Allocate responsibility not blame
- Look forward not backward
- Focus on changing behaviours
- Examine relationship processes not incidents
- Resolve the problem not establish guilt

The aims of school anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behavior.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multiagency support.

HOW YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SUPPORTED WHEN FEELING BULLIED

Young people are encouraged to bring any issues of bullying to a member of staff. This can be verbally reported or by placing an 'I feel Bullied' form in the bully box.

A reply will be given to the young person explaining how their complaint has been dealt with including any further action needed.

Details will be entered in the Bullying Log.

Young people need to feel supported and cared for by all staff. Peers should be encouraged and educated in supporting each other.

Issues of bullying need to be addressed between all parties involved where possible. Young people will need to be supported in doing this. Some young people may feel unsafe/unable to do this and their wishes must be listened to.

There may be times when group discussion is needed to address bullying in regard to specific incidents or general issues.