

Cockton Hill Infants' School Anti-bullying Policy



Headteacher: Tom Cuthbertson
Chair of Governors: Bob Woods

Introduction

"Research suggests that bullying not only causes considerable suffering to individual pupils but also has a damaging effect upon school atmosphereIt is hard to see how a school can win the confidence of its pupils if it fails to deal with behaviour which so seriously damages the quality of their lives."

(Discipline in Schools - report of the Elton Committee)

"Bullying is probably the most underrated problem in our schools today. It involves some 1.5 million children and young people in both state and independent sectors in the U.K. It causes fear and distress in the victim and distracts from school work." (Tattum and Herbert 1990)

The two quotes above give sound reasons why bullying, something that can occur in any school, should and will be actively prohibited at Cockton Hill Infants' School.

We believe that bullying, whether between child and child, adult and child or adult and adult, is socially and morally unacceptable and can have a long-term damaging effect on both victim and bully. We also recognise that bullying concerns many children, parents and school staff and can affect both school attendance and school performance.

Scope

This statement of policy refers to all children who attend Cockton Hill Infants' School. It should be considered within the context of our whole school policy on Behaviour Management. It should also be included within the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education, Religious Education and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programmes of the school.

Bullying Definition

At Cockton Hill Infants' School, we discuss what bullying is, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying, with all pupils through assemblies and PSHE lessons. We agree that:

- Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally;
- Bullying usually happens when the relationship is imbalanced;
- It could be prejudice-based or discriminatory

Types of Bullying

➤ Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in and outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen beyond the school day into home and private space, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content.

➤ Racist Bullying

This refers to a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that make the person feel unwelcome marginalised and excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity culture, faith community, national origin or national status.

➤ Homophobic Bullying

This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people.

➤ Vulnerable Groups

We recognise that some groups of pupils may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Looked After Children
- Children having caring responsibilities
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- Children with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children from ethnic minorities
- Children entitled to Free School Meals
- Children for whom English is an Additional Language
- Children who are perceived to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transsexual
- Those suffering from health problems, including mental health

Signs of Bullying

Staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying or other child protection issues including:

- Physical: unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes, or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting.
- Emotional: losing interest in school, being withdrawn or secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.
- Behavioural: asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asking for more money, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, truancy.

Entitlement

All children, without exception, at Cockton Hill Infants' School have the right to enjoy to the fullest possible extent the benefits of the educational provision that is offered. In order to make full use of these benefits the pupils at this school should expect to be educated in an environment which:

- is safe and caring;
- provides challenges but is non-threatening;
- encourages children to feel secure;
- values children's opinions and involves them, where appropriate, in the determining of school policy and rules;
- shows an awareness of children's individual needs and attempts to meet these.

This school believes that if a child claims to have been bullied or is suspected of being bullied he/she is entitled to expect:

- to be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts,
- that appropriate action will be taken to address the child's concerns and an assurance that there will be no recurrence,

- that the action to be taken will be made clear to the child and if necessary to the parents.

This school also believes that if a child is suspected of bullying he/she is entitled to expect:

- to be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts;
- to be told what action the school can take;
- to be told what action the school intends to take.

This school further believes that parents are entitled to expect that:

- their child will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring and is not characterised by violence and intimidation,;
- the school will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying from occurring;
- any bullying incident which is reported will be thoroughly investigated;
- any bullying incident which is found to have taken place will be dealt with in line with the school's guidelines.

School Staff

All school staff have collective responsibility for ensuring that any reported or actual bullying incidents are investigated thoroughly and dealt with in the appropriate way.

The Headteacher shall be responsible for ensuring that all possible means are followed to stop bullying, in all its forms, in the school.

Staff Guidelines to Combat Bullying

1] Prevention

Obviously, it is better to stop bullying before it occurs so prevention is better than cure. This will also create a feeling of safety within the children. In order to achieve this we can:

Use the curriculum to raise awareness. This could be carried out in:

- school assemblies;
- R.E. lessons;
- P.S. H. C. E. lessons;
- SEAL/emotional intelligence lessons;
- Circle time;
- School Council meetings;
- parent newsletters;
- open days;
- staff meetings.

By discussing bullying we will be giving children, staff and parents opportunities to talk about the issue openly. We aim to:

- develop within the school an atmosphere of trust where children are able to tell and where adults will listen and believe;
- make children aware that bullying is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and that every incident will be acted upon;
- ascertain the times in school where bullying is likely to occur and ensure a high priority of supervision. Times might include - before school begins; as school is closing; break times; during movement between activities.

- locate the places in school where bullying is likely to occur and ensure adequate supervision here. Places could include - the playground (corners, recesses etc.); the cloakroom and toilet areas; any work areas with minimal supervision (e.g. computer corridor); lining up areas.
- encourage children to be aware of their own feelings and the feelings of others through out emotional intelligence curriculum thus increasing the likelihood of a pupil reporting bullying
- be aware of any vulnerable children these may include - new children in school; children different in background, appearance or speech from others; children suffering from low self-esteem, anxiety or nervousness; emotionally vulnerable children; those who give a reaction when bullied - i.e. loss of control, tantrums, crying etc.

2] **Action**

All cases of alleged bullying should be reported to the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher or senior member of staff.

In any case of alleged bullying, either the class teacher, the Headteacher, or a senior member of staff should first establish the facts, and build an accurate picture of events over time, through speaking to the alleged perpetrator(s), victim(s) and adult witnesses, as well as parents and pupil witnesses if necessary and appropriate.

If the allegation of bullying is upheld, the Headteacher (or senior leader) should seek to use a restorative approach with the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) together. The consequences of their actions on the victim(s) should fully explained to the perpetrator(s). Both parties should be clear that a repeat of these behaviours will not be acceptable.

All bullying incidents must be recorded. Parents of both parties should be informed.

If the situation does not improve, the Headteacher (or senior leader) should meet with the parent(s) of the bullying child(ren) and agree clear expectations and boundaries which would be shared with the pupils involved. Any further incidents should lead to intervention (e.g. through outside agencies), further monitoring, support and punitive sanctions as deemed necessary. Any necessary action should be taken until the bullying has stopped.

Listening to children

It is important that children are and feel that they are listened to when discussing or disclosing any potential incidents of bullying.

- Listen to the child
- Take them seriously
- Show empathy
- Let the child know it's not their fault
- Avoid stereotypes
- Reassure them they were right to tell you
- Follow our procedures for reporting concerns

Remember

- Bullying can have a huge negative impact on children – in the short and long term

- Be on the lookout for signs of bullying, and be aware of who might be more vulnerable
- Report any concerns you have
- Take prejudice-based bullying seriously and listen to children affected by it