



ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

- ◆ There is a national concern about bullying. Work place bullying, domestic violence, violence in the streets, racism, institutional bullying, and even road rage have all been highlighted as public areas of concern.
- ◆ Schools also face the issue of bullying and have to cope with problems which can be extremely worrisome for pupils and their families. We cannot afford complacency: some degree of bullying is likely to exist in most schools.
- ◆ 'Childline', the childrens' helpline, received an average of 2,700 calls a month about bullying. This makes bullying the number one reason why children call Childline.
- ◆ As a community, we believe everyone has the right to come to school and learn in a safe environment, free from bullying, harassment or violence.

Our community should be one that is secure, safe and stable, where pupils associate their education with enjoyment, progress and achievement.

- ◆ The school should protect the bullied student and make effective arrangements for the person's continued support.
- ◆ We believe that it is incumbent upon the school to develop in all pupils a sense that:
 - ✓ it is behaviours that are inappropriate, not people,
 - ✓ condoning or ignoring bullying is wrong,
 - ✓ people can influence and change a situation for the better,
 - ✓ together and separately, students have responsibility for their own behaviour and can influence others' behaviour.

PURPOSE

The aims of this policy are:

- that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is
- that all governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported
- that all pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises
- that, as a school, we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- that bullying will not be tolerated
- to encourage confidence, self-esteem, a feeling of security, ownership and active participation;
- to reward responsible and caring behaviour;

- to promote positive non-violent discipline which reinforces pro-social, anti-violent attitudes;
- to respond to bullying as a whole school community issue and recognise that both bullies and the bullied have emotional and social needs;
- to recognise that bullying is wrong, morally and socially unacceptable, and should not be tolerated in any learning environment;
- to make our response to bullying swift, clear and firm;
- to stress our abhorrence of bullying at all times and in all places;
- to adopt maximum vigilance to counteract bullying.

A definition of bullying is fundamental to the purpose of this policy.

'Bullying is behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack (physical, verbal, emotional or psychological) by an individual or a group deemed to be in a position of power, on one or more who is deemed to be powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification.'

Bullying can be

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber: all areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse/mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls/misuse of associated technology i.e. camera and video facilities

PRACTICE

Heart of the Matter

The school must encourage and enable children who are being bullied to **TELL** someone without delay. The school then must ensure **prompt** action follows.

❖ Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- does not want to go on the school/public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- 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 do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or “go missing”
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually “lost”
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Teachers and Support staff must be aware of all these signs to ensure early identification

The ‘BULLIES’ may:

- lack ability to empathise with others
- have difficulty making friends
- have difficulty making the transition between home and school
- have difficulty making the transition between one school and another
- may find school work difficult
- have low self esteem
- be self hating
- have an unrecognised special need
- have changing, difficult or hostile living circumstances
- have experienced harsh, physical punishments themselves.
- have experienced rejection
- have experienced humiliation
- be unable to relate their actions with their consequences
- express no remorse

❖ Creating the Atmosphere in Which the Bullied will tell

- Explicit statements by the Headteacher that bullying is unacceptable and a serious breach of our Code of Conduct.
- Publishing policy to pupils, staff and parents to promote the confidence to speak out.
- Setting out our standards in assemblies, in tutorials and on signs on display around the school.
- Regular discussion in tutor teams, and INSED as necessary.

- Getting the word around that 'telling' leads to prompt and sympathetic response and resolution. This will encourage the 'tellers' and deter the bullies. Ensuring necessary confidentiality for 'tellers'.
- Encouraging staff to be observant, sensitive and good listeners. Patience (and that sixth sense) are needed, as the child about to tell may be slow to get to the point, and the teacher will be in a hurry!
- Pointing out to children that they have a responsibility to 'tell' if they know of another pupil who is being bullied.
- Breaking down (with a great deal of persistent persuasion) the culture that says one should not tell; that it is weak or shameful to tell; that there is no point in telling; that the bully will seek revenge if one tells; that one must just shrug one's shoulders and put up with it; that everyone must expect their share of this suffering.
- Teachers whose lessons allow some freedom of movement and teachers on supervisory break duties must be particularly vigilant.
- Providing a caring and supportive pastoral system so the bullied students can tell someone. The following personnel have key roles:
 - Governors
 - Senior staff (including Headteacher)
 - Senior Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)
 - Heads of Year
 - Pastoral Support Officers
 - Tutors
 - Office Staff
 - Support Staff
 - School Counsellor
 - School Prefects

However, it is everyone's responsibility to be vigilant and good listeners.

❖ School Environment

The Environment should provide:

- a quiet safe area for pupils to use
- adequate lighting
- adequate exterior fencing
- positive 'signs' to discourage the bully and encourage all pupils to tell

❖ School Curriculum

The school curriculum must work to prevent bullying. Southborough High School provides for this by:

- ★ providing space and time for children to create opportunities for spiritual and moral development. This is accomplished through assemblies, RS and PSE lessons or drop down days
- ★ creating opportunities for the development of empathy, through role play, drama, team work and games
- ★ creating opportunities for the expression of feelings

- ★ giving experience of belonging to different groups and communities
- ★ exploring, reflecting and celebrating diversity; creating opportunities for the discussion of ethical and sensitive issues in a non-judgmental way
- ★ developing listening skills, self expression and communication skills
- ★ encouraging pupils to take responsibilities for their own actions
- ★ encourage and provide opportunities for decision making with real consequences;
- ★ encourage democratic participation through PSE, School Council, mock elections etc
- ★ developing, amongst staff and pupils, conflict resolution, mediation and dispute solving skills
- ★ encouraging the growth of understanding about rights and responsibilities

❖ Staff Training

- Where appropriate staff will be placed on a training course to help them develop skills relevant to this policy.
- Opportunities are given during INSED to raise the awareness of staff and to discuss the topic of bullying in the school.

❖ Action to be taken when a Child tells

- ◆ The member of staff told must first listen carefully and, if there seems to be a genuine case of bullying, initiate immediate action either on his/her own part or personally refer the matter to the Assistant Head, Pastoral (or other senior member of staff). The complaint must not be dismissed or ignored.
- ◆ It may be sufficient to go to the scene or summon the bully and then mediate with advice, reprimand, and extracting assurances. A careful written record must be kept and the victim sought a day or two later to ensure that there has been no repetition.
- ◆ A case judged to be more serious must be taken to the Assistant Head, Pastoral, who will arrange to deal with it. If the case is very urgent and the Assistant Head, Pastoral, cannot deal with it immediately (eg because of a teaching commitment), then the Assistant Head, Pastoral, will involve the Headteacher or another Deputy Head. The case will be investigated and necessary action taken, and parents of both bully and victim informed.
- ◆ Sadly a few pupils may appear to 'attract' bullying, and they may need particular counselling to avoid this and on how to integrate better.
- ◆ Notes of all serious incidents will be kept on a separate register by the Assistant Head, Pastoral.
- ◆ At all times the victim should be made to feel safe. It may mean that anonymous evidence has to be taken in order to protect others. Teachers must use their professional discretion but they must record their actions and communicate their concerns.
- ◆ The experience of bullying should be halted quickly, and the bullied child is helped to feel safe and secure. Steps must be taken to overcome a pupil's reluctance to tell, whether from:
 - ⇒ fearing reprisals
 - ⇒ feeling that they are 'grassing'
 - ⇒ feeling ashamed of their vulnerability

⇒ feeling inadequate in being unable to sort out their own problems

- ◆ The teacher may consider speaking to the whole group eg a tutor group without mentioning names in order to encourage shared responsibility and give whole group support. Teachers must monitor this approach carefully.
- ◆ Support programmes can be put in place:
 - ★ ongoing monitoring by tutor/Pastoral Support Officer
 - ★ 'on report' protocols
 - ★ referral to counsellor
 - ★ paired work with group mentor
 - ★ specific work: to build self esteem; assertiveness training; build social and communication skills;
 - ★ enrol the support of a 'buddy' to report to a teacher - the 'buddy' might be another pupil.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually during the Autumn Term of September 2022