

Sefton Park Infant and Junior Schools

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy reflects DfE guidance for schools:

‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying’ October 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>

‘Cyberbullying’ DCFS Guidance 2007

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Equality Act 2010

The Children Act 1989

A child-friendly version of this policy is available as an appendix to this policy (Appendix A)

RATIONALE

At Sefton Park Infant and Junior Schools we believe that all members of the school community should feel valued, safe and secure and have a right to work and learn in a relaxed, secure environment free from harassment and bullying. We are a TELLING school; incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

At Sefton Park Infant and Junior Schools, we are committed to working with staff, pupils and parents and carers to create and maintain a school community where bullying is not tolerated. The school anti-bullying policy has been developed with due regard for our duties and obligations under existing legislation and public sector duties for the safeguarding and wellbeing of all our pupils and we will take all steps to ensure their safety.

We strive to

- have a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.
- ensure a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that do occur.

- have a whole school approach, where all members, staff students and parents are involved in making the classroom and playground a bullying free zone.
- keep in mind the understanding that bullying is usually caused by discontentment, unhappiness or difficulties with self-regulation in the pupil using bullying behaviours. We believe that all behaviour is a form of communication; we would seek to understand the motivation of inappropriate behaviours, be trauma-informed and provide the necessary support.

AIMS

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents will have an awareness of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents will know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Everyone creates an atmosphere in school where children and adults feel confident to TELL. Everyone must realise that not telling means that bullying is likely to continue.
- Staff will promote attitudes that will change bullying behaviour.
- Staff will build self-esteem and confidence in pupils so that they can use these qualities to challenge bullying and TELL.

We ensure that the principles in this policy apply also to the full range of our policies and practices, including those that are concerned with:

1. Teaching and Learning
2. PHSRE (Personal, Health, Social and Relationships Education)
3. Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy
4. Anti-harassment/discrimination
5. SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)
7. Staff recruitment/Code of Conduct

8. Behaviour

8. Working in partnership with parents, carers and guardians

9. Equalities and Community Cohesion

10. E-Safety

WHAT IS BULLYING?

The DFE guidance defines bullying as: behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Our definition of repeated, face-to-face bullying: to have occurred on **three or more** separate occasions and targeted towards the same individual.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power. This could involve the pupil using bullying behaviours having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual. Those who carry out the bullying or witness it can also experience emotional harm. The impact on parents and school staff can be significant.

Examples of Bullying are repeated:

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another pupil.
- Interfering with another pupil's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it.
- Using offensive names when addressing another pupil.
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another pupil or his/her family.
- Belittling another pupil's abilities and achievements.

- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another pupil.
- Excluding another pupil from a group activity.
- Ridiculing another pupil's appearance, way of speaking or personal mannerisms.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be defined as 'the use of information and communications technology (ICT) particularly mobile phones and the internet, to upset someone else' it can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing an additional means to hurt or humiliate. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty controlling electronically circulated messages; the size of the audience; perceived anonymity; and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

Some cyberbullying is deliberate and aggressive. Some are unintentional and simply the result of not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke, may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means that the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There can be less opportunity for misunderstandings to be resolved and/or empathy. **It is therefore important that pupils are made aware of the effects of their actions.**

How is Cyberbullying different to other forms of bullying?

The audience can be very large and can be reached rapidly.

A single incident can be experienced as multiple attacks. For example, a series of messages or threats may be sent; a humiliating video posted may be copied and shared many times.

It is also worth noting that some of those being bullied may not be aware that they have or are being cyberbullied. For example, they may not have seen, or be aware of, content about them that has been posted online.

Bullying is a form of child-on-child harm and will be recorded as such on CPOMs, our secure online monitoring system for recording safeguarding, pastoral and welfare concerns.

Signs and Symptoms for Parents and Staff:

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/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 to harm themselves or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do make less effort with school work than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged, has unexplained cuts or bruises
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost" /comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable/ is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's 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
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered/change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

DEALING WITH BULLYING

This policy sets out a range of proactive strategies, reactive strategies and intervention systems which are in place to:

- Prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- React to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- Safeguard the student who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for them.
- Apply appropriate consequences to the pupil/s causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, in some cases through multi-agency support, and using restorative justice techniques where applicable

PREVENTION

- The whole school community is made clear about the anti-bullying stance the school takes and the anti-bullying policy brought to the attention of staff, parents and students.
- Curriculum opportunities are taken to develop empathy and educate students about bullying issues linked to National Anti-bullying week and Safer Internet Day, for example.
- Strategies for helping to understand what bullying is and how to prevent bullying will be taught as part of our ongoing curriculum work in PSHRE. All year groups from Y1-6 learn about forms of bullying and what to do about it in our PSHRE topic 'Say No to Bullying' in the Autumn Term. Assemblies will focus on themes surrounding issues such as being able to stand up for ourselves, not following the crowd and celebrating diversity.
- Individual classes will address issues around bullying throughout the year in circle or discussion times. We work hard to ensure that all pupils know the difference between bullying and "falling out". Circle time gives students an opportunity to speak openly with their class group and discuss issues and concerns they may have.
- Students are clear about the roles they can take in preventing bullying.
- The peer support system involves students in caring for and being aware of each other.
- Good parent-teacher relationships are developed.

- Opportunities are taken to celebrate the success of anti-bullying work in the school.
- Guidance on appropriate and safe use of the internet is introduced throughout the school in an age-appropriate way.
- All staff make sure that they make time to talk to pupils about any worries they may have and pass any concerns.
- We display the Anti-bullying policy (Child version) in class rooms (Appendix A)

INTERVENTION

- The school will identify children at risk of using bullying behaviours and will support the child: this may include working with multi-agency partners and parents/carers.
- The exact course of action once bullying has been identified, will vary with each situation but the main objectives should be that bullying incidents are brought into the open, discussed and strategies agreed to help resolve the problem.
- The following steps will be taken when dealing with a bullying incident:
- The incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has witnessed the incident or been approached regarding it. The incident should be acknowledged and those involved assured that it will be dealt with.
- The relevant class teacher(s) should be informed and initially take the lead in dealing with the situation first of all. An investigation should take place to establish the facts. Details of the investigation needs to be recorded on CPOMs (under Child-on-Child Harmful Behaviours).
- The staff member will record the witnessed/reported incident clearly on CPOMS and a member of SLT should be informed on the same day. Any additional details found during the investigation can be added. We aim to follow-up incidents within 24 hours.
- The class teacher should liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead who, alongside other members of SLT will determine appropriate action relevant to the age of the children involved. **All incidents that are determined to be bullying will be discussed and reviewed at Leadership/Safeguarding Team meetings.**

- Teachers and break duty staff will be made aware of the situation so that it can be monitored.
- When handling a bullying incident, the school may take a number of age appropriate approaches to the situation, which will include: taking time to discuss the issues with the victim of bullying and suggest strategies on how best to deal with the situation. **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 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.
- Strategies to support a victim of bullying will be put in place by staff. These may include a buddy from an older class, LSA/SMSA support at lunchtime or the opportunity to talk regularly to a member of staff.
- Any approach agreed upon will be monitored closely by the class teacher and the progress reported back to SLT and the parents of those children involved.
- Time spent talking to the child or children who have done the bullying, explaining to them why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in the future.
- Parents will be notified and kept informed.
- When appropriate, we will invite the children's parents to school to discuss the situation. The school will try hard to support the child using bullying behaviours through mentoring/pastoral support and by setting up home school link systems, working with parental support.
- Staff will try to support the children in resolving the situation using restorative justice principles. This is not simply about 'saying sorry'. Wherever possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

- In extreme situations, the school may seek advice and support from external services.
- Any approach agreed upon will be monitored closely by the class teacher and the progress reported back to SLT and the parents of those children involved.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor records regularly to ensure that there are not consistent repeat victims or pupils using bullying behaviours.

VULNERABLE PUPILS

- Bullying can happen to all children and young people and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. School staff should support all pupils who are bullied. This means being alert to the effect any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact.
- Some pupils are particularly vulnerable to bullying and may be severely affected by it, such as those with special educational needs or disabilities. Others may be particularly vulnerable because they are going through a personal or family crisis, or suffering from a health problem. Children in care who are frequently on the move may be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer. Those with caring responsibilities may be vulnerable because they are socially isolated. These vulnerable young people may also be at risk of turning to social media for consolation or to get their own back by cyberbullying.

SAFEGUARDING

- At all times the safety and well-being of all the children will be paramount. All members of the community will be conscious of the child protection considerations and liaise with the DSL if appropriate.
- Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead will analyse information for patterns of pupils, places or groups. They look out in particular for racist bullying or bullying directed at children with disabilities or special educational needs.
- The effectiveness of this policy will be evaluated in the light of:
 - ✓ Numbers of pupils being bullied
 - ✓ Pupils willingness to report incidents
 - ✓ Staff vigilance and response to bullying behaviour
 - ✓ Numbers of pupils and parents feeling secure about the school's response to bullying.
- The Senior Members of Staff with responsibility for this policy area: Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Safeguarding Lead.
- The Governor with oversight of this policy is: Safeguarding Governor
- This policy is monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Governors will be informed of any incidents recorded in the log along with incidents, sanctions and reconciliation in the Leadership Report to Governors. The information reviewed by governors does not include children's names.
- This policy will be reviewed every 3 years.

CONCLUSION

As a result of our proactive and positive approach to social education, children at Sefton Park Infant and Junior Schools will develop the necessary skills and attitudes to be confident in building successful relationships with each other. They will be able to recognise acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Through our caring ethos any member of the school community will be confident to TELL should they feel that they are experiencing or witnessing bullying. Bullying will be recognised as unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated.

It should be emphasised that although we use the terms bully, victim, harassment, racist in this policy, it is recommended that in real life situations we should as much as possible from the use of these labels when dealing with the problem. Research shows that labelling totalises people and makes it more difficult for people to behave differently from their label, or be seen as more than their label.

Ms Rebecca Earnshaw: February 2023

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