



ST IVO SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved: October 2015, Governors Student Welfare and Community
Engagement Committee

Next review due: October 2017

The school recognises the harmful effects of bullying in damaging children's physical and mental health, self-esteem, confidence and ability to build and sustain relationships. Bullying undermines the ability to concentrate and learn and can impact on children's chances of achieving their full potential at school and later in life. Bullying causes harm to those who bully, those who are bullied and those who observe bullying. This school believes that all children and young people have the right to learn and work in an environment where they feel safe and that is free from harassment and bullying.

Bullying is a subjective experience that can take many forms, but is generally defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over time and with an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves. We recognise that bullying can be emotionally and/or physically harmful.

Although children may be particularly vulnerable to bullying as a result of personal characteristics (such as height or weight), or more structural inequalities (such as race, disability or sexuality), anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference.

Bullying behaviour can represent itself in a number of different forms. Children can be bullied in ways that are physical, verbal, indirect (being ignored/excluded or the spread of malicious stories) and electronic (cyberbullying through texts, social media, email and internet).

The school recognises that bullying is a complex type of behaviour occurring between individuals and groups. Different roles within bullying situations can be identified, including the ring-leader, assistants, reinforcers, bystanders and defenders.

Some children can adopt different roles at different times, or at the same time (a bullied child might be bullying another child at the same time, or a seeming 'reinforcer' might become a 'defender' when the ringleader is not around).

The school recognises the fact that some children are more vulnerable to bullying than others and is sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child or young person is being bullied. Children who are being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems. The school will ensure that staff are aware of the physical signs and behaviours which could indicate bullying, or indeed other problems affecting the child's well-being. Where children exhibit extreme signs of distress and changes in behaviour, the school will liaise with parents/carers and where appropriate, relevant health professionals and agencies such as the school nurse / GP and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service .

The school recognises the fact that children may bully others for a variety of reasons. Recognising the reasons for bullying supports the school in identifying children who are at risk of engaging with this type of behaviour, enabling intervention at an early stage to prevent the likelihood of bullying occurring and to respond promptly to incidents of bullying as they occur. The role of pastoral staff, including form tutors, Heads and Assistant Heads of Year, is key to this.

Implementing the Anti Bullying Policy in our School

The school is committed to examining and developing all aspects of school life to enhance the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community. This is achieved in a variety of ways, including:

- the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum
- an inclusive ethos
- a strong pastoral system
- home-school links.

The school believes that the whole school community should work together to reduce bullying as part of our efforts to promote a positive and inclusive whole school ethos and create a safe, healthy and stimulating environment. Alongside the school's responsive strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying, the school adopts as part of our pastoral support system, a whole school approach to implementing proactive and preventative interventions at a school, class and individual level to reduce bullying.

A variety of preventative approaches are used, including:

- ⤴ positive behaviour strategies
- ⤴ peer support systems
- ⤴ student support in "The Bridge"
- ⤴ participation in the National Anti-bullying Week
- ⤴ liaison with other schools and organisations

The school listens to children's opinions regarding bullying through participation every two years in The Balding Survey, and other pupil voice work.

Other school polices which support this anti-bullying policy include behaviour, curriculum, equality and diversity, safeguarding and whole school ICT/esafety.

The school believes that providing a safe and happy place to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, promoting equality and diversity, ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community and raising achievement and attendance. The school has allocated specific responsibility for anti bullying work to an Assistant Headteacher who coordinates a whole school approach to managing this important issue, including oversight of the effectiveness of anti-bullying prevention and response strategies, monitoring of pastoral staff responses to incidents, staff training as required and responding to homophobic and racist incidents.

The school encourages and equips the whole school community, including parents, to report all incidents of bullying, including children who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident. The school endeavours to provide clear, accessible and confidential incident reporting systems.

Agreed procedures are used for responding consistently to incidents or allegations of bullying. Direct action to respond to incidents of bullying occurs within a context, which reminds all children that bullying behaviour is unacceptable to the school and will not be tolerated. All children are encouraged to report incidents of bullying whether they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying. The school will investigate the incident including the context and the roles of the people involved.

When responding to incidents involving any type of bullying the school will consider the situation in relation to the school's Safeguarding Policy. In cases of severe or persistent bullying, staff will liaise with the Designated Person for Child Protection. In all cases, the priority is to ensure that the person being bullied is and feels safe, all reported incidents will be taken seriously.

All incidents are recorded using a log form, enabling pastoral leaders to identify any patterns over time. Staff seek to establish and record what has happened by listening to different perspectives, including those of the person bullied, the person doing the bullying and any witnesses.

Written records are factual and where opinions are offered these are based on factual evidence. Children are invited to contribute initially and on an ongoing basis throughout the follow up period. Recording incidents helps to build a picture of behaviour patterns in school e.g. who, when, how, what action taken. It enables the school to manage individual cases effectively and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of both prevention and follow-up strategies.

All incidents of bullying will be responded to seriously and the behaviour of those who have been bullying will be challenged. It will be made clear that such behaviour is unacceptable. In all cases of bullying the school will initially consider the use of a restorative approach to resolving the situation, leading to reconciliation. The school believes that children causing harm should be held to account for their behaviour. This means accepting responsibility and agreeing actions which are monitored over a period of time.

The school will consider the use of disciplinary sanctions when responding to incidents of bullying. This may be where the school's restorative approach has failed to prevent further incidents of bullying, or where appropriate in conjunction with the school's restorative approach. Sanctions will be applied fairly and proportionately in accordance with the school's behaviour policy, taking account circumstances such as special educational needs or disabilities. Disciplinary sanctions are intended to impress on the perpetrator that what s/he has done is unacceptable, and to act as a deterrent to both the perpetrator and others.

The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident. The school takes verbal bullying, cyberbullying and indirect bullying as seriously as physical bullying. When deciding upon appropriate sanctions for bullying the school will ensure that the sanctions address bullying behaviour in a way which does not lead to an escalation of the behaviour but instead supports a resolution to the problem. This approach gives the best chance that bullying will not be repeated. The school will draw upon the school's behaviour policy and follow the agreed system for sanctions.

In the case of more serious and persistent bullying, where the perpetrator has not responded to the school's restorative strategies (see above) or sanctions, the school may consider excluding the perpetrator from the school. Serious cases of bullying can include where violence and damage to property has taken place. The DfE guidance for exclusion appeal panels makes clear that 'pupils responsible for violence and threatened violence should not normally be re-instated'. Some children who have been subjected to bullying can be provoked into violent behaviour. Where an attack has been provoked after months of persistent bullying, this will be considered differently from an unprovoked attack.

The school recognises that bullying can and does happen outside school and in the community. Bullying is a relationship issue and its occurrence reflects the ways in which children socialise in school and in the wider community. The school believes that bullying is unacceptable wherever and whenever it happens.

The school encourages children to seek help and to tell us about incidents of bullying that happen outside the school so that the school can, as appropriate, alert colleagues in other schools, contact the police or youth services, and/or offer children and parents/carers strategies to handle bullying outside of school and keep safe when using the internet and mobile phones.

Where the school has become aware of a bullying situation, parents/carers of the child who is being bullied and the child who is allegedly bullying, will be contacted to discuss their children's behaviour. The school will endeavour to involve parents/carers constructively at an early stage to support the process of investigating allegations and positively working together to seek ways of resolving the situation and bringing about reconciliation. Outcomes and agreed actions/responses will be recorded by the school.

While the school firmly believes that all bullying is unacceptable and that the perpetrators should be made to accept responsibility for their behaviour and make amends, the school will refrain from apportioning blame to the different parties involved as this could undermine the cooperative ethos that the school is seeking to promote. A cooperative ethos is desirable when trying to reach a resolution that is effective and long lasting. The school will also work alongside those parents/carers whose children have been bullied to support them in developing their children's coping strategies and assertiveness skills. Parents/carers of those causing the bullying will also have support in coming to a balanced view of what is happening and appreciating their role in helping their children to learn about the consequences of their actions.

The school also seeks support and guidance from relevant and local and national agencies and organisations that work collectively to ensure that those who work with and support children are equipped with the skills and knowledge to address bullying effectively. Local support and guidance is accessed from county wide services and through liaison with the school's multidisciplinary Locality Team and voluntary agencies.