



Anti-Bullying Policy

2019



1. Introduction

This policy reflects the values and philosophy of Bury School in relation to issues regarding bullying. It will be shared with all interested parties both in the school and in the wider community.

2. School Ethos

The school staff, governors, parents and most importantly, children, work together to create a caring and friendly atmosphere. We believe that this active partnership is vital to the life and work of the school. We are a school where we are all learning and it is safe to make mistakes and take controlled risks. Mistakes are forgiven, and seen as opportunities for improvement. This positive approach to school life spans all areas of the curriculum and all school activities.

3. Aims of the school

The broad aims of the school are:

- to enable the child to realise his/her potential through the acquisition and development of the necessary skills, concepts and knowledge
- to foster the intellectual, physical, aesthetic, spiritual, emotional, moral and social development of each child
- to provide an ordered, stimulating environment, which is meaningful in the context of children's experience
- to foster kindness and understanding between children and their peers in relation to differences of any kind – cultural, physical or intellectual
- to enrich experiences with the variety of culture, linguistic and social backgrounds within our school and its neighbouring community
- to foster good manners, self-discipline and awareness of the needs of others.

In order to attain these aims we need to promote positive behaviour and ensure that negative behaviours do not go unchecked.

Bullying is one manifestation of negative behaviour and undermines our school aims. It should therefore be read in conjunction with the Positive Behaviour Policy.

4. Aims of the Policy

The aim of this anti bullying policy is to communicate the school's approach to involving the whole school community in developing and promoting a whole school anti bullying ethos and culture. The policy provides clear guidance on how the school intends:

- To raise the profile of bullying and the effect it has on children and young people's emotional health and well-being, life chances and achievement.
- To make clear to everyone within our whole school community that no form of bullying is acceptable and to prevent, de-escalate and /or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To encourage and equip the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including those who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident.
- To respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying within the overall positive behaviour management policy.
- To safeguard and offer support and comfort to children who have been bullied.
- To apply reasonable and proportionate disciplinary sanctions to children causing the bullying.
- To support children who are bullying in recognising the seriousness of their behaviour and to offer support and counselling to help them to readjust their behaviour
- To provide longer term support to promote the self esteem of those who have been bullied to reduce the likelihood of long term damage and also to address the emotional and behavioural needs of children who bully others to reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents of bullying.
- To identify vulnerable children and those critical moments and transitions when they may become vulnerable, and provide additional support/safeguarding when needed.
- To ensure all staff are trained and supported and model positive relationships
- To regularly monitor and record incidents of bullying and harassment and report to responsible bodies e.g. governors.
- To provide curriculum opportunities including an entitlement framework for Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship that includes learning about bullying, discrimination, personal safety and domestic violence.



5. Context

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at the School.

At Bury School we believe that pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. However we accept that all institutions, both large and small, contain some numbers of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying.

We frequently, through class discussion and during themed Acts of Worship, make clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is WRONG and will not be tolerated.

It is important therefore that the School has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly. This Policy has been written in consultation with staff, Governors, parents and children.

6. What is bullying?

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.' *Preventing and tackling bullying*, DfE, 2014

'Bullying is the persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone.'
Cambs CYPS 2007

At our school we define bullying as:

Emotionally or physically harmful behaviour which is:

- Repetitive or persistent
- Deliberately harmful, carried out by an individual or group.
- Based on an imbalance of power leaving the person who is bullied feeling defenceless

For the children at our school the definition of someone who bullies is someone who:

- Deliberately keeps on hurting you by what they do or say, someone who tries to make you feel small or will not let you join in.

We are always mindful of the difference between arguments children have and true bullying. Bullying takes many forms. It can be short-term or can continue over years. It can be physical, mental or verbal, it can take place via phone or internet. It can take the form of deliberate, purposeful, systematic action by an individual or group against another individual or group. It can be overt or subtle intimidation. It does not include occasional fighting or falling out between friends or equals. Bullying can include physical hurting and leaving people out as well as damaging people's things and making fun of people.

We don't allow unkind or cruel behaviour in our school. But not all unkind behaviour is bullying.

The key characteristics that turn unkindness into bullying are:

- that it is repeated and goes on over time;
- that it is deliberate and not accidental;
- that it involves the person doing the bullying having some sort of power over the person experiencing the bullying – usually at the age of our pupils this power will come from being bigger, having a 'gang' of friends or having a toy or something that everybody wants to play with.

Children will often fall out with friends or say unkind things when they are angry. We explain to children that this is different from bullying which can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:-

- PHYSICAL.
A child can be physically punched, kicked, hit, spat at, etc.
- VERBAL.
Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality, etc.
- INDIRECT
By having nasty stories told about them; being left out, ignored or excluded from groups.



- d) **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT.**
Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hand over property to them.
- e) **ELECTRONIC / CYBERBULLYING** - for example, via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phones.

Specific Types of Bullying

Bury CE Primary School recognises that although children and young people may be particularly vulnerable to bullying as a result of personal characteristics such as height, weight, colour of hair or identity based differences such as ethnicity, ability or sexuality, anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference. Research has identified various different types of bullying which reflect different causations. These include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Bullying related to being clever or talented
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying related to gender
- Bullying of young carers or looked – after children or otherwise related to home circumstances

(See Appendix A - Specific Types of Bullying)

Bury CE Primary School recognise that bullying is a complex type of behaviour occurring between individuals and groups. Different roles within bullying situations can be identified and include:

- The ring-leader, the person who through their position of power can direct bullying activity
- Assistants/associates, who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader)
- Reinforcers, who give positive feedback to the bully, perhaps by smiling or laughing.
- Outsiders/bystanders, who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour.
- Defenders, who try and intervene to stop the bullying or comfort pupils who experience bullying.

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).

7. Recognising Signs and Symptoms

Bury CE Primary 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 following physical signs and behaviour could indicate other problems but bullying will be considered as a possibility:

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Reluctant to go out at break times
- Losing self confidence and self-esteem
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Developing unexplained cuts, bruises and other injuries
- Unwilling to go to school, development of school phobia and unusual patterns of non attendance
- Failing to achieve potential in school work
- Becoming withdrawn, nervous and losing concentration
- Becoming isolated and disengaged from other children
- Developing changes in physical behaviour such as stammering and nervous ticks
- Regularly having books or clothes destroyed
- Having possessions go 'missing' or 'lost' including packed lunch and money
- Starting to steal money (to pay the perpetrator)
- Becoming easily distressed, disruptive or aggressive
- Developing problems with eating and food



- Running away
- Developing sleep problems and having nightmares
- Developing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide

8. Reporting and monitoring incidents of Bullying

The school has allocated specific responsibility for anti-bullying work to the school's Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher who will support the coordination of a whole school approach to managing this important issue. This leadership role on anti-bullying includes the following core elements:

- evaluating data to inform policy development
- co-ordinating anti-bullying curriculum opportunities
- overseeing the effectiveness of the anti-bullying prevention and response strategies
- supporting staff to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and practice.

Bury CE Primary School encourages and equips the whole school community 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, which include access to:

- teachers and support staff who are trained in listening skills and anti bullying issues;
- the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher;
- Independent listeners/buddies, identified by the children themselves, including older pupils and adults other than teaching staff to whom children who are experiencing being bullied may turn;
- confidential phone numbers, e.g. Childline;
- (when identified as a need) family workers and other outside agencies

The school's incident reporting systems and guidance on defining bullying and recognising the signs and symptoms of bullying in **children** are recorded and communicated to the whole school community via:

- the school's prospectus
- the school's anti bullying leaflet for children
- the school's and or /local authority's anti bullying leaflet for parents/carers
- the school's notice/information board

Bury CE Primary School has an agreed procedure 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. At our school all children are encouraged to report incidents of bullying whether they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying. The school will investigate the incident and decide on an appropriate course of action.

When responding to incidents involving any type of bullying the school will consider the situation in relation to the school's Child Protection policy and procedures. Statutory guidance on safeguarding children identifies 'Emotional Abuse' as featuring 'serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; or the exploitation or corruption of children'. In cases of severe or persistent bullying, staff will liaise with the Designated Person for Child Protection particularly where there are concerns that a child or young person may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm in terms of emotional abuse.

The procedure and stages in responding effectively to bullying at our school are:

Monitoring and recording behaviour and relationship issues. The school follows a clear pastoral support system, which enables challenging behaviour and relationship problems to be identified, recorded and addressed. This process is part of the school's overall positive behaviour policy. It supports the detection of bullying and allows for intervention at an early stage. At Bury CE Primary we keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying.

Making sure the person being bullied is safe and feels safe. When a child reports being bullied, the school will acknowledge their concerns and the incident will be taken seriously. Incidents of bullying reported by witnesses are treated in the same manner and will always lead to a conversation with the targeted child.



Establishing and recording what happened by listening to the targeted child. After listening to the targeted child and their account of what has happened to them, the school will record the following information:

- *Date, time incident reported*
- *Member of staff to whom the incident was reported*
- *Date, time, location of alleged incident*
- *Nature of the alleged incident from the perspective of the person being bullied.*
- *Date, time when parents/carers were informed*

When an incident of bullying is reported the school will endeavour to record this incident within 24 hours of the incident occurring. Written records are factual and where opinions are offered these are based on factual evidence. 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 strategies.

Note: The school submits reports of any incidents relating to the 9 protected characteristics of the Equalities act to the local authority on a termly basis via the PRIDE website. This information allows local authorities to monitor the occurrence of incidents and identify underlying trends in bullying so that appropriate and relevant training and support can be provided to schools. The headteacher makes half termly reports to the Governing Body on incidents of Bullying.

9. Responding to incidents of Bullying

The school is currently using The Support Group Method led by any trained member of staff. The school believes that all bullying is unacceptable but that many children who display anti-social behaviour and lack empathy for others can be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and change their behaviour for the long term.

(Note: With many restorative approaches, it is inadvisable to gather accounts from perpetrators and witnesses as this tends to inflame situations and is not conducive to establishing a restorative approach where perpetrators are more likely to come to terms with the harm they have caused, accept responsibility for their actions and feel compelled to change their behaviour).

Use of Sanctions

In certain cases of bullying, the school will consider the use of sanctions e.g. in cases of bullying where violence has been used or where a restorative approach has been unsuccessful in preventing further incidents of bullying. This will be recorded including the different perspectives of all those involved in the incident, including those of the person being bullied, the person doing the bullying and those that have witnessed the bullying.

Sanctions will be applied fairly and proportionately in accordance with the school's behaviour policy, taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that children may have and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable children. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other children. However for a sanction to be reasonable and lawful the school will take account of the nature of the children's disability or SEN and the extent to which they understand and are in control of what they are doing. Disciplinary sanctions are intended to:

- Impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable
- Deter him/her from repeating that behaviour
- Signal to other children that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident. The school takes verbal 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. Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold the children who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the children to put right the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the children to put right the harm they have caused. Where appropriate the school may use sanctions in conjunction with the school's restorative justice approach. This approach give the best chance that bullying will never be repeated. The school will draw upon the schools' positive behaviour policy and follow the system for sanctions, which includes:

Removing the child who is bullying from particular groups of children including withdrawing them from certain breaktimes / lunchtimes when needed.

Involving children in developing appropriate 'fair punishments' for those who have been involved in bullying.

In the case of 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. The government's 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.

Monitoring and following up with all parties concerned, including parents/carers to ensure that the bullying has stopped. Part of the school's process of responding to an incident is to seek an agreement to meet at some point in the future to see whether the situation has been resolved or whether further work needs to take place. This will include evaluating the effectiveness of the follow up strategies that have been put in place to ensure that the bullying has stopped. The school does not assume that a situation requires no further attention simply because a children has made no further complaints. Where a problem has not been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties the follow up strategies will be reviewed and/or further advice sought. The timing of this monitoring will depend on the agreed responsive approach.

Responding to incidents of bullying which occur off the school premises.

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.

When an incident of bullying is reported and has occurred off the school site and out of school hours e.g. walking to and from school, or via technology, the school will work with home to help resolve the issue.

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:

- *raise concerns and take steps as appropriate e.g. contacting the police to alert them to trouble spots*
- *alert colleagues in other schools whose pupils are bullying off the school premises*
- *make contact with local police officers and representatives from the Youth Service and other organisations (including sports clubs and voluntary organisations)*
- *map safe routes to school in the event of a children being bullied on their journey to school*
- *offer children and parents/cares strategies to handle bullying off the school premises and guidance on how to keep safe on the internet and when using their mobile phones or other technology.*

We make use of the Primary Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme (SEAL) within PSHE and ensure continual professional development for staff.

Bury CE Primary 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

10. Prevention

At Bury CE Primary we believe 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.

Our approach includes:

- Implementing an effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti bullying ethos
- Adopting positive behaviour management strategies as part of the school's Positive Behaviour Policy
- Implementing a whole school approach to the teaching of PSHE and Citizenship and the incorporation of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme (SEAL)
- Implementing a Personal Safety Programme such as the Cambridgeshire Staying Safe Programme
- Ensuring that the school's anti bullying statement or charter is actively promoted in assemblies and other formal occasions, as well as displayed around the school
- Providing training on behaviour management and anti bullying for all relevant staff including playground staff
- Providing a school council and regular circle time, enabling children to talk about their feelings and concerns in a safe environment and to enable them to share concerns about bullying
- Participating in the national annual anti bullying week and supporting learning on bullying though whole school activities, projects and campaigns



- Reviewing the development and supervision of the school inside and outside including the outdoor areas and playground to ensure provision is safe, inclusive and supports children's emotional wellbeing
- Providing publicity including information leaflets for children and parents/carers to raise awareness of bullying and support those who are being bullied or have witnessed bullying to report incidents and seek help
- Providing social skills groups for vulnerable individuals and groups
- Providing cross year group house systems of mixed age groups to allow children from different age groups to socialise and support each other
- Providing information on support agencies such as Childline, Kidscape and Beatbullying including telephone numbers for help lines and addresses for supportive websites

Liaising with members of the community e.g. transport service providers and engaging in community initiatives and safer school partnerships

- Linking with other schools in a local school partnership and with local authority strategies

Delivering the Entitlement Curriculum for Friendships and Relationships and Bullying in our school

The school acknowledges the role of the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum in preventative work on bullying. The PSHE and Citizenship curriculum supports the development of children's self esteem and their emotional resilience and ability to empathise with others. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to learn and develop the skills to identify manage and challenge incidents of bullying as well as providing opportunities for children to learn about bullying in relation to the wider context of diversity and inclusion.

- The school adopts the Cambridgeshire Primary Personal Development Programme for PSHE and Citizenship in which learning related to bullying, diversity and difference is covered within strands such as Myself and My Relationships, Citizenship and Healthy and Safer Lifestyles
- The school is also implementing the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning Programme (SEAL) as part of the Cambridgeshire Personal Development Programme
- The school also uses the Cambridgeshire Education Child Protection Service's Personal Safety units as part of the Cambridgeshire Personal Development Programme
- The school recognises and participates in the national Anti-Bullying Week, which provides an annual intensive focussed week on the subject of recognising and combating bullying

Work on bullying as part of the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum is taught through:

- Designated lesson times
- Enrichment activities such as visits from the Life Education Centre, drama groups/ theatre in Education, outside agencies

Children's Consultation and Participation

The school considers listening to the voices of children and actively seeking their views and opinions regarding bullying as an important part of our preventative work. The school regularly audits the way in which bullying is being addressed which includes, listening to children and ensuring they are given the opportunity to speak out, and have their voices heard on their experiences of bullying. Children are actively encouraged to participate in identifying both the problems and solutions to bullying; reviewing and developing the schools anti bullying policy and practice and engaging in initiatives to support an anti bullying ethos in school. Children actively participate in:

- Identifying when and where the bullying happens and who is doing it to whom
- Making decisions about how to address and tackle bullying
- Reviewing the development and delivery of the taught curriculum focusing on aspects of bullying and discrimination
- Learning how to play an active participant role in challenging bullying such as engaging in peer support schemes such as buddying, mentoring and mediating

The school adopts a number of democratic methods / systems for promoting pupil consultation including:

- Class and school councils, house groups
- Focus groups and face to face discussions with small groups of children
- Active learning and interactive learning techniques included in PSHE and Citizenship such as mind mapping sessions, role play, puppets, group work and creative arts



- Surveys including written questionnaires, draw and write and research designed and carried out by children

11. Working with Parents/Carers

Where the school has become aware of a bullying situation, parents/carers of the child/young person who is being bullied will be invited to the school to discuss their child's situation. The school will endeavour to involve parents/carers of children who have been bullied constructively at an early stage to support the process of working together to seek ways of resolving the situation and bringing about reconciliation. The outcome of the meeting and agreed actions/responses will be recorded by the school. The school will work alongside those parents/carers whose children have been bullied to support them in developing their children's coping strategies and assertiveness skills.

The school takes parents/carers reporting bullying seriously. Parents are initially encouraged to refer their concerns to the class teacher. Parents/carers are encouraged to note details of the incident to share with the class teacher/ member of staff. Again, a record of the incident and the agreed actions/responses made at the meeting will be recorded by the school. The school will discuss the possible responsive options with parents/carers and the bullied child and agree a way forward.

In cases where a Restorative Approach has failed to modify the behaviour of a perpetrator and the bullying is continuing or when sanctions are to be used, the parents/carers of the perpetrator will be invited to the school to discuss their child's behaviour. The outcome of the meeting and agreed actions/responses will be recorded by the school. The school adopts a problem solving approach with parents/carers e.g. 'It seems your son/daughter and (other child) have not been getting on very well' rather than 'your son/daughter has been bullying....' 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 understands that a cooperative ethos is desirable when trying to reach a resolution that is effective and long lasting. 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 and adopt alternative ways of behaving.

The school ensures that staff and parents/carers remain fully aware of the measures that have been put into place to prevent the occurrence of further incidents. Follow up appointments are made with parent/carers to share these agreed measures and to monitor their success in preventing further bullying.

Guidance for parents/carers regarding advice on recognising the signs and symptoms of bullying in children and how to approach the school to register concerns/incidents and seek support is available via the:

- *school's prospectus*
- *the school website*

12. Outside Agencies

The school seeks the 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.

13. Monitoring the problem

A Bullying log is kept where all reported cases are recorded. Once per term the Headteacher will report to the Governing Body on the number and type of incidents and their aftermath.

To assist with the monitoring process, the following should be considered:

- The OfSTED framework for inspecting schools, which outlines:
 - assessment of the extent to which pupils are free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment
 - assessment of the extent to which schools promote good relationships, including racial harmony and deal effectively with incidents such as bullying, racism and other forms of harassment.
- the reported incidence of bullying, particularly in relation to any issues of ethnicity, age, gender, disability etc
- whether appropriate recording procedures are being consistently adhered to
- the means by which the policy is being regularly communicated to all members of the school community, especially new and non-teaching staff, and is regularly and openly publicised
- whether the policy continues to comply with all statutory requirements
- to what extent the policy evolves in the light of emergent good practice elsewhere



- the impact of the policy on pupils' attainment and behaviour and on the school's inclusive practice
- aspects of school organisation, for example playground or lunchtime arrangements, which may impact upon the effectiveness of the policy
- the needs of the staff with regards to training

14. Arrangements for review of this policy

This policy will be reviewed biennially.

Date approved: 9th July 2019



Appendix A – Types of Bullying

Bullying related to race, religion or culture

Racist or faith-based bullying is bullying based on a person's background, colour, religion or heritage. Some surveys and focus groups have found that a high proportion of bullied pupils have experienced racist or faith-based bullying. Recent political and social issues also appear to have been a factor in bullying and harassment. There is research to support the suggestion that where black and minority ethnic (BME) children experience bullying, it is more likely to be severe bullying. Moreover, bullying incidents can be a subset of the indirect and direct racist hostility which BME children, children of different faiths and Traveller children can experience in a number of situations.

When racist or faith-based bullying takes place, the characteristics singled out not only apply to the individual child but also make reference to their family and more broadly their ethnic or faith community as a whole. Racial and cultural elements in bullying can be seen to heighten the negative impact on a child's sense of identity, self worth and self esteem.

Schools have a statutory duty to log all incidents of racist or faith-based bullying and submit them on a regular basis (termly) to the local authority. This allows local authorities to monitor the occurrence of incidents and identify underlying trends in racist bullying so that appropriate and relevant training and support can be provided to schools. It is important to note that all incidents that are identified as potentially racist must be recorded, reported and investigated as such. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) defines racism as 'conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin. In its more subtle form, it is as damaging as in its more overt form'.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

Research shows that children and young people with SEN and disabilities are more at risk of bullying than their peers. Public bodies have new responsibilities to actively promote equality of opportunity for all disabled people and eliminate disability-related harassment.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, whether in mainstream or special schools, do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence and the robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying. Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, in most cases (except those related to specific conditions) schools should expect the same standards of behaviour as apply to the rest of the school community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

Bullying related to gifted and talented children and young people

Children and young people who are gifted and talented can be vulnerable to bullying. Their achievements, different interests and advanced abilities can set them apart from their peers and can lead to a sense of not 'fitting in' and feelings of isolation. Their talents and abilities may cause feelings of resentment and jealousy among their peers which may make them targets for bullying behaviour.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Those with health or visible medical conditions, such as eczema, may be more likely than their peers to become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight, and other body image issues can result in bullying, and obvious signs of affluence (or lack of it), can also be exploited.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

Homophobic bullying involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of their perceived or actual sexual orientation. Evidence of homophobic bullying suggests that children and young people who are gay or lesbian (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of victimization than their peers. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying. The young person may not want to report bullying if it means "coming out" to teachers and parents before they are ready to.

Homophobic bullying includes all forms of bullying but in particular it can include:

- Verbal abuse - the regular use, consciously or unconsciously, of offensive and discriminatory language, particularly the widespread use of the term 'gay' in a negative context. Also spreading rumours that cause an individual's perceived sexual orientation to be ridiculed, questioned or insulted
- Physical abuse – including hitting, punching, kicking, sexual assault and threatening behaviour
- Cyberbullying – using on-line spaces to spread rumours about someone or exclude them. Can also include text messaging, including video and picture messaging



Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise linked to home circumstances

Children and young people may be made vulnerable to bullying by the fact that they provide care to someone in their family with an illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse problem. Young carers may be taking on practical and emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. Research has highlighted the difficulties young carers face, including risks of ill-health, stress and tiredness, especially when they care through the night. Many feel bullied or isolated. Children in care may also be vulnerable to bullying for a variety of reasons, such as their not living with their birth parents or because they have fallen behind in their studies. Some children and young people are heavily influenced by their communities or homes where bullying and abuse may be common. Some bullying at school may arise from trauma or instability at home related to issues of domestic violence or bereavement or from the experience of being part of a refugee family. Siblings of vulnerable children may themselves be the subject of bullying by association.

Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying

Sexist and sexual bullying affects both genders. Boys may be victims as well as girls, and both sexes may be victims of their own sex. Sexist bullying is based on sexist attitudes that when expressed demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexual bullying may be characterised by name calling, comments and overt “looks” about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used. Children and young people identifying as transgender or experiencing gender dysphoria (feeling that they belong to another gender or do not conform with the gender role prescribed to them) can also become a target of bullying.



APPENDIX B

Responding to Incidents of Bullying – The Support Group Method.

This appendix outlines the reconciliation processes and approaches the school will take when responding to incidents of bullying. This appendix includes guidance on The Support Group Approach.

The Support Group Method - Introduction

The Support Group Method, developed by Barbara Maines and George Robinson, was first outlined in *Educational Psychology in Practice* (1991). The approach addresses bullying by forming a support group of children and young people who have been bullying and/or have been involved as bystanders. It uses a problem-solving approach, without apportioning blame, giving responsibility to the group to solve the problem and to report back at a subsequent review meeting.

The process does rely upon the 'discovery' of an incident. Schools should concentrate on openness and an ethos that supports peer in seeking help for targets without suffering the stigma of 'telling'. When bullying has been observed or reported, then The Support Group Method offers a simple seven-step procedure, which can be used by a teacher or other facilitator.

The Support Group Method is a well recognised approach used in many schools and local authorities across the country. The approach was originally called 'The No Blame Approach' but has recently had a change of name due to misconceptions regarding the process because of the use of the words 'no blame'. The process does in fact enable those that bully to acknowledge the damage caused to others by their behaviour and supports those that are bullying to develop empathy for others and take responsibility for changing their behaviour. It is suggested that schools keep as closely as possible to the steps outlined in the process as this is a proven process and alterations to the protocol may jeopardize the positive effects of the process. However, having trailed this process, schools may feel that some small adjustments are required to ensure that the programme suits the needs of their school and individual children and young people.

The Support Group Method - the seven step process

Step one – talk with the targeted pupil

The aim of this step:

1. To understand the pain experienced by the person who has been bullied
2. To explain the method and gain permission to proceed
3. To discuss who will make up The Support Group
4. To agree what will be recounted to the group.

When the facilitator finds out that bullying has happened, they start by talking to the person who has been bullied. During this conversation the listener encourages them to describe how they feel with reflective comments such as, "That must be very hard for you ... So you have felt really upset".

The purpose is not to discover factual evidence about this or other events; if the person wants to include evidence in the account this is always reframed to establish the resulting distress. For example a comment like, "They have all been ignoring me, nobody will talk to me." might be replied to with a response like, "So, you felt really lonely and you were upset that you had nobody to talk to". At this point the facilitator will have enough of the picture to be able to recount a story which will illustrate the harm experienced by the person who has been bullied.

It is important that the person being bullied understands and gives consent to the process. Sometimes there may be a fear that it could lead to further torment but when the non-punitive aspect is fully explained they usually feel safe, and relieved that something is being done. They may want the perpetrators to understand how much distress has been caused. Talking to someone else who has been through the experience might give further reassurance.

The person who is being bullied will help the facilitator to select the group members by asking who has been causing the harm and subsequently inquiring for names of colluders, observers and potential rescuers. The questions might be:

Who has been doing this to you?

Who else joined in?

Who watched and knows this is happening but did not join in?

Who is a friend or somebody really popular who would want to help?

It is very important to build the group to include all these roles.

The facilitator should end the meeting by:



- *Checking that nothing confidential has been discussed which should not be disclosed to the group.*
- *Inviting the person to produce a piece of writing or a picture which will illustrate their unhappiness.*
- *Offering the person an opportunity to talk again at any time during the procedure if things are not going well. This could be arranged by ensuring some easy contact point at the same time each day or by agreeing how a message could be delivered. A discrete and useful way of monitoring how the targeted person is feeling is to introduce them to a secret thumbs up or thumbs down signal which they can use to convey how they are feeling. It is important that, although no meeting is planned until the follow-up, the person does have access should something go wrong in the intervening period. The person who is being bullied is not invited to join the group to present their own account, as it is possible that they will make accusations, provoke denial or justification and undermine the problem-solving approach. It is up to the facilitator to act as the advocate for the target.*

Step two – convene a meeting with the people involved *facilitator arranges to meet with the group of pupils who have been involved and suggested by the person who has been bullied. A group of six to eight works well. This is an opportunity for the facilitator to use their judgement to balance the group so that helpful and reliable young people are included alongside those whose behaviour has been causing distress. The aim is to use the strengths of group members to bring about the best outcome.*

In order to establish a welcoming environment atmosphere the meeting should be arranged in school time in a comfortable room, and the facilitator should greet the participants and thank them for coming. Refreshments can be offered to emphasise that this group is important.

Step three – explain the problem

The facilitator starts by telling the group that they, the facilitator have a problem – they are worried about ‘John’ who is having a very hard time at the moment. By asking the group to listen to the facilitator’s worries, the facilitator can divert some suspicion or irritation which might be directed towards the target. The facilitator has a duty of care and this meeting is called to help the facilitator fulfil that duty.

The facilitator recounts the story of ‘John’s’ unhappiness and uses the piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise their distress. At no time does the facilitator discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group.

Step four – share responsibility

When the account is finished, the listeners may look downcast or uncomfortable and be uncertain about the reason for the meeting. Some may be anxious about possible punishment. The facilitator makes a change in the mood here by stating explicitly that:

- *No-one is in trouble or going to be punished*
- *It is the facilitator’s responsibility to help ‘John’ to be happy and safe but this cannot be achieved without the group’s help.*
- *The group has been convened to help solve the problem.*

Step five – ask the group members for their ideas

Group members are usually genuinely moved by the account of their peer’s distress and relieved that they are not in trouble. No-one has been pushed into a defensive corner by accusations and the power of the group has shifted from the “bully leader” to the group as a whole, whose members withdraw consent for the behaviour to continue.

Each member of the group is then encouraged to suggest a way in which ‘John’ could be helped to feel happier. These ideas are stated in the “I” language of intention. “I will walk to school with him.” “I will ask him to sit with me at dinner.” Ideas are owned by the group members and not imposed by the facilitator. The facilitator makes positive responses but does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

The facilitator may want to record the group’s ideas in order to validate the efforts made by the group member. The facilitator may want to use some prepared certificates that record appreciation of each group member and allow for a space to record the suggestion.

*Thank you to -----for joining a group to help support a peer who is unhappy, and making the suggestion:
‘I could-----’*

Step six – leave it up to them

The facilitator ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. The facilitator thanks the group members, expresses confidence in a positive outcome and arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going. As a way of monitoring ongoing progress, the facilitator may want to introduce the group members to a secret thumbs up or thumbs down signal as a discrete way of enabling them to communicate any concerns that may arise regarding the targeted pupil’s welfare.



Step seven – meet them again

About a week later, the facilitator discusses with each pupil, including the person who has been bullied, how things have been going. This allows the facilitator to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process. These meetings are with one group member at a time so that each can give a statement about their contribution without creating a competitive atmosphere. It does not matter if everyone has not kept to his or her intention, as long as the bullying has stopped. The person who has been bullied does not have to become the most popular person in school, just to be safe and happy.

The above description of the Support Group Method is taken from 'Bullying: A Complete Guide to The Support Group Method'. Robinson and Maines 2008 SAGE Publications Ltd