



## Anti-bullying Policy and Procedures

# January 2016

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## Contents

Introduction	3
Rationale	3
Principles	3
Aims	4
Definition	5
How we will deal with incidents of bullying	6
How we will recognise incidents of bullying	6
Appendix One Parental Involvement	7
Appendix Two Staff Guidance	9
Appendix Three Advice for Students	10

## **Introduction**

'Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community'. DfES, 2007

The Governors and Head Teacher of the Link School are committed to safeguarding the welfare of students and vulnerable adults. Policies and practices will be robust and contain the necessary measures to enable all staff to fulfil their roles and responsibilities with full regard to this commitment.

The school has a designated Anti-Bullying Coordinator who leads an Anti-Bullying Team. The team includes a cross section of school staff and they have been involved in the development and review of the policy. In March 2016 the school was awarded the Sunderland Young Peoples platinum anti-bullying charter mark.

The policies and procedures contained in this document apply to everyone who is in contact with students who come to the Link School. We each have a role to play in ensuring that the students in our care feel safe. We all share the responsibility to protect our students and that includes taking the right steps to ensure that their safety is maintained. It is our statutory obligation to follow procedures and these procedures are set down in this document.

(Please also refer to the Peer on Peer Abuse guidance on the whole school Child Protection Policy).

## **Rationale.**

In the context of our school ethos and the Every Child Matters Agenda, the Link school is committed to the protection, support and care of all members of the school community. We believe that the emotional, physical and mental welfare of the student is paramount.

In so doing, we wish to create an atmosphere where students and staff feel safe and secure and where they can enjoy positive and open relationships with each other. Students must also be able to interact with staff and with fellow students without prejudice.

## **Principles.**

As a learning community we must ensure that our policies and practices minimise bullying and always help and support every member of the community. Students in our care should be able to engage in their learning and development in accordance with their own ability and potential. Equally, members of staff should be able to fulfil their professional duties without impediment. Therefore, our policy on anti-bullying and the procedures which are in place are intended to reflect those beliefs.

We are committed to sustaining a culture in which those barriers to teaching and learning that are a consequence of bullying are removed. In line with our school behaviour policy we have a zero tolerance of Bullying in all of its forms.

In carrying out our responsibilities, all staff will seek opportunities to emphasise the message of this policy and put it into practice. Those with responsibility for team meetings, subject lessons and activities will ensure that the school's anti-bullying values are highlighted and practised.

## **Aims.**

To ensure that: Governors, all staff, students and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.

- Governors, all staff, students and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

We use a range of proactive strategies to prevent bullying. These include;

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities, in particular tutor periods and PSHE classes where issues of diversity are discussed and anti-bullying messages are drawn out.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year
- School assemblies and pupil/parent surveys.
- Poster campaigns and student displays.
- Review of general and specific staff induction and continuing professional development to ensure staff training reflects the anti-bullying policy and practice of the school.

Measures are put in place which prevent or address incidents of bullying.

These are:

- To establish and maintain a culture of zero-tolerance re: bullying (promoted by visual displays, annual Anti-bullying week and PHSE lessons)
- Named Anti Bullying leads across key stages.
- To provide mechanisms for students and/or staff to report incidents of bullying
- To use our annual school survey and school systems to monitor incidents of bullying and evaluate impact of the measures in place
- To consider peer mentoring where suitable

## **Definition.**

It is important to understand what constitutes bullying as opposed to being rude or mean.

**Rude - Inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else.**

Incidents of rudeness are usually spontaneous, unplanned inconsideration, based on thoughtlessness, poor manners or narcissism, but not meant to actually hurt someone.

**Mean - Purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (or maybe twice).**

The main distinction between “rude” and “mean” behavior has to do with intention; while rudeness is often unintentional, mean behavior very much aims to hurt or depreciate someone. It is impulsive cruelty that is often regretted very quickly. Very often, mean behavior in children is motivated by angry feelings and/or the misguided goal of propping themselves up in comparison to the person they are putting down.

**Bullying - Intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power.**

Experts agree that bullying entails three key elements: an intent to harm, a power imbalance and repeated acts or threats of aggressive behavior. Children who bully say or do something intentionally hurtful to others and they keep doing it, with no sense of regret or remorse — even when targets of bullying show or express their hurt or tell the aggressors to stop.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional. Being unfriendly, excluding, and tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures, damaging property, theft).
- 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, social network sites such as Facebook, internet, chat room misuse.
- Mobile threats by text messaging & calls.
- Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.
- Social/familial. Because of socio-economic background.
- Educational. Because of educational ability

Bullying is damaging for both victim and perpetrators and is usually linked with secrecy and threat. It can lead to feelings of fear, misery, isolation, loneliness, powerlessness and hopelessness, as well as physical signs in the victim and a sense of power and control in the perpetrator. Therefore, bullying will not be tolerated in the Link School and will be taken

seriously.

## **How we will deal with incidents of bullying**

### Stage 1: Information

- Learners, parents, member of staff or other stakeholders may report an issue.
- Where necessary the member of staff involved should also complete the relevant paperwork.
- All completed forms go to either the Lead Behaviour Professional or designated person.

### Stage 2: Investigation and Action

- All pupils involved should be interviewed by an appropriate member of staff.
- If appropriate parents/carers may be contacted and information shared.
- Mediation process to resolve the issue(s) if required and beneficial to all parties concerned.
- The incident will be logged in the school Bullying Incident Record.

### Stage 3: Enhanced response:

- If the issue continues parents/carers of all parties could be invited in for a meeting with relevant member of staff e.g. Headteacher, Senior Leader, Lead Behaviour Officer.
- The school decides upon the next course of action e.g. Positive re-engagement plan, moving group, twilights etc.

### Stage 4: Escalated response:

- Fixed term exclusion.
- Outside agency involvement e.g. Police, Washington Mind etc.
- Alternative timetable/placement.

## **How we will recognise incidents of bullying**

### **Signs and Symptoms.**

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults, at home and in school, 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 to school on the bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes his usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)

- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering or self-harming
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries himself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- underperforms 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
- is bullying other students or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong with him
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous/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.

## **APPENDIX ONE**

### **Parental Involvement**

When necessary the parents of bullies and their victims will be informed of an incident and the action that has taken place and asked to support strategies proposed to tackle the problem. The bully will also be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions for repeated incidents will be clearly explained

Parents will be informed regularly through newsletters about the anti-bullying policy in the school. As a school we regularly review the policy to ensure we are in a position to strengthen our approach to this issue. This policy is seen as an integral part of our Behaviour and Discipline Policy.

#### **Advice for Parents:**

The most important thing a parent can do to help a child who is being bullied is to provide love and reassurance and to support them in their quest to solve the problem. A report of bullying by a child should always be taken seriously. Parents can take comfort that the link school are committed to tackling bullying in all its guises. Therefore, parents are invited to contact the school should they become aware that their child is being bullied. The school welcomes ideas and encourages that you contact the Anti-Bullying Coordinator.

## **APPENDIX TWO**

### **DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING**

#### **Staff Guidelines**

IT IS THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL ADULTS, TEACHING AND NONTEACHING STAFF To challenge anything you see or hear during lessons and around school e.g. racist remarks, jeering, swearing at, laughing at, name calling, isolating, physical violence etc. Address any issues as they occur in lessons – if possible, sensitively, with the whole class; if not, then at least with the people involved. Encourage pupils not to tolerate things done to them and to speak out.

If a pupil makes a complaint, listen and take it seriously – your attitude will say so much about the support the pupil may expect. Use your own judgement as to whether to investigate thoroughly or just to accept the distress of the ‘victim’ as being the important factor.

Record all incidents or complaints on sleuth. Contact the Lead Behaviour Officer or a member of the Anti-Bullying Team.

Decide what is appropriate to do, using your own judgement as to whether to deal with the incident yourself or to seek further support from either of the above.

If there is more than one incident involving the same people contact the Anti-bullying Coordinator who should inform parents of both or all involved and suggest strategies to prevent further incidents.

## **Appendix Three**

### **Advice for students.**

If you are being bullied, it is important that you talk to an adult who is in a position to help you.

There can be a reluctance to report bullying because of a fear of being labelled a 'grass' and going against an unwritten code of student behaviour. This concern is understandable but must not prevent you from reporting bullying behaviour. The vast majority of students dislike bullying and would support your attempts to stop it.

Some students may not want to report bullying because they feel it might only make matters worse. Again, this fear is understandable, but staff are trained in ways to help victims of bullying in a manner that protects the victim.

It can take courage to challenge the bully, to expose them for who they are and to play a part in improving our school by ridding it of bullying behaviour. The Link school encourages its students to stand up to bullies – do not tolerate bullying as a victim or as a bystander.

Everyone at The Link School should be committed to making the School a safe and happy community.

**AND REMEMBER;**

Before you post to social media

**THINK** is it;

**T**True

**H**Helpful

**I**Inspiring

**N**Necessary

**K**Kind

If it is not **DELETE IT!!**

