



Our Lady & St Thomas RCVA Primary School

Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy

As a Rights Respecting School we consider these rights are central to UNCRC and therefore to this policy. It is important in a school to ensure these sentiments reflect how incidents are handled. These are the main articles represented.

The purpose of education is to develop every child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities. Article 29

All children should be protected from violence, abuse and neglect, and governments should protect them. Article 19

All organisations concerned with children, for example, schools and the health service, should work towards what is best for each child. Article 3

All children have a right to find out things, and say what they think through speaking, writing, drawing etc. unless it breaks the rights of others. Article 13

No child should be punished in a way that humiliates or hurts them. Article 37

Definition-Bullying Bullying is deliberately hurtful (including aggression); repeated often over a period of time; difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

A person is bullied if he or she is exposed regularly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more

persons. Bullying is a behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack, physical, psychological, social or verbal, by those in a position of power, which is formally or situation ally defined, on those who are powerless to resist, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification.

An attitude rather than an act. It can be identified as bullying only by measuring the effects the acts have on the vulnerable child.

It is different from random or individual acts of aggression. These are not isolated incidents arising from poor communication and understanding between children. They are not accidental. Children come to school to learn, to socialise, negotiate, and deal with problems. (UNCRC Article 3, 19 and 37.)

Definition- Harassment

- Harassment is statutorily defined as, any act of pursuit, torment, or annoyance, words, conduct or action, usually repeated or persistent that, being directed at a specific person, annoys, alarms, or causes substantial emotional distress in that person and serves no purpose.
- targeting others, with the apparent intention of causing distress, embarrassment, or other discomfort. or with a view to the violation of the dignity of a person on grounds of racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age, gender identity or sexual orientation.
- harassment occurs when one user continually or deliberately offends another user with actions such as posting comments intended to hurt, offend or conflict with another user's beliefs.

Bullying and harassment can take a number of forms, but the three main types are:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, and taking belongings, damaging personal property.
- **Verbal** – name calling this includes all forms and includes prejudiced based bullying relating to special educational needs, sex, race, religion and belief, disability and sexual orientation or gender reassignment, making any offensive remarks, text messaging, emails, writing offensive graffiti. We keep a record of known bullying incidents. All staff are aware that children with SEND and / or differences/perceived differences are more susceptible to being bullied.
- **Indirect** – spreading nasty rumours, exclusion from social groups. (UNCRC Article 3, 19 and 37.)

Aims and Objectives Bullying and harassment is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a whole school ethos in which bullying and harassment is regarded as unacceptable. We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all children can learn without anxiety.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying and harassment and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the prevention and eradication of bullying and harassment in our school.

Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying and harassment. (UNCRC Article 3, 19, 29 and 37.)

Preventative action

Ensuring all staff are aware of and trained to follow the school's anti-bullying and harassment policy. Assess the extent of the problem through surveys and discussions with parents and pupils. There are many opportunities to promote the policy, including during assemblies and collective worship.

Work based upon the rights respecting school charters, children as a class decide upon their charters and these are all different. The playground and dining hall charters are negotiated through the school and class councils. These charters are re negotiated each year. (UNCRC Article 12.) Projects, role-plays or stories can indicate what pupils can do to prevent bullying.

PSHCE (Personal Social Health and Citizenship Education) deals with direct issues on bullying. SEAL –especially the unit on Bullying to be used as part National Anti-Bullying Nurturing Human Wholeness. Circle Time – must not be a naming and shaming session. History- dealing with racism, intimidation, persecution. Literacy- exploring feelings of isolation, intimidation and abuse. Happy Helpers and Buddies (UNCRC Article 3 and 12.) Friendship Bench (UNCRC Article 3 and 12) Worry Box and Bear (UNCRC Article 3 and 12) School Council (UNCRC Article 3 and 12) Children are used to working collaboratively rather than competitively. Staff setting an example, which is firm, respects those who are different and avoids being domineering, manipulative or bullying, reduces conflict.

Who are the victims? Any child can be a victim. A likely indicator of bullying is when a child's demeanour or behaviour changes. There is a range of behaviours, which we need to be aware of in case they either provide a catalyst to bullying or are an indicator of a potential bullying and harassment situation: Extreme nervousness, reluctance to come to school, depression; are unable to cope; have social/communication disorders; hygiene problems; very poorly dressed; don't easily make friends; are different from most others; are smaller; not very strong; are poor at communicating; are clumsy; worry about bigger children; are poor at PE and games; feel they should always be polite and not speak out.

Natural victims or those provoking bullying: some children want attention at all costs and tease, name call and provoke others and then moan and tell staff when others retaliate. [This is a very small group].

Social prejudice, cultural and minority group victims: they are called names; they are taunted about their parents or their families' characteristics or way of life; being part of a very small minority; they are derided for alleged sexual activities or liking particular boys or girls.

Who are the bullies? *Any* child is a potential bully. They usually have little sympathy with their victims, nor feelings of guilt. They often have problems at home or educational problems and have poor attitudes to school or authority. They are often, but *not* always, physically bigger and stronger, well co-ordinated, and they may enjoy

conflict and aggression. They may be loud, rude and very bossy. Some have been bullied themselves and have very low self-esteem. They may feel the only way to gain that is to bully others. Adults are often unaware of bullying children. (UNCRC Article 3, 19 and 37.)

Procedures to Follow A clear procedure for children *The victims* Everyone needs to know exactly what to do if there is a problem. The victims are encouraged to tell the following people in these situations: -

In the classroom - the teacher or a member of the support staff. It is established routine that the children can tell a member of staff or write down their concerns and put them in the class worry box or the worry boxes located in the Magnolia room or the entrance hall.

In the playground – the teacher or support staff on duty [sometimes it will need to be the class teacher]

During the Midday Break – the children find the nearest adult. These incidents are then communicated to the teachers. This enables the teacher to follow up incidents and where necessary, pass them on to the Behaviour Mentor and the Deputy Headteacher

On the way to school or on the way home – parents or carers, the class teacher, a member of the support staff, another member of staff, another pupil.

The silent majority They are told that every time they see bullying they must “tell” the above people just as the victim should do. The reasons why this is necessary are explained at every opportunity.

A clear procedure for staff Staff in our school take all forms of bullying and harassment seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. Staff record incidents of bullying that they have witnessed or have been disclosed to them by the victim, a witness or a parent/carer. Concerns must be passed to the Behaviour Mentor (Mrs Ring) and the Deputy Headteacher (Miss Conroy) who will take action to prevent further incidents. (See intervention procedures).

Intervention Procedures Our school takes a problem solving ‘No Blame’ support group approach. This reflects the school’s position as a UNCRC School. It ensures that the rights of everyone are respected. (UNCRC Article 12)

The parents/carers of the victim will be informed that their child will be participating in this process and kept informed of the outcome.

No Blame – How It Works What is the “No Blame” support group approach?

When bullying has been observed or reported then the “No Blame” approach offers a simple seven-step procedure, which can be used by a teacher or other facilitator. Note that each step has been carefully planned as a single part of the whole and variations may undermine the success of the method. The steps are summarised below:

Step one – talk with the victim When the facilitator finds out that bullying has happened, she/he starts by talking to the victim. During this conversation the listener encourages the victim to describe how he/she feels 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 victim 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". It is important that the victim understands and gives consent to the process. Sometimes there may be a fear that it could lead to further victimisation but when the non-punitive aspect is fully explained the victim usually feels safe, and relieved that something is being done. He/she 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 facilitator should end the meeting by:

- Checking that nothing confidential has been discussed which should not be disclosed to the group.
- Asking the victim to suggest the names of those involved, some colluders or observers and some friends who will make up the group.
- Inviting the victim to produce a piece of writing or a picture which will illustrate his unhappiness.
- Offering the victim an opportunity to talk again at any time during the procedure if things are not going well.

The victim is not invited to join the group to present his/her own account, as this could provoke accusation, denial or justification and undermine the problem-solving approach.

Step two – convene a meeting with the people involved. The facilitator arranges to meet with the group of pupils who have been involved and suggested by the victim. A group of six to eight works well.

This is an opportunity for the facilitator to use his/her 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.

Step three – explain the problem The facilitator starts by telling the group that he/she has a problem – he/she is worried about "John" who is having a very hard time at the moment. The facilitator recounts the story of the victim's unhappiness and uses the piece of writing or a drawing to emphasise his/her 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.
- there is a joint responsibility to help John to be happy and safe.
- 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 John'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 the victim 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.

Step six – leave it up to them The facilitator ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. No written record is made – it is left as a matter of trust. The facilitator thanks them, expresses confidence in a positive outcome and arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

Step seven – meet them again About a week later, the facilitator discusses with each student, including the victim, how things have been going. This allows the teacher 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 his/her contribution without creating a competitive atmosphere. It does not matter if everyone has not kept to his intention, as long as the bullying has stopped. The victim does not have to become the most popular person in school, just to be safe and happy. The entire process showing the seven steps is available as a training video (Michael’s Story – The No Blame Approach. Maines and Robinson, 1992). A fuller account of the development of the work is published in a book “Crying for Help”. Robinson and Maines 1997 Lucky Duck publishing Limited. In 1996-8 Kingston-upon-Hull Behaviour Support Service started a project to support schools with anti-bullying work. They used a variation of the No Blame Approach and followed up 50 cases. They had an immediate 80% success rate and with further support all cases were successful or partially successful. The article appeared in Educational Psychology in Practice April 1998.

Incidents that are deemed to be bullying will be recorded on an internal tracking system CPOMS and parents/carers of the perpetrator will be informed if this action has been taken. The role of the Head and Assistant Headteacher

- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the school antibullying and harassment strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying and harassment.
- The Headteacher reports annually to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying and harassment policy. The Deputy Headteacher informs the curriculum sub-committee of the governing body of the number of recorded incidents of bullying.
- If the seven step problem solving approach has not been successful, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher will implement the school’s behaviour management procedures. This will involve the perpetrator and his/her parents/carers meeting with the Headteacher and/or Assistant Headteacher and other relevant staff to resolve the situation.

(UNCRC Article 3, 19 and 37.)

The role of the governors The governing body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying and harassment from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the governing body does not allow bullying and harassment to take place in our school, and that any incidents that do occur are taken very

seriously and dealt with appropriately. \ The governing body monitors the incidents of bullying and harassment that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The governors require the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and harassment and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school's strategies.

The role of the parents

- Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately.
- Contact with parents is essential and we listen keenly to their views. They may be able to contribute important information and feedback to the school, but also become a significant part of a helpful answer to the problem.
- We are able to give advice to parents about possible signs of bullying and harassment and how they can help. We help parents to understand that even bullies need their self-esteem raised.
- Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying and harassment policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school. The chances of success are greatest when we find common ground.

Staff training Training is available, over time, for all staff. Using these guidelines, Midday supervisors receive advice and have discussions through their meetings with the Behaviour Mentor. Specific training is arranged about circle time; working with bullies / victims; new ideas and ways of presenting material.

Monitoring and evaluation Monitoring by the Deputy Headteacher identifies progress and enables follow-up, showing whether the policy is really effective.

Using data from monitoring and feedback, the policy can be reviewed and updated. This should happen annually. Using a whole school approach to bullying, schools typically find that:

- Staff are more aware and vigilant in their response to bullying.
- Fewer pupils report being bullied or that they are bullying others.
- More pupils say that they would not join in bullying someone else.
- More pupils would tell a member of staff if they were being bullied.

Awareness raising increases pupils' understanding of bullying and makes them more likely to report incidents. There may even be a temporary increase in reporting. In primary schools, bullying is usually reduced within the first year of implementation.

In the long term, change should be positive if schools continue to work through the process. It would be hoped that with the charters and the work completed on UNCRC a shared understanding of how to eliminate bullying and harassment will result.

R. Veitch Head
teacher

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