Prevention of Bullying

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Owner: Emma Ledger, Principal

Table of Contents

Scope of this policy

1   Definition of Bullying

1.1 Repeated verbal or physical actions over time that intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

2   Statement

2.1 Ranches Primary School is committed to providing a caring and safe environment for all pupils and staff. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all pupils or staff should be able to report the incident and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We recognize that bullying, both physical and emotional is serious and may cause psychological damage. Strong sanctions such as exclusion may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

2.2 This policy relates to pupils only. For any bullying incidents towards members of staff refer to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

3   Aims

3.1 Provide an environment where everybody feels secure, respected and valued.

3.2 Create an atmosphere which builds pupil self-esteem.

3.3 Zero tolerance to any form of harassment or bullying.

3.4 All reported incidents are listened to with swift action when necessary.

3.5 Staff to act as positive role models in terms of communication and respect for each other.

3.6 Minimisation of the opportunities for bullying (e.g. appropriate supervision and vigilance at key times in the school day, such as break and lunchtimes).

3.7 Implement a structured PSHE/ Moral Education programme (including assemblies, drama, projects, stories) which aims to develop personal and inter-personal skills and deals specifically with the issue of bullying.

3.8   To provide Internet security, filtering and ICT education.

3.9 To undertake a wellbeing survey to raise awareness and reflect on positive actions that may be developed as a result of this.

3.10 Ensure pupils are made aware of and have access to additional support within school, eg peer supporters, teachers, counsellor, nurse.

4 Procedures to Follow for the Reporting of Bullying

4.1 The school promotes the idea that caring for each other is of prime concern. All situations are dealt with promptly and talked through thoroughly. We seek to gain a clear picture of the situation and clearly explain ideas about unfairness, cruel actions and the consequences of such actions.

4.2 All staff should be vigilant and aware of the Signs and Symptoms of bullying (see paragraph on Signs and Symptoms). They should deal promptly with suspected or actual bullying and report to the Vice Principal or form teacher, as appropriate.

4.3 Explain to the person disclosing bullying that if you feel they may be at risk, you cannot promise confidentiality.

4.4 Explain to them that you will discuss with them how to proceed, so they can be as comfortable as possible with the actions to be taken and you are able to sustain their confidence.

4.5 Initially establish the facts; ask open-ended questions; listen, believe and support pupils who say they have been bullied.

4.6 If possible, gain a written account of what happened, asking them to express their opinions; the written records should be dated and signed, from all parties present. Witness statements should be included as appropriate. Statements and Interviews should be conducted in the presence of a responsible adult, whenever possible. Statements about possible consequences should not be made.

4.7 Inform the appropriate Form Teacher who should ensure that a full record of the incident has been made and that the truth of the incident has been established as far as possible.

4.8 The Form Teacher will then make a decision on how to proceed with the problem in consultation with the member of staff involved.

4.9 The Form Teacher/Senior Manager will meet separately with the alleged bully and victim to discuss the specific incident(s) and the general situation in order to identify the cause of the bullying; depending on the seriousness of the incident(s) or general situation, parents may be invited to this or a further meeting; appropriate sanctions will be imposed which will follow from the School's EMM Policy.

4.10 Cyber-bullying will be investigated using the same procedures, with support from the Head of E-Learning, where appropriate.

4.11 Counselling should be used to support both the victim and bully in order to help change attitudes and behaviours. The situation will continue to be monitored by the Vice Principal for an appropriate length of time after the incident has been resolved.

4.12 Records must be kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified.

5 Monitoring Bullying

5.1 We always keep records of bullying incidents and aim to keep parents informed of any action taken by the school. Bullying behaviour is not tolerated and any child/children involved are monitored carefully.

5.2 Bullying is monitored in school through:

5.2.1 Pupil questionnaires;

5.2.2 Staff vigilance and good pupil/staff relationships;

5.2.3 Making bullying an item on the agenda of staff meetings when appropriate.

6 Involvement of Parents/Other adults

6.1 Support for Parents

6.1.1 At school we aim to support parents of children who are either bullying or being bullied. We support parents by discussing the problems and offering help and advice as soon as the situation becomes evident;

6.1.2 Parents are invited to meetings at school so that the situation can be closely monitored. If the child is bullying, then sanctions may be discussed. The reasons why the child may have chosen to bully are also discussed. What kind of support can be given to the child to help them change their behaviour is explored. If the child is being bullied, problems and possible solutions are discussed, including ways to help the child deal with this problem, ways to help build self-esteem (often connected to those who are bullied) and ways to ensure all incidents are reported and explored.

6.2 Signs and symptoms of bullying

6.2.1 Reluctance to go to school (school phobic);

6.2.2 A pattern of minor illnesses;

6.2.3 Damaged possessions or clothing;

6.2.4 Missing items of equipment;

6.2.5 Aggression to siblings;

6.2.6   Mood swings or character changes;

6.2.7   Changes in eating habits;

6.2.8   Difficulty sleeping;

6.2.9   Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations;

6.2.10   Get into physical or verbal fights;

6.2.11   Have friends who bully others;

6.2.12   Blame others for their problems;

6.2.13   Don't accept responsibility for their actions;

6.2.14   Standards falling at school;

6.2.15   Unexplained injuries;

6.2.16   Asking for money or stealing money.

6.3 If a parent suspects or knows that their child is a victim of bullying they are asked to

6.3.1   Report any concerns to their child's form teacher as soon as possible;

6.3.2   Listen carefully to the child, reassure and support them;

6.3.3   Advise them how to cope in a non-violent manner (e.g. walk away);

6.3.4   Build up the child's self-esteem and learn how to be assertive.

6.4 If a parent suspects or knows that their child is involved with bullying behaviour they are asked to

6.4.1   Talk through the situation calmly;

6.4.2   Support the school in expecting this behaviour to stop (reminding child if necessary);

6.4.3   Accept that this may have happened due to peer group pressure and the child may be bullying to avoid being bullied themselves;

6.4.4   Acknowledge that this may or may not be an isolated incident;

6.4.5   Ease the situation by using a sensitive approach;

6.4.6   Explain to their child why this situation cannot continue and why it is important to you and your family.

7 Involvement of Pupils

7.1 Pupils should be encouraged to take responsibility for preventing bullying by using a range of strategies

   7.1.1   Asking the bully to stop;

   7.1.2   Rescuing the victim;

   7.1.3   Staying with or close to a potential victim;

   7.1.4   Talking to a bully at a time when he/she is not bullying;

   7.1.5   Taking collective responsibility, by not standing around and watching someone being bullied;

   7.1.6   Ensuring that personal contact numbers given to others are restricted and if necessary changed;

   7.1.7   Having a mentoring system, where the younger pupils are paired with older ones so that they have someone to go to if they need help;

7.2 Pupils are encouraged to discuss the issue of bullying within their Forms. The School Council has produced a Prevention of Bullying Policy, a copy of which is given below.

Appendix 1 – School Council Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is repeated actions not one-off incidents

Bullying occurs when someone is made to feel uncomfortable or unhappy.

Bullying is not accepted at this school.

Bullying can be either emotional and/or physical.

Emotional bullying can include:

- Name calling (including racial, sexist, homophobic comments);

- Isolation (e.g. rejecting someone from a group);

- Hiding or tampering with someone's belongings;

- This can occur to someone's face or as cyber-bullying (eg texting, posting on websites).

Physical bullying can include:

- Pushing, tripping, and jostling;

- Hitting.

Stopping Bullying

What to do if you are being bullied

- Tell someone as soon as possible, no matter how minor you think the situation may appear (e.g., parents, any teacher, peer supporters, friends, School counsellor, School Nurse);

- Try and avoid situations where problems may occur;

- Make it clear that you find the situation unpleasant.

Most difficulties can be resolved very quickly if you communicate early.

What to do if you see others being bullied

- Challenge the behaviour;

- Support the person being bullied;

- Report the problem.