

Eastcroft Park Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

March 2021

Research suggests that bullying not only causes considerable suffering to individual pupils but also has a damaging effect upon school atmosphere. It is hard to see how a school can win the confidence of its pupils if it fails to deal with behaviour which so seriously damages the quality of their lives. (Discipline in Schools: Elton Report)

Other relevant documentation: Behaviour Policy, Special Needs Policy, Racial Equality Policy Aims

Schools have a duty of care towards their pupils acting in loco parentis. Whilst we cannot guarantee that bullying does not occur, the overall aim of this policy is to promote a climate in school where bullying and harassment cannot flourish and where all members of the school community especially the young are treated with respect. This is entirely consistent with the school's vision and ethos.

Vision Statement

Every child matters at Eastcroft Park School. It is our vision that each child fulfils their potential, regardless of their background, circumstances or mental health state in a safe, stimulating and caring environment. We aim to develop a love of learning inspired by quality teaching, foster high aspirations and encourage positive self-esteem, enabling children to leave our school prepared for their future as citizens who will lead happy and rewarding lives.

"Proud to be the best that I can, a seeker of knowledge, secure in a diverse and changing world"

Eastcroft Park School is a caring community, with children, governors, parents and staff working closely together to fulfil our aims.

Aims

Do the best that we can!

We will be motivated and make every effort to reach our learning goals with the support and commitment of the whole school community; pupils, parents, staff and friends. We will use our pupil voice positively to participate in decisions that affect us both as individuals and our community as a whole.

Be Proud of Who We Are!

We will work together to build self-esteem, promote individuality and value the contributions of everyone in our school community. We will respect the right for each of us to be an individual and allow others to follow beliefs that we ourselves may not share.

Go For It! We Can Do It!

We will be prepared to have a go even when we find things difficult. We will build resilience and determination. We will learn to regulate our emotions so we can tackle life's challenges. We will take the opportunity to follow and develop our existing interests whilst being prepared to try new things by taking risks and challenges; ensuring that we never settle for less than our best. We put our own emotional well-being and mental health at the forefront of all that we do, so that we can achieve our full potential.

Support and Care for Ourselves and Others!

We will all show and encourage respect for others and look after everything around us. We will recognise when we, or others around us, need help with our wellbeing or mental health. We will actively participate in all areas of school life and the life of the wider communities we live in making the most of every opportunity to make a positive difference.

The policy aims to be preventative and proactive to enable children to learn and be taught to their full potential, regardless of gender, race, religion, age, ability, appearance or culture. This policy sets out the strategies to be followed and the back up by systems in place to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and review.

The nature of bullying

There are many definitions of bullying, but the Anti-Bullying Alliance bases its definition on the accounts of the victims of bullying. They consider it to be:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- repetitive or persistent
- based on an imbalance of power, leaving the victim feeling defenceless Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:
- Physical: pushing, hitting, kicking, pinching, threats, stealing
- Verbal: name calling, insulting, sarcasm, persistent teasing, offensive remarks, spreading rumours
- Emotional: tormenting, ridicule, humiliation, exclusion from social groups,
- Racist: racial taunts, jokes, offensive mimicry, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: inappropriate and uninvited touching, abusive comments, innuendoes Who is involved in bullying - and where Bullying is widespread and occurs in all schools. Bullies may be either sex and any age.

Name-calling is the most common direct form. This may be because of individual characteristics, but pupils can be called nasty names because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour; sexual orientation; or some form of disability. Verbal bullying is common amongst boys and girls. Boys experience more physical violence and threats than girls, although physical attacks on girls by other girls are becoming more frequent. Girls tend to use indirect methods that can be more difficult to detect.

In schools it is more likely to occur where adult supervision is intermittent. In primary schools, up to three-quarters of bullying takes place in the playground. Schools are not directly responsible for bullying off their premises. The head's duty of care to prevent bullying only applies within the

precincts of the school. However, bullying can take place on journeys to and from school. The bullying may be by pupils of the school or pupils of other schools. This policy encourages pupils not to suffer in silence. Where a pupil tells of bullying off the school premises, a range of steps could be taken:

- inform the head of the school whose pupils are bullying off the premises;
- talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside the school premises.
- inform the parents of the victims and arrange for them to be collected.
- inform the local police about the problem (if necessary seek a police presence at trouble spots)

Why do some children bully?

Bullies pick on smaller, weaker victims as a way of making themselves feel better. Very often they are unhappy, have difficulty making positive relationships, are lacking self-esteem, or have inadequate role models and support systems in their lives. Some children turn to bullying as a way of coping with a difficult situation such as the death of a relative or their parent's divorce. Others are lacking in basic social skills and boundaries of acceptable behaviour; they are selfish, spoilt and care little for the feelings of others.

How does bullying start?

Any child can be bullied, and although none of these characteristics can excuse it, certain factors can make bullying more likely:

- lacking close friends in school
- being shy
- an over-protective family environment
- being from a different racial or ethnic group to the majority
- being different in some obvious respect - such as stammering
- having Special Educational Needs or a disability
- behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a 'nuisance' Pupils with Special Educational Needs or disabilities may not be able to articulate experiences as well as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific difficulties or disability.

Symptoms of Bullying

Teachers can play a crucial role in identifying when bullying occurs and need to be aware of the symptoms of bullying. Victims may:

- be reluctant to attend school and are often absent

- be more anxious and insecure than others, become withdrawn and lack confidence
- have fewer friends or withdraw from friendships and often feel unhappy and lonely
- suffer a drop in standards of school work
- suffer from low self-esteem and negative self-image, looking upon themselves as failures - feeling stupid, ashamed and unattractive
- stop eating, have nightmares
- have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts
- start stealing or “losing” money and possessions
- show reluctance to go out at playtimes, asking for jobs or feigning illness
- ask to be sent home early or hang around school in order to leave late

Victims may present a variety of symptoms to health professionals, including fits, faints, vomiting, limb pains, headaches, stomach aches, bed wetting, sleeping difficulties and sadness. Being bullied may lead to depression or, in the most serious cases, attempted suicide.

Developing a Telling School

Some children may find it difficult to report bullying. There remains amongst many the notion that ‘telling’ is wrong. Children who are being bullied may fear that any action taken may even lead to the problem intensifying. Others may feel embarrassed or ashamed about being bullied. The school employs several strategies to enable bullying to be uncovered including regular consultation with pupils:

- Regular 1:1 Assertive Mentoring meetings
- Clear and consistent rewards and sanctions
- Parental survey
- Pupil surveys
- Parental consultations
- School’s Council meetings
- Peer Mentors mentors
- Circle-time activities
- PSHE sessions
- “Suggestion” or “Bully Boxes”
- Pastoral support Surveys can reveal:
- how frequently pupils have been bullied
- what ways it has happened
- who the bullies are

- who victims tell
- what action was taken and its effect

Teachers should not immediately react to a suspected bullying case without further investigation. Interviews can be useful - individually or in small groups - especially for children with moderate or severe learning difficulties. The class teacher or SEN teacher should conduct these as the pupil/interviewer relationship can affect the honesty of the answers. Do it in private, but where both are visible to others. Children may not like to repeat unpleasant names they have been called, or stories that have been told about them. Making notes during an interview can be distracting, so do them as soon as the interview is over. Confidentiality is a difficult issue. Sometimes interviewers may need to disclose information to others. They should explain to pupils how they might need to use such information. Some children are prepared to write about their experiences anonymously, but not to talk about them. Even one-to-one interviews are not always reliable in detecting whether particular pupils have been bullied or not. When bullies act in a gang they should be interviewed one at a time, without allowing the other participants the opportunity to collaborate. This should be followed by a group meeting to air all the individual comments in order to establish the facts and identify any ringleaders.

Involving parents early is essential, and they might wish to involve the police as necessary. Keep accurate records of incidents and the school's response to help with proceedings and protect the school from legal action. It is essential to follow-up after an incident to check that the bullying has not started again. Do this within about two weeks, and again within the following half-term.

Immediately after intervention, the bullying is likely to stop. However, bullying can be very persistent and may recur. If pupils expect follow-up, they are unlikely to start bullying again.

Sanctions

Bullying is subject to school sanction just as any undesirable behaviour. The severity and frequency should be reflected in the level of sanction imposed. Where other strategies do not resolve the problem, permanent exclusion may be justified in the most serious and persistent cases, particularly where violence is involved.

The DfE's guidance for local authority exclusion appeal panels makes clear that pupils responsible for violence or threatened violence should not normally be re-instated.

Five key points:

- never ignore suspected bullying
- don't make premature assumptions
- listen carefully to all accounts - several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth
- adopt a problem-solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves
- follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed

Promoting the Policy

There are many opportunities to promote the policy:

- during assemblies and collective worship
- during normal curriculum coverage
- circle time activities
- School-wide Anti bullying posters
- School-wide promotion of our Code of Conduct
- PSHE/Dino School activities
- School's Council meetings
- Role-play or stories
- Participation in 'Anti-Bullying Week'

Curricular approaches to bullying

Anti-bullying forms part of an overall strategy for Personal Social Health Education and Citizenship, which aims to create an effective climate for learning and equip young people with skills and knowledge to prepare them for adult life. Discreet PSHE, including anti-bullying, sessions are delivered in all classes. In addition there is a whole school focus on ant-bullying during Anti-bullying week. The implementation of the programme is supported and overseen by the PSHE coordinator and Learning Mentor.

The curriculum can be used to:

- raise awareness about bullying and the anti-bullying policy
- increase understanding for victims, and help build an anti-bullying ethos
- teach pupils how constructively to manage their relationships with others

Through the curriculum it is possible to explore such issues as:

- why do people bully each other?
- what are the effects of bullying on the bullied, on bullies, and on bystanders?
- what can we do to stop bullying?

Strategies for reducing bullying

Our policy includes a combination of strategies that can be drawn on complete solution on its own to the problem.

a) Co-operative Group Work When this is integrated into normal classroom practice, pupils can:
   - explore issues and controversies by considering different points of view
   - be more tolerant of others and more willing to listen
   - trust those of the opposite gender and those from other ethnic groups
   - become better integrated into the peer group
b) Team Building Trust-building/team building exercises, co-operative games, problem-solving activities, discussion groups, role-play and simulations. All share some essential aspects:

- pupils work together and help one another, managing conflicts within the group
- there are tasks needing a group effort
- children share information and divide work towards common goals
- roles vary within groups: leading, problem-solving, tidying up By working together, relationships sometimes develop into real friendships. Potential victims of bullying can be drawn into working groups with other children who do not abuse or take advantage of them.

c) Circle Time Time is regularly set aside for teachers and pupils to sit in a circle and take part in enjoyable activities, games and discussion. The positive atmosphere generated in the well-managed circle usually spreads into other areas of class activity.

Circle Time:

- creates a safe space to explore issues of concern
- explores relationships with adults and peers
- enhances effective communication
- affirms the strengths and enhances the self-esteem of each member

The teacher and pupils agree on simple, positive rules that encourage the group to:

- focus on their own feelings and those of others
- listen to one another and tolerate others' views
- learn to take turns
- discuss difficult issues using a problem-solving approach

d) Circle of Friends Sometimes known as 'Circle of Support', they build relationships around a vulnerable pupil. The method must first be explained to that pupil, whose agreement and cooperation are essential. Circles aim to:

- improve the level of acceptance and inclusion of the pupil
- help the pupil make friends inside or outside the Circle
- increase insight into the pupil's feelings and behaviour
- describe the pupil - only positive things may be said
- list things about the pupil that they find difficult
- discuss how they would feel and behave if they were isolated or socially excluded
- consider how they might help - pupils typically produce two clear solutions: offering friendship and finding ways to keep the pupil on track
- identify what might stop the pupil changing
- volunteer to form the pupil's Circle of Friends (between six and eight pupils) Soon afterwards, the initial Circle of Friends meeting takes place including the focus pupil. Ground rules are negotiated and aims clarified about helping them to make friends and change any negative behaviour. In turn, circle members explain why they volunteered. The leader asks 'What do we like and value about this person?' and responses are written down. Next, the leader carefully asks about the pupil's negative behaviour. The group brainstorms strategies for helping the pupil which are recorded and then prioritised. Subsequent weekly meetings check on the progress the group.

d) Peer Mentors Pupil volunteers across Key Stage 2 agree to help prevent bullying, racism and other forms of anti-social behaviour on the playground. They attempt spot potential unrest, include isolates in activities and look after any children sitting on the "friendship bench".

e) Befriending

Befriending involves assigning selected pupil volunteers to 'be with' or 'befriend' peers whom teachers have referred. Befrienders:

- need friendly personal qualities
- give support with emotional and social problems - newness to a school, difficulty making friends, upset at separation or loss, being bullied or socially excluded
- offer companionship and activities to peers who would otherwise be miserable and alone
- may share a common difficulty - for example bereavement The befriended feel more positive about themselves having had someone to talk to about their problems. Befrienders feel more confident and value other people more. The school becomes safer and more caring as relationships improve generally. Befrienders need training in active listening, assertiveness and leadership.

f)The Support Group Approach A support group is formed for the bullied pupil made up of those involved in the bullying, and bystanders. Responsibility for change lies with the participants in the bullying. The first aim is to get the bully to identify with the victim, and the second to help resolve the problem. There are several steps:

- the group's facilitator chats with the victim and a support group of around 6-8 pupils is set up. As well as pupils involved in the bullying, friends of the victim can take part;
- with the victim's agreement, their own feelings are communicated to the group.
- the facilitator makes clear that the purpose is to take joint responsibility and find a solution. • suggestions on how to help are sought, but the key aim is a joint commitment to take action; each group member is interviewed individually a week later to review progress and report back on their contribution to resolving the problem. The bullied pupil is also interviewed. Whilst some group members might not have kept fully to their good intentions, the main criterion for success is that the bullying has stopped.

g) Mediation by adults Methods focus on pupils who have been bullying others regularly for some time, as well as those being bullied. The aim is to establish ground rules that will enable the pupils to co-exist at the school.

- hold brief, non-confrontational, individual 'chats' with each pupil in a quiet room without interruptions - the bullying pupils first
- get agreement with each that the bullied pupil is unhappy and that they will help improve the situation - if they cannot suggest ways to do this be prescriptive
- chat supportively with the bullied pupil - helping them to understand how to change if thought to have 'provoked' the bullying
- check progress a week later, then meet all involved to reach agreement on reasonable long-term behaviour - at this stage participants usually cease bullying
- check whether the bullying starts again or targets another pupil
- if bullying persists, combine the method with some other action targeted specifically at that child, such as parental involvement, sanctions or a change of class. The approach is successful, at least in the short term, provided the whole process is worked through. Alone, it cannot tackle all forms of bullying, and it may not have long-term success unless backed up by other procedures, including firm disciplinary ones. Working with victims.

The behaviour of certain pupils can contribute to bullying, though this in no way justifies it. Some pupils find it hard to concentrate in class, are hyperactive, or behave in ways that irritate others. They may get angry easily and fight back when attacked or even slightly provoked - and a large number of classmates and adults, including the teacher may dislike them. They may also bully weaker pupils. Parents and teachers should co-operate in identifying such behaviour. The pupil needs improved social skills; assertiveness, conflict

resolution and stress management. Friends could give feedback on annoying behaviour. Adults can encourage such friendships. Other professionals may work with the pupil or family. When tougher measures are needed Where pupils do not respond to preventive strategies to combat bullying, the school will take tougher action to deal with persistent and violent bullying.

Our Behaviour Policy sets out a range of clear sanctions to deal with unacceptable behaviour. The whole school community knows what sanctions will be taken and that they will be fairly and consistently applied (see Behaviour Policy: Sanctions). This can and does include permanent exclusion. Where serious violence is involved, the head teacher can permanently exclude a pupil with immediate effect and for a first offence. Appeal panels have been advised that they should not seek to overrule such a decision on appeal. Involving parents Parental support is often a key to success or failure in anti-bullying initiatives.

The majority of parents support anti-bullying measures and are keen to participate. Consultation is important, helping create an ethos in which positive behaviour is encouraged, and bullying considered unacceptable. However, a significant few do hold unhelpful attitudes saying bullying is an inevitable part of growing up and encouraging bullied children to 'stand up for themselves' rather than seek help. While understandable, this conflicts with the aim of most anti-bullying initiatives to encourage children to tell staff about bullying rather than try to fight back.

Parents reporting bullying
Parents may contact schools, often in some distress, to report that their child has been bullied. Their concerns must be taken seriously. The first point of contact for parents is likely to be the Learning Mentor or a class teacher. It is important that all staff know the school policy and when to refer parents to the headteacher. Good practice includes:

- recognising that the parent may be angry and upset
- keeping an open mind - bullying can be difficult to detect, so a lack of staff awareness does not mean no bullying occurs
- remaining calm and understanding
- making clear that the school does care and that something will be done
- explaining the school policy, making sure procedures are followed

When a case is referred to them, senior teachers should also:

- ask for details and record the information
- make a further appointment to explain actions and find out if it has stopped
- follow up with staff to ensure that appropriate action has been taken and that the school policy has been implemented

Many of the same points apply when the school has to tell the parents that their child is involved in bullying. Parents are more likely to accept a calm approach, following the agreed guidelines of an anti-bullying policy they are familiar with. This helps to defuse anger and resentment. Specific requirements depend on whether the child in question is the victim or the bully.

Parents of bullies and victims

Our policy is to involve parents constructively at an early stage using a problem-solving approach in the first instance. Strong measures - including exclusion will sometimes be necessary. Comprehensive consultation, awareness raising and communication are the best preparation for such situations. Some claims of bullying may turn out to be false or exaggerated. However, whatever the victim's previous history, all claims of bullying should be treated seriously and not dismissed without further enquiries being made. Playground policy (see Behaviour Policy: Playground procedures and Lunchtime Policy)

Our Behaviour Policy and Lunchtime Policy sets out clear guidelines for managing pupil behaviour during breaks and lunchtimes. They involve all staff, especially lunchtime supervisors, as well as pupils.

- Staff are encouraged to move around the grounds, talking and playing briefly with pupils and anticipating potential difficulties. A suspected problem should be quietly and promptly investigated.
- Efficient communication between supervisors and teachers is assured through the use of the "Playground" and "Incident" book as well as regular, verbal exchange.
- Roles and responsibilities of supervisors and teachers when on duty are clearly defined in writing.
- Supervisors' authority is acknowledged, by them operating rewards and sanctions, with the full support of teaching staff.
- A lunchtime supervisor oversees the work of others, ensures effective communication, acts as the main contact point with the behaviour manager and ensures the reporting of incidents to class teachers. She monitors the "playground book" and informs teachers of anyone requiring attention.

Strategies for reducing playground bullying

The school's playground environment is carefully organised to offer space for educational, social, physical and creative activities, reduce boredom and therefore bullying. This is achieved by providing:

- a stimulating range of playground equipment including footballs, basketball, rugby ball, skipping ropes, bowling, giant chess, giant draughts, hoop-las, hop-scotch etc.
- games and activities painted on to the playgrounds.
- designating areas for different activities –i.e. restricting ball games to the lower KS2 yard, games to the paved area of the upper KS2 yard etc.
- seating areas for conversation, calming down or observation and a "friendship bench".
- "Playground Pals" system of pupil mentors and monitors.
- separating areas -with low brick walls, fences, planting and changes of level.
- providing alternative activities with lunchtime clubs.
- staggered dinner sittings to reduce numbers on the yard. Handling the Media The media has turned bullying into an 'issue' which encourages parents and children to call often one-off incidents bullying, rather than a disagreement or fall-out. If approached by the media about an incident the following procedure should be followed to minimize sensationalism:
- Do not respond straight away. Tell them you will get back to them.
- Inform the Headteacher.
- Headteacher informs the Communications Team of the LA and seeks advice and support.
- Check the facts and discuss with colleagues as necessary.

- Either the Head or Communications Team prepare a brief statement about the situation, putting the matter in context and emphasizing the positive steps that the school are taking.

Acknowledgements
The following documents were used in devising this policy:
- Bullying (Don't Suffer in Silence) DfEE
- Preventing Bullying Kidscape
- Stop Bullying Kidscape
- You Can Beat Bullying Kidscap