

Anti-Bullying Policy

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| Approved by: | College of Management Council of Trustees | Date: November 2017 Date: November 2017 |
| History of review: | November 2017 | |
| Date for next review: | November 2019 | |

Introduction

Everyone at South Devon Steiner School (SDSS) has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Social, emotional and academic growth is optimised in an environment free from feelings of humiliation, distress, fear and despair. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent any kind of bullying and to promote an ethos of respect, trust, caring and consideration for others in our school.

This Anti-Bullying Policy is a positive step towards creating that ethos and needs to be actively supported by all teachers, students and parents or guardians. Everyone has to be clear and confident that our approach to bullying is one of zero tolerance: working at both preventing bullying and dealing swiftly and carefully with issues if they arise.

This document outlines how we make this possible at SDSS.

Definitions

Bullying behaviour has become so prevalent that many people believe that it is an almost inevitable part of growing up in today's society – part of the rough and tumble of daily life. However, this should not be so because it can have serious and far reaching physical and psychological effects on the person who is bullied, both at the time of the bullying and in later life. People who feel a need to bully do so for a reason and they too do not escape the effects of their bullying behaviour.

The Department for Education (DfE) defines bullying as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

It takes many forms and can include:

- physical assault
- making threats
- name calling
- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (eg email, social networks and instant messenger).

Most of us will have encountered some form of unpleasantness as we have grown up, but in most cases this does not amount to persistent bullying that seriously affects our health and wellbeing.

Is teasing the same as bullying?

Teasing is generally good natured and usually takes place between those who share a close relationship. It is often a way of communicating or 'bantering' between friends. For the one doing the teasing it is a playful way of provoking a reaction without an intention or desire to cause hurt. Where a group of friends are concerned, the teasing would not focus on one person all the time; it would be shared equally amongst the group. Teasing does not ridicule or make fun of any characteristic a person cannot change. If someone is upset or offended by the teasing and they ask the person to stop, they would. Teasing can sometimes be taken too far, even between friends, but it would generally not be considered bullying.

The five key components

Of course, people have different views as to the level and balance of what constitutes teasing before it would be considered bullying because, by its very nature, it is subjective. However, there are typically five key components to bullying:

- There is an intention to harm: bullying is deliberate behaviour that sets out to upset and cause distress.
- There is a harmful outcome: one or more people are hurt physically or emotionally.
- It is persistent and repeated: bullying involves repeated acts of aggression and hostility. An isolated aggressive attack, like a fight, is not bullying.
- It is direct or indirect: bullying can involve direct acts of aggression, such as hitting someone, as well as indirect acts, such as spreading rumours.
- There is unequal power: bullying involves the abuse of power by one or several people who are more powerful or perceived as being more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, or psychological resilience.

Bullying of a racial nature is reportable by law. Guidelines from the Department of Education 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (2010) states:

'The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act,
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it,

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.'

Aims and objectives

To create an environment where:

- All incidents are taken seriously and are dealt with immediately.
- Procedures are clear and consistent.
- "Telling" is OK.
- Positive caring relationships, respect and trust are promoted.
- Both victims and bullies are supported in developing positive behaviour, self-esteem and social inclusion.

Policy statement

This policy supports the ethos we have at SDSS: promoting the emotional, social and academic development of all pupils in the following ways:

- Bullying is not tolerated and an environment where pupils feel safe to 'tell' is created.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour – this is especially relevant for those doing the bullying and those bystanders who observe the bullying but do nothing to intervene. Children are more likely to really want to change if they feel ownership of decisions.
- Pupils are given an opportunity to change their behaviour within a supportive atmosphere – this is especially helpful for victims who will benefit from the support of their peers, but also for bullies who may feel isolated which might lead to the bullying behaviour being repeated.
- An ethos of caring and respect is fostered where children are asked to consider the feelings of others and come up with ways in which they might make them feel better – this can turn a very distressing and negative situation into a positive learning situation.
- Patterns of behaviour are changed in a positive way, rather than by simply using threats, punishments or sanctions. Behaviour which supports the ethos of caring and respect at SDSS is rewarded and also increases the self-esteem of the child.
- Through open and frank discussions bullying is portrayed as negative behaviour amongst peers which will not be tolerated, and likewise bullies themselves will be seen as pupils who have made poor decisions rather than people who should be admired or emulated.
- Strong relationships are created both between pupils and between staff and pupils as the policy procedure promotes active listening, empathy, caring, respect and honesty.
- Pupils are encouraged to be tolerant of diversity and to support those who may be in difficulties, in whatever area of school life that may be.

Procedures

- An incident is observed and/or reported. It is taken seriously. The Class Teacher or Guardian

- is informed and they make a decision based on their knowledge of the children involved/any previous incidents etc. as to whether this is a behaviour or bullying issue.
- If the incident is a behaviour issue, the Class Teacher will deal with it and if necessary follow the procedures laid out in the Behaviour Policy.
 - If it is a bullying issue, a Bullying Incident Reporting Form is filled in and details brought to Staff Meeting by Class Teacher or Sponsor. It is also logged on the Bullying Log. Immediately following the incident the Anti-bullying policy is initiated.
 - Class Teacher/Guardian discusses the incident with the victim to find out
 - What happened?
 - Where?
 - When?
 - Who was involved?
 - Class teacher will work with the involved students on strategies to ensure they feel safe and happy, including being able to express when they are struggling or need support.
 - Parents of the children directly involved are informed.
 - Teacher meets with the child or group of children involved, including bystanders and colluders if necessary (6-8 children works well). The victim may not be present. An older pupil may be present as a facilitator or advocate. This meeting should ideally not take place in break times. The aims of the meeting are:
 - **To address the problem.** The child or group is told that the behaviour is inappropriate and must stop. They are told about the way the victim is feeling by whatever means the teacher feels is age appropriate. At no time does the teacher/pupil allocate any blame.
 - **To share responsibility.** What is important is to let the child or group know the effect of their actions and that you have confidence that together they can come up with possible positive actions to make the situation better.
 - **Ask the group for their ideas.** Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. Guidelines and rules for games/lessons or regularly occurring 'trigger' situations could be mutually agreed. The teacher gives a positive response but is careful not to extract a promise of improved behaviour. He/she looks for ways to realistically support the group's ideas.
 - **Leave it up to them.** The teacher ends the meeting by passing over responsibility to the child or group to solve the problem, making it clear that any recurrence may be reported by anyone involved.
 - The outcome of this meeting is communicated to the College of Management and the parents.
 - The teacher arranges to meet the child or group again to see how things are going within a fortnight. It is best for these meetings to happen in school time but ideally away from break and lunch times as the children may feel they are being punished and can become resentful if their free time is curtailed.

- The teacher (supported by the rest of the staff) continues to monitor the situation at regular intervals, which should become less frequent. It is especially useful if the teacher has informal discussions with the child or group and keeps an eye on the situation generally, especially in the playground. The teacher continues to keep the parents informed of progress.
- It is particularly important that both the school and the parents adopt a similar approach. This can be facilitated by clear, consistent communication between the school and the parents of all those involved.
- **If this procedure does not stop the bullying:**
 - The class teacher/guardian should bring the issue to the College of Management.
 - The class teacher/guardian may need to meet with the parents to discuss possible further strategies, such as friendship work or social strategies with all children involved.
 - Another teacher may be called upon to talk to the child(ren) and parents involved.
 - The Class teacher/guardian will bring a child study of the victim and/or bully.
 - **If, after a reasonable time decided upon by the Class Teacher, no progress has been made, it will become a behaviour issue and the steps outlined in the Behaviour Policy will be followed.**
 - Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The DSL should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

Whole school development

A caring and positive ethos is promoted through:

- The curriculum, in particular:
 - Teaching friendship skills
 - Promoting tolerance and understanding
 - Promoting inclusion
 - Supporting high self-esteem
 - Assemblies & Drama
 - E-safety presentations and discussions
 - E-safety issues addressed in IT lessons
 - Strong positive relationships between staff and pupils
 - Giving children ownership of their behaviour through involving them in rule-making/ decisions etc. in an age-appropriate way
 - Cooperation rather than competition
- Positive interaction between different age groups, including:
 - 'Buddying' lower and upper school classes
 - Peer support
 - Emphasis on social and emotional development of all children
 - Good communication between staff, parents and pupils

- The Designated Person for Behaviour, who is part of the Educational Support Team and the DSL, will have overall responsibility for the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. His/her responsibilities will include:
 - Policy development
 - Staff training
 - Record-keeping

Record keeping

- It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher/Guardian to ensure that the Bullying Incident Form is completed. Notes should be taken during any meetings with parents and copies given to all those involved to ensure clear communication.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and any incidents, observed or reported, should be taken seriously and written details given to the Class Teacher/Guardian. It is particularly important to be observant when on playground duty and during transition times when large numbers of pupils are moving around the school.
- Records will be kept securely.

Parental Involvement

Parents may be understandably very concerned/upset/angry if they feel their child has been bullied or has been involved in bullying. It is vital that parents trust that the school will deal with the behaviour as quickly and as sensitively as they can. It is also very important that both parents and staff are clear as to how the behaviour is going to be dealt with so there is clarity and consistency which can be very reassuring for the child(ren) involved.

Parents of children who have been bullied can:

- Approach the school for advice on how to support their child at home
- Try to remain calm and confident in front of their child
- Resist asking lots of questions which can add to stress
- Assure the child that the bullying will stop and that it is not their fault
- Reassure the child that although bullying is wrong, it is unfortunately something which many people encounter at some time during their lives
- Help the child develop coping skills such as
 - Rehearse appearing calm and relaxed
 - Practice walking/speaking in a more positive/confident manner
 - Help them concentrate on something positive such as a trip, holiday or treat you have planned

Conclusions

SDSS is committed to providing a happy and healthy environment. We take the issue of bullying very seriously and believe that through working to create an ethos of trust, honesty and openness where bullying is not accepted, we can support the social, emotional and academic well-being of all our pupils.

Information/advice/guidance

- DfE Jul 2017 publication “Preventing and tackling bullying, advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies”
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/623895/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf
- Devon Safeguarding Board website:
<http://www.devonsafeguardingchildren.org/?s=Bullying&x=0&y=0>
- KidScape: London-based charity which provides children, families and professionals with advice and information to keep children safe used by our school:
<https://kidscape.org.uk>
- Proud2Be is a social enterprise that supports LGBTQIA+ people & their families, in South Devon and beyond. They support our school through student workshops and staff training:
<http://www.proud2be.co.uk/>

Compliance

- Independent School Standards:
https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283/pdfs/uksi_20143283_en.pdf

References

- Serious Behaviour Incident and Bullying Record Form
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- Guidance for Supporting Positive Behaviour in Early Years
- Behaviour Policy for Classes 1 – 3
- Behaviour Policy Classes 4 – 8
- Behaviour Policy Classes 9-12
- Serious Behaviour Incident Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy