Anti-Bullying Policy

Building Relationships and an Emotionally Healthy School

We are committed to developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable and aim to create a safe and secure environment where all children can learn without anxiety and free from discrimination. We believe bullying is wrong and we do all we can to prevent it by putting in measures to reduce the likelihood of bullying. (See whole school Behaviour, Relationships and Respect Policy and Behaviour Code.)

Definition

Bullying happens when a person is subjected to repeated aggressive acts over a period of time by another person or persons. DFE guidance defines bullying as: “behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”. The guidance states that, “Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities”. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (e.g. being ignored or excluded from social interaction). Bullying may be distinguished from other unacceptable forms of aggression in that it involves dominance of one pupil by another, or a group of others, is pre-mediated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour rather than one isolated incident.

When teaching about bullying in school, we teach children three important aspects that define bullying behaviour:

- Bullying is deliberate – it is not accidental.
- Bullying is hurtful, either emotionally or physically.
- Bullying is repeated, often over a period of time.

By equipping children with a clear definition of what constitutes bullying, we aim for children to be able to identify an instance of bullying if it arises and to be able to find appropriate support.

Our school aims to:

- provide a safe and emotionally healthy environment for all of our learners
- ensure that Rushcombe First School is a place free from discrimination or prejudice, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities
- enable our learners to understand what bullying is and what to do if they think they or someone else is being bullied
- ensure a school ethos where all forms of bullying are not tolerated
- ensure that when bullying occurs, measures are taken swiftly to stop the bullying behaviour.

In order to prevent bullying, we take the following actions:

- develop an awareness in all our children of the definition of bullying, supporting their awareness of how to respond to bullying incidents whether as bully, victim or bystander
- show an interest in all children, listening to what they have to say and developing a culture based upon positive, supportive relationships

- create a safe environment where children feel that they can openly discuss bullying and report any concerns about bullying that they might have
- being aware what is happening in and around school, including providing safe and well supervised areas to reduce the possible threat of bullying
- work with the children and families concerned to resolve any bullying incidents that arise
- develop close working partnership with parents, including ensuring parents are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and that they are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied
- as part of the school ethos, all children have an understanding of the role they can all play to prevent bullying
- ensuring an inclusive ethos which openly represents differences between people, including through the school's curriculum and assemblies
- use the Learning Heroes regularly within classroom practice to reinforce key dispositions such as respect for others (Thoughtful Theo), working with others (Teamwork Tiger) and showing empathy for others (Empathy Elephant)
- ensure that any prejudice-based language is addressed if it occurs, ensuring that this is seen as unacceptable
- utilise a range of strategies and procedures to help reinforce clear and consistent rules and expectations, including the appropriate use of sanctions and rewards
- implement clear sanctions in cases of bullying, reflecting the seriousness of the behaviours
- regularly evaluate and update the school's Anti-Bullying Policy to take account of developments in technology, for instance updating 'acceptable use' policies for computers
- provide effective staff training to all staff on the Anti Bullying Policy and the school's Behaviour, Relationships and Respect Policy, ensuring that all staff apply the policies consistently.

In Cases of Suspected Bullying

The class teacher / leadership team will investigate to establish whether bullying is occurring. This may include:

- Initial discussions with the children involved to ascertain details (to be carried out sensitively with any potential victim).
- Putting in place preventative measures to stop the bullying from taking place as soon as possible.
- Possible reparation between the children, including apologies, if this is deemed appropriate and in agreement with the victim of the bullying.
- Appropriate implementation of negative sanctions where bullying behaviour is identified, including informing parents.
- Discussions and feedback with parents of the victim to ensure clarity about the steps that are / will be taken by the school.

It is important to recognise that although adults may not view an incident as a case of bullying, a child may indeed perceive it as such and it can have an affect on self-esteem.

If the incident is one of general misbehaviour, as opposed to bullying, then this will be dealt with in the most appropriate way, in line with the school's Behaviour, Relationships and Respect Policy.

The Role of Pupils

Our school community have helped develop our whole school behaviour code. The behaviour code aims to support the development of a school ethos based upon respect for others where each child knows the responsibilities they have within this. We reward and celebrate instances of respectful behaviour in a range of ways (please see the Behaviour, Relationships and Respect Policy).

Pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff if they believe that bullying is taking place, either for themselves or someone else. They are supported to understand the role they play in developing a school environment where bullying is minimised and not tolerated.

In addition to this, children are invited to tell us their views regularly about a range of school issues, including through the school council, PSHE / circle time sessions and questionnaires.

The Role of the Class Teacher

All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place. Teachers keep their own records of all significant incidents that happen in their class. In addition, there is a log book held by the leadership team for serious incidents or concerns, as well as, individual records of children with social, emotional and behaviour needs. Records of discussions are kept by staff using parent contact sheets or notes from meetings.

If staff witness or are informed of potential bullying, they will inform the leadership team. When any bullying takes place, the class teacher / leadership team will investigate what has happened, including talking with those involved. Staff will be mindful of carrying out discussions with any potential victim with sensitivity, including being aware that informal counselling and further emotional support may be required. Consideration should also be given to any immediate preventative actions that may need to be taken to stop the bullying from happening again.

Time is spent talking to the child who has bullied, including exploring why his/her action was wrong, and identifying ways in which they can change their behaviour in future. The individual who has bullied is encouraged to think about the feelings of and impact upon the victim. An appropriate consequence will be given to the child who has carried out the bullying.

Parents of both the victim and the perpetrator will be contacted and kept up to date about what has happened and what has been investigated. Where appropriate, we may invite parents into the school to discuss the situation – separate meetings for the victim's and the perpetrator's parents will be arranged.

In more extreme cases, for example, where initial discussions and actions have proven ineffective, the headteacher may contact external support agencies, such as behaviour support services or social services.

Staff have participated in training, which equips them to identify bullying and to follow school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management. Staff are aware of the potential for 'cyber bullying' through text messaging on mobile phones, or on social networking sites. The school takes steps to make parents and carers aware of the dangers of unsupervised use of mobile phones or the internet, and to educate pupils about the proper use of technology.

Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use the school's Learning Heroes, PSHE, drama, stories, circle time and assemblies to help pupils learn about bullying and how to deal with it if it occurs.

The Role of the Leadership Team

It is the responsibility of the headteacher / leadership team to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The leadership team ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in the school. The headteacher / leaqdershipsets the school climate of respectful relationships with the aim of creating a school where instances of bullying are miminised. When instances of bullying occur, the leadership team are informed and advise staff on the necessary steps to be taken, including taking part in investigations where deemed appropriate. The headteacher reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying strategy on request.

The Role of Parents

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to adopt the school's values, including being respectful and empathetic to others. 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. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact a member of the leadership team. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure, as detailed in the school's Complaints Policy.

The Role of Governors

The governing body supports the headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately. The governing body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The governors require the headteacher to keep records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies. A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the chair of governors to look into the matter. The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases the governing body notifies the headteacher, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored on a regular basis by the headteacher, who reports to governors on request about the effectiveness of the policy. The Anti-Bullying Policy is the governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this in discussion with the headteacher.

This policy was written by the senior leadership team and teaching staff and will be kept in a policies folder. It is accessible to all staff, governors and parents.