



Annfield Plain Infant School

Anti-bullying Policy

Date February 2022
Review Date February 2023

Annfield Plain Infant School has achieved the Gold Rights Respecting Schools Award. We recognise achievement in putting the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at the heart of our school's planning, policies, practice and ethos. By taking these steps our school community helps improve well-being and develops every child's talents and abilities to their potential.

At Annfield Plain Infant School we not only teach about the child's rights but we also model rights and respect in all of our relationships: between teachers/adults and students, between adults and between students.

Statement of Principle

Our school seeks to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and young people can develop and grow making full use of the range of facilities available to them.

Children, young people and the adults involved with them are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding, and to participate in any activity free from intimidation.

Our school seeks to ensure that those acting on behalf of the school:

- Actively listen to children and young people;
- Act appropriately on information received;
- Actively encourage conversations about what bullying is to enable children to have the language to tell us should it happen.

In order to ensure that a safe, secure, positive environment exists.

The Nature of Bullying

Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms, making it extremely difficult to define. Children, young people and adults

can bully. The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops.

Bullying is harmful to all involved, not just the bullied, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, selfharm and sometimes even suicide. Bullying generally fits into one of two categories: emotionally or physically harmful behaviour. This includes: -

Name calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; text messaging; emailing; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours and cyber-bullying (e.g. misuse of social media).

Definitions are different and individuals have different experiences; however from the accounts heard from children and young people, bullying is considered to be;

- Repetitive or persistent
- Intentionally harmful (deliberate), carried out by an individual or group
- An imbalance of power leaving the victim feeling defenceless

The three main types of bullying are:

- **Physical** - this includes hitting, kicking, scratching and the taking or deliberate damaging of property
- **Verbal** - this includes name calling, insulting or discriminatory remarks (racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic), teasing, threats and extortion or sending nasty notes, text messages, emails etc.
- **Indirect** - this includes ostracising or the spreading of nasty stories about someone and social exclusion of an individual.

Some individuals may feel that they are being bullied, even when there is no intention from others to cause them distress. Such perceptions of bullying should be taken seriously.

In more serious instances where adults abuse their power over a child or a child does over another child, bullying may be viewed as child abuse and should be seen within this context.

Bullying is always damaging to those involved. The victim, the bully and those who witness or even know about the bullying are affected.

Victims

Victims may spend their lives in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and may believe that it is something about themselves which has led the bully to pick on them.

The victim's life may be characterised by unhappiness, a sense of desolation and desperation and exclusion from normal social experiences. These feelings can permeate all aspects of the victim's life and may lead to a strong desire to escape the situation by running away from home, truanting from school, and in some cases, self-harming or taking their own life.

The victims of bullying may have reduced self-esteem and self-worth and their performance in school and other areas often deteriorates.

Research evidence has shown that victims of bullying may be more likely to experience mental health problems. Victims of bullying may well become socially excluded (isolated) - which is a clear risk factor to becoming engaged in crime.

Bullying Behaviour

Bullying behaviour is not a natural part of growing up and should not be seen as such.

Children and young people who bully are unlikely to stop while they can continue unchallenged.

Others

Bullying behaviour does not just affect the victim and the perpetrator. Those who witness or know of bullying may live in fear that it will be their turn next.

Bullying promotes poor models of behaviour and may encourage others to imitate these models. Children and young people who have been bullied in one setting may well become bullies in another.

Evidence has shown that bullying is a major concern for parents and children of all ages.

Organisations

Organisations which encourage or even tolerate bullying are less effective. Where the values and culture of the organisation are dominated by fear and misuse of power, individuals are less efficient, morale is lower and absence is more frequent.

At Annfield Plain Infant School we state categorically that bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

In our school we insist that:

- All adults, children and young people should be alert for signs of bullying;
- The issue of bullying should be discussed in schools and other settings openly and regularly;
- Organisations will develop close links with agencies which might help reduce bullying behaviour (UNICEF, PCSO's, Fire Service, Church...);
- We will make a commitment to take effective and appropriate action in dealing with bullying behaviour;
- Our school will develop appropriate mechanisms for: - making children and young people who allege they have been bullied immediately safe

- Incidents are investigated and actions taken as part of that investigation will be clearly stipulated.
 - recording incidents and the subsequent action taken
 - giving consideration to confidentiality issues
 - involving parents and other organisations
- Monitoring and evaluating the actions taken

- We will provide appropriate training and support for the victims of bullying;
- We will provide appropriate help for those involved in bullying behaviour;
- We will have to give careful consideration to how our Anti-Bullying Policy links with the Safeguarding procedures.

OUR SCHOOL'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY:

- We will consult with our pupils, parents, governors & staff in the development & updates of our policy.
- We will take advice & training for pupils and staff when available.
- We will set up a special friends system (Minibuds) so that daily support is in school for our children.
- We will include topics based on 'friendship', related to RRSA, PSHE & our RE schemes, in order to raise awareness of the issues.
- We will provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss anti bullying issues in class council sessions, circle time, and PSHE curriculum time.
- We will try to ensure that all children in our school can identify an adult with whom they feel safe enough to talk to.
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved with children and young people are able to maintain and develop positive relationships with them.
- We will provide and encourage a safe, listening environment in which adults, children and young people feel free to discuss their concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- We will act swiftly & considerately when an accusation of bullying is made, helping the child involved to feel safe, and involving parents/carers.

- Any incidents of bullying will be taken seriously, and the discipline procedures set out in our behaviour policy will be immediately implemented, with parents being contacted.
- Any incidents will be recorded.

1. Signs of Bullying

The behaviour of children, young people and adults is not always easily understood. Changes in behaviour may have many causes. Being bullied can be one reason why a child or young person's behaviour changes.

There is a need to be alert to the possibility that bullying is occurring.

These are some signs which need to be investigated sensitively: -

The child or young person may:

- Become withdrawn, clingy, moody, aggressive, unco-operative or non-communicative.
- Behave in immature ways, e.g. revert to thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Have sleep or appetite problems.
- Have more difficulty in concentrating.
- Show variation in performance.
- Have cuts, bruises or aches and pains without adequate explanation.
- Request extra money or start stealing.
- Have clothes or possessions which are damaged or lost.
- Complain of illness more frequently.
- Show a marked change in a well-established pattern of behaviour e.g.

A sudden loss of interest in a previously favoured activity

Changing times of coming to and going from the house
A reluctance to (or no longer wishing to) leave the home
A request to change school, class etc.

A refusal to return to a place or activity

SOME VICTIMS OF BULLYING DO NOT APPEAR TO REVEAL ANY OUTWARD SIGNS

THESE SIGNS CAN ALSO BE AN INDICATION OF OTHER PROBLEMS AND MAY NOT ALWAYS BE LINKED TO BULLYING

2. Guidelines for Staff

Children and Young People have the right to be safe (Article 19). All staff have a responsibility to keep them safe.

All staff should be aware of the need to raise antibullying issues regularly. There must also be effective monitoring of the frequency and nature of bullying within our school.

The following actions will be taken to ensure that awareness of bullying is raised within our school: -

- Name a member of staff to be responsible for co-ordinating antibullying issues (Mrs Kane)
- Have an Anti-Bullying Policy with representative young people (School Council).
- Review the Anti-Bullying Policy at least annually.
- Keep staff and young people informed of developments on bullying issues by posters, leaflets, white-boards and in schools, assemblies, Rainbow Group and lessons.
- Specify clearly those types of behaviour that are considered to be bullying and therefore unacceptable.
- Positively encourage co-operative behaviour.
- Provide support to victims of bullying
- Provide support to those alleged to be bullying
- Provide staff training about bullying.

- Make it possible for children and young people to voice their concerns anonymously through our 'Worry Boxes'.

Immediate Action for Staff

ENSURE THAT BULLYING INCIDENTS ARE DEALT WITH PROMPTLY

The following actions are appropriate for use with **both** children and young people who are bullied and those who are involved in bullying.

- Ensure the immediate safety and well-being of children and young people
- Protect and support all parties while the issues are resolved
- Take the necessary steps to stop the bullying
- Listen to and treat children and young people sympathetically and take their concerns seriously
- Encourage children and young people to discuss the incidents of bullying
- Involve children and young people in the discussion about what action will be taken
- Consider a range of strategies to ensure that bullying does not occur again
- Record incidents and actions being taken and bring them to the attention of the named person
- Inform parents/carers and discuss the situation with them calmly
- Maintain contact and work with parents/carers
- Respond calmly and consistently

LISTEN, TAKE ACTION, RECORD AND FOLLOW UP

3. Guidelines for Parents/Families of Children being Bullied

Children and young people go to a wide variety of places, ranging from schools, activity groups to youth clubs. It is not possible to list all of these, so the word **organisation** is used to cover all of them. Each

organisation should have an Anti-Bullying Policy available. Ask for a copy.

If you suspect your child is being bullied:

- Talk to your child about what is happening;
Be calm
Show sensitivity
Show concern
Reassure your child that he or she is not to blame
Comfort your children and reassure them that they are safe.
- If at all possible, act with your child's agreement;
- Contact someone in the organisation
- Expect the organisation to take you seriously and take appropriate action;
- Maintain contact and work with the organisation.

Some Do's and Don'ts

Do listen to your child

Do take your child's concerns seriously

Do encourage your child to tell you what has been happening and in particular to report any trouble that has been encountered

Do help your child to try and find a safe solution

Do talk to the organisation

Do look for signs of distress shown by your child

Don't ignore your child if they say they are worried about being with certain people or in certain places

Don't tell your child: "Just put up with it". Bullying is never acceptable.

Action needs to be taken to stop bullying.

Don't tell your child to fight back - retaliation is not the answer. The bully may be stronger. Your child could be hurt or get into trouble.

Don't immediately rush off and deal with the situation yourself, let the organisation know and leave it to them to deal with.

Don't approach the parents/carers of the perpetrator as this can make things worse.

Avoid describing children as victims as this may result in the label sticking rather than the issue being overcome.

**YOUR CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE (ARTICLE 19).
YOUR CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO EXPECT OTHER PEOPLE,
INCLUDING YOURSELVES, TO HELP KEEP HIM OR HER SAFE.**

Other Sources of reference

DfEE Circular 10/99 (Social Inclusion: Pupil Support)

DfEE Document „Bullying, Don't Suffer In Silence“ (2000)

DfEE Sex and Relationships Education Guidance (2000)

(Further details from www.DfES.gov.uk)

- Awareness of the Data Protection Act 1998 with regards to the disclosure of information

SOME USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS

NSPCC

Behave yourself! A free guide which provides advice on positive ways of encouraging good behaviour in children.

Parenting: A rough guide written to encourage parents to work out positive ways of dealing with their children's difficult behaviour.

Stop the Violence A short booklet produced by the NSPCC for parents on keeping children safe. Covers violence in the home, violence at school and in the community. Gives some suggestions for how parents can make a difference.

Bullying Online

A useful website with information and advice - www.bullyingonline.org.uk

Helplines

ChildLine Children can write or phone free of charge if they have a problem of any kind. Write to: Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR. Tel: 0800 1111

NSPCC Child Protection Helpline Free 24-hour service which provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Tel: 0800 800 500 or text phone 0800 056 0566.

Family Lives A national help line for anyone who is parenting a child and who is in need of guidance, information or emotional support. Tel: 08088 002222.

County Durham Social Care Direct & First Contact 03000 267979