

# STEPHENSON SCHOOL



# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## **Aims and Objectives**

It is crucial that Stephenson School does not tolerate bullying and establishes a culture in which children and staff are aware of what bullying is and have an expectation that there should be no bullying occurring in the school.

Children should have simple disarming strategies to discourage at early stages (such as “please don’t, thank you”) and be willing to report incidents promptly and with confidence.

Staff should be aware of early signs and have strategies to help eliminate the practice.

## **Definition**

Bullying can be described as being ‘a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. It can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, isolation, threats and extortion, racial, religious, cultural, sexual, homophobic, disability and cyber bullying through to physical assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident which casts a shadow over a child’s life, or a series of such incidents.’ Bullying is a serious matter, which can cause psychological damage. Bullying can be deemed as being a criminal offence.

At Stephenson School staff, parents and children work together to create a happy, caring, learning environment. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated. It is everyone’s responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Research has shown time and time again that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated.

## **The Role of Governors**

The Governing Board supports the Head in all attempts to eliminate bullying from the school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the Governing body does not allow bullying to take place in the school and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The Governors are told by the Head of any incidents of serious bullying that occur and review the effectiveness of the school policy regularly.

## **The Role of the Head**

It is the responsibility of the Head to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and ensure all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.

The Head ensures that all children understand and know that bullying is wrong, that it is unacceptable behaviour in the school and that children are encouraged to tell someone when they are bullied.

The Head draws the attention of children to this fact on a regular basis during Assemblies and during informal class discussions and role play with leaders of learning during Reflection Time and in Spiritual, Moral, social and Cultural (SMSC) lessons which cover the Personal Social and Health Education within the school. Experiences are shared and discussed during these times.

The Head sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, and encourages an ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable. Children at Stephenson School should feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, thus bullying is less likely to be part of their

behaviour. In addition, and wherever possible, the curriculum is used to reinforce correct social behaviour and to help the children to develop strategies to dissipate any bullying which may arise.

### **The Role of the Staff**

Members of staff are vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously. Bullying can be brought to the attention of staff either by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or other interested people. The class teacher and a member of the Leadership Team should always be informed in the first instance. They take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. Records are kept of all major incidents that happen in their class and that they are aware of in the school. A record of serious incidents, including details of the investigation and outcome, will be recorded in the children's individual files.

There is a 'Bullying Log Book' and a log book of serious disciplinary incidents. This is regularly analysed for patterns, children, places and groups, as is the accident record data.

Regular training takes place to ensure best practice and to make staff aware of best practice in dealing with bullying.

### **The Role of Parents**

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. Parents also have a responsibility to support the school's anti bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school. In the event that parents feel that a situation has not been resolved satisfactorily, they should refer to the School Complaints Procedure, a copy of which may be found in the Parents' Handbook.

### **Possible signs of Bullying**

A child may indicate by their behavior that he or she is being bullied. If a child shows some of the following signs, bullying may be responsible.

Children may :

- be frightened of walking to and from school
- change their usual route
- not want you to go on the school bus
- beg you to drive them to school
- be unwilling to go to school (or be 'school phobic')
- feel ill in the mornings
- begin truanting
- begin doing poorly in their school work
- come home regularly with clothes or books destroyed
- come home starving (bully taking dinner money)
- become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence
- become distressed and anxious, stop eating

- attempt or threaten suicide
- cry themselves to sleep, have nightmares
- have their possessions go missing
- ask for money or start stealing (to pay the bully)
- continually 'lose' their pocket money
- refuse to talk about what's wrong
- have unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- begin to bully other children, siblings
- become aggressive and unreasonable
- give improbable excuses for any of the above

### **Strategy to Identify Incidents of Bullying**

In order to identify incidents of bullying and the identity of bullies, at Stephenson School we carry out the following strategies:

- All staff watch and check for early signs of distress in pupils
- All staff listen, believe, act and are clearly visible at playtimes
- Ensure children are never left unattended except in an emergency or when needing to go to the toilet
- Appropriate behaviour should be normal practice
- Regular reminders of playground behaviour are issued

### **Addressing Incidents of Bullying**

The following is a list of actions available to staff depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. Staff must try to remain neutral when dealing with a case of bullying and try to deliberately avoid direct questioning which may be interpreted as accusatory or interrogational in style. Each child must be given an opportunity to talk and the discussion should remain focused on finding a solution to the problem and stopping the bullying from recurring. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too - that is why they bully. Communication is the key to addressing bullying.

- Discussions at length with the victim in a private location. This will require patience and understanding. Remember – listen, believe, act
- Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Advise a senior member of staff
- Discussions with the bully. Ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable at Stephenson School
- If they own up then follow the procedure outlined below and in the Discipline Policy
- If they do not own up, investigate further. If it is clear that they are lying, continue with the procedure. Children usually own up if presented with all the facts
- The bully should be helped to recognise their unsociable behaviour and offered support to modify that behaviour

- Where a child is deliberately aggressive, for example, in the playground, he/she should be removed from the situation so that others can enjoy their break. Then gradually re-introduce the child to the playground, monitoring progress carefully
- Sanctions for the bully may include obtaining an apology, withdrawal from favoured activities, loss of playtimes, suspension from school, depending on the perceived severity of the incident(s)
- If deemed necessary and with the approval of the Head or a senior member of staff, have separate discussions with parents of bully and victim. Inform the parents that an incident has occurred and the action that has taken place and ask that they support the strategies proposed to tackle the problem
- Make a written record of the incident
- Continue monitoring the situation by observing at playtimes/lunchtimes and having discussions with victim to ensure no repetition
- As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then favoured activities etc can be reinstated, and the child should be praised for good behaviour. This will rebuild the child's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after being caught bullying, or could have been low anyway, hence the bullying
- Review and analyse the incident to identify lessons learnt

**FOR INCIDENTS OF BULLYING INVOLVING ADULTS,  
PLEASE REFER TO THE STAFF HANDBOOK**

Reference is made to a report commissioned by the DfES (now DCFS "Bullying in Schools" published November 2006 and Recruiting to Safeguard Children in Schools

Last reviewed June 2009

Next review June 2010