

Godstone Village School

Anti Bullying Policy

Bullying

All staff are aware of the signs of bullying and ensure that the appropriate member of staff is informed of any concerns or incidents.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school and we have a policy of **"Zero Tolerance"**. If we discover that an act of bullying or intimidation has taken place, we act immediately to prevent any further occurrences of such behaviour. Parents/carers will be involved at an early stage. If you suspect your child is being bullied, please inform the head teacher or class teacher as soon as possible. Any suggestion that bullying is taking place will be investigated. While it is very difficult to prevent bullying from occurring, upon recognition we will initiate action in line with the school policy and swiftly and effectively deal with it to prevent reoccurrence. We will do everything in our power to ensure that all children attend school free from fear.

What Is Bullying?

There are many definitions of bullying, but we consider it to be: deliberately hurtful behaviour (including aggression), repeated often over a period of time - however long or short that time may be; results in pain and distress to the victim; and difficult for victims to defend themselves against. It can be carried out by individuals or by a group of children. It is important to understand the difference between bullying and friendship issues, although the school will help children to deal with both situations. **Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent - if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist or homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.**

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- **Taking or damaging belongings**
- Excluding not allowing a child to join in games or activities or not talking to them
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually offensive comments
- Anti-gay because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Due to difference/perceived differences including because of SEN or disability
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber misuse, all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room, Mobile threats by text messaging & calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.

Cyberbullying is the use of Information Communications Technology, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. (DfE, 2010)

The effects of bullying include making the target feel:

- Uncomfortable/unhappy
- Threatened
- Unwilling to come to school
- A need to bottle up their feelings.

The target of bullying may:

Take their feelings out on friends or family
Hold the feeling of being bullied for a very long time.

Signs of bullying:

- Unwillingness to go to school
- Feeling 'ill' in the morning
- Arriving home with clothes or books damaged
- Missing possessions
- Aggression displayed towards siblings
- Withdrawn
- Physical injuries

There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Bullying can take place between:

- Young people
- Young people and staff
- Between staff
- Individuals or groups
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Some groups of children are particularly vulnerable to bullying:

- Looked after children.
- Young carers.
- Children with Special Educational Needs or disabilities.
- Members of any minority group.
- Young people who may be perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning their gender role.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head Teacher - Has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies and appointing an

Anti-bullying coordinator who will have general responsibility for handling the implementation of this policy.

The Anti-bullying Coordinator (lead) in our school is: Sacha Booth

Their responsibilities are:

- Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies
- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- Managing bullying incidents
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

The nominated Governor with the responsible for Anti Bullying is: Louisa Jones

Whole School Strategies

In order to prevent bullying and deal with any incidents of bullying, we employ a range of strategies: circle time; assemblies; monitoring of playground by staff on duty - walk around, keeping 'an eye' on certain areas, especially those out of sight; and observing pupils at playtime, around school and in class.

All children follow a PSHE Program in class and assembly to help them understand the effects of bullying.

The school celebrates kindness by awarding kindness certificates to children who are recognised by staff or their peers.

Play leaders chosen from the older classes lead organised games which include all children who wish to take part. **A buddy bench is also located in the playground.**

Trained learning mentors are available throughout the week to talk to individual children on many issues including bullying.

Involvement in Healthy Schools reinforces our Anti Bullying policy.

Systems to report bullying include a worry box in the hall for the use of all pupils, ensuring that pupils have an adult they feel comfortable talking to and in some cases, named adults for individual children.

Specific computing lessons focus on using technology safely, respectfully and responsibly, identifying acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and what pupils should do if they have a concern.

Procedures

When an incident is reported we will listen to the child's/parent's/carer's report of the incident. If the report comes directly from a child, we ensure the parents or carers are informed immediately and invited to become party to the solution. On receipt of

information we will investigate and record the incident, talking to all children involved, to establish the context and frequency of reported incidents. Because we consider bullying as a serious incident we ask parents/carers to directly inform the head teacher or class teacher of any concern. Our staff will then monitor, track, report and follow our procedures. Good, regular communication will be established between school and parents/carers. **All reports of bullying are logged in the anti-bullying log book located in the office.**

We will help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour and engage the victim in making choices about how the matter may be resolved. If necessary, mediation will be considered and facilitated. If necessary, the use of outside agencies will be considered and used with parental permission.

We adhere to 5 key points:

1. Never ignore suspected bullying.
2. Don't make premature assumptions.
3. Listen carefully to all accounts, keeping thorough, dated records - several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth.
4. Address the issues for both the target and the bully.
5. Monitor the situation to ensure bullying has not resumed.

Outcomes & Dealing with Reported Incidents of Bullying

If a child has been bullying, the action followed will depend on the severity of the incident. Sanctions may vary due to the severity of the bullying. However, a hierarchy of sanctions will be followed which are set out below depending on the severity of the incident.

We will:

~ Warn them not to do it again. The bully (bullies) will be asked to genuinely apologise and we will try to reconcile the pupils. We will follow the sanctions outlined in the school's Behaviour Policy, e.g. withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges, etc. Parents/carers will be contacted and records kept.

~ Parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the incidents and again to review progress. As part of our Home/School Agreement, we expect parents/carers to engage with the school to help to resolve the situation.

~ A restorative approach to dealing with the situation will be used whenever possible which will require the agreement of both pupils and in some cases, the permission of both sets of parents.

~ The situation will be closely monitored by school staff. Measures will be put into place to support the target and the bully. All parties will be encouraged to discuss the issues with their parents/carers, and an adult, chosen by the child, will be made available for them to talk to in school.

~ Any locations which are identified as potential places where bullying could take place, will be supervised by staff at break and lunch times to avoid them becoming 'hotspots'.

~Through discussion, circle time or role play, the school will attempt to get to the root of the bullying. If necessary, and with parental permission, outside agencies may be used as support.

~ If the bullying continues, there is a possibility of exclusion. (The head teacher may make the decision to exclude the child immediately. In the case of any fixed-term or permanent exclusion, the parents/carers may have a right of appeal to the Governing Body and LA, please see separate information available from the school.)

After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. Reports of bullying will be logged by the head teacher and reported to Governors. **These reports will be placed in the anti-bullying log book located in the office.** Where bullying is of a racist nature, details of the incident will be recorded by the class teacher and reported to the head teacher. **These reports will also be placed in the racial incidents log book located in the office.**

Parents/carers and Governors will be informed of such racist incidents and the Governing Body will inform the LA annually of the pattern and frequency of any racist incidents. Godstone Village School ensures that all children are praised for positive behaviour and adheres to the belief the everyday is a new day.

Communication

All staff and Governors will receive a copy of the policy on an annual basis. This policy is available on the school website and is available in different formats upon request from the school office.

To be read in conjunction with the school's Behaviour, PSHE, SEND (Special Educational Needs or Disability), Parental Complaints, Child Protection policies. Also please see School Development plan and single equality plan.

Adapted from the Behaviour Policy - September 2010 in consultation with staff, parents and governors. M Goodwin and G White

Appendix 2 ~ Bullying

What can children do if they are being bullied?

Each term or when incidents occur, class teachers will discuss bullying and reinforce the following strategies:

- a) Tell a teacher or another adult straight away! Tell your family! Take a friend with you if you are scared to tell someone by yourself. You will get immediate support. Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you
- b) Keep telling people until someone listens. Never give up!
- c) Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.
- d) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong. DO NOT blame yourself.
- e) Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- f) Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- g) Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- h) Be assertive - shout "No!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- i) DO NOT fight back - this may make things worse.

What do you do if you know someone is being bullied?

- a) TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own. Let a teacher or other member of staff know. Teachers will deal with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- b) DO NOT rush over and take the bully on. DO NOT be made to join in.
- c) DO NOT be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.
- d) DO try and be a friend to the person being bullied.
- e) DO try to help the bully stop bullying.

Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have an important part to play. We ask parents/carers to:

- a) Look out for unusual behaviour in your children - for example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their usual standard.
- b) Listen to your child and try to remain calm. An emotional reaction can worry the child so that they will not tell you of their concerns.
- c) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school **immediately**. Give the class teacher and/or head teacher the facts. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- d) Reassure your child that the school will deal with the bullying and encourage him/her not to fight back
- e) If a child has bullied your child, please do not approach that child or their parents/carers on the playground or involve an older child to deal with the bully. Please inform school immediately.
- f) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- g) Tell your child that it is not their fault that they are being bullied.
- h) Reinforce the school's policy concerning bullying and make sure your child is not afraid to ask for help.
- i) If you know your child is involved in bullying, please discuss the issues with them and inform school **immediately**. The matter will be dealt with appropriately.

The school's strategies for dealing with bullying

We will:

- Provide support to all pupils who are bullied.
- Reassure them that they do not deserve to be bullied and it is not their fault.
- Assure them that it was right to report the incident.
- Try to ascertain the extent of the problem.
- Try to ensure that they feel safe.
- Ask them to report immediately any further incidents to us.
- Affirm that bullying can be stopped and that our school will persist with intervention until it does.

We will interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in bullying separately and will:

- Listen to their own version of events.
- Talk to anyone else who may have witnessed the bullying.
- Reinforce the message that bullying is not acceptable, and that we expect bullying to stop.
- Seek a commitment to this end.
- Affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- Adopt a joint problem solving approach where this is appropriate.
- Consider sanctions under our school's Behaviour Policy.
- Advise pupils responsible for bullying that we will be checking to ensure bullying stops.
- Ensure that those involved know that we have done so.
- When bullying occurs, we will contact the parents/ carers of the pupils involved at an early stage.
- We will keep records of incidents that we become aware of and how we responded to them.
- We will follow up after incidents to check that the bullying has not started again.

Reviewed Spring 2016