

# **BULLYING MATTERS**

## ***ANTI-BULLYING POLICY***

Policy reviewed after consultation with pupils, staff and parents, by C.A. Middleditch  
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## INTRODUCTION

If children are to make progress in their education, the environment for learning should be safe and caring. Freedom from personal threat is a fundamental right as well as a pre-condition for successful learning. We can only expect children to accept challenge in their learning if they feel secure and confident in their surroundings. Children will only learn to value differences in opinions, values and cultures in circumstances where their own personal safety is secure.

**This also means that when children claim to have been bullied, are suspected of being bullied or are bullying another child, they are entitled to expect that:**

- **they will be listened to in an appropriate setting;**
- **every effort will be made to establish facts;**
- **appropriate action in line with the guidelines of Elmstead Primary School will be taken to address their concern and to prevent re-occurrence.**

## AIM

**The aim and purpose of this policy is to enable our school to deal effectively with any incidents of bullying, in order that all our children may feel safe and secure and are so able to take full advantage of their learning opportunities.**

In our Behaviour Management Policy it states that at Elmstead Primary School: "...all the pupils are expected to behave in a responsible manner to themselves, to other pupils and to adults, showing care, consideration, courtesy and respect for other people at all times."

**Everyone** is entitled to be happy and feel secure at Elmstead Primary School.

This policy will provide a clearly defined framework that can be easily understood by children, staff and parents.

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

There are many definitions of bullying. Most have three things in common:

- it consists of deliberately hurtful behaviour;
- it occurs repeatedly over a period of time, or may be a one-off incident;
- it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Bullying can occur in three main ways:

1. **physical** – where the person being bullied is hit, kicked or when belongings are taken or damaged;
2. **verbal** – which consists of name-calling, insulting, or general taunting, racist or sexist remarks;
3. **indirect** – when malicious rumours or stories are spread or the person is excluded from the social group.

## WHO ARE THE BULLIES?

All pupils can act as bullies. However, most reported incidents in schools involve individual boys, or groups of boys. When girls engage in bullying it is usually as part of a group, often involving indirect bullying which is more difficult to detect and sometimes more damaging. Potentially anyone can be a bully, including adults within the school community.

## WHO ARE THE VICTIMS?

Potentially, any child can be bullied, but there are certain factors which can make a child more prone to being a victim of bullying, including:

- a lack of friends, which may also be a result of bullying;
- being shy;
- coming from an over-protective family environment;
- coming from a different racial or ethnic group;
- being different in some obvious respect from the majority;
- having Special Educational Needs;
- being a 'provocative victim' – a child who behaves inappropriately with others, barging in on games or being a nuisance.

**None of the above factors can excuse the bullying but they may account for it happening!**

### WHERE DOES BULLYING TAKE PLACE?

In primary schools, nationally, up to 75% of bullying takes place in the playground. Although less likely in a primary school, bullying may occur on the way to school, as well as on the school premises.

### HOW CAN BULLYING BE IDENTIFIED?

By its nature bullying tends to take place out of sight and earshot of teaching and other school staff. **Perhaps the most important element in identifying bullying is the creation of a positive school culture in which bullying is not tolerated – as at Elmstead Primary School – and any reporting of bullying is seen as a positive and valued act by pupils.**

However, there are possible signs of bullying that we require all school staff to be aware of and to which they should respond with enquiry. Some key signs may include:

- a reluctance to come to school/ erratic attendance;
- a marked deterioration in a pupil's performance;
- a reluctance to go out to play;
- a reluctance to leave school at the normal time or walk home with other pupils;
- unlikely excuses for possessions damaged or destroyed;
- pupils who 'lose' items;
- pupils who appear isolated in the playground, during games etc;
- pupils who display withdrawn, unforthcoming behaviour;
- pupils who feign illness or seek attention more than usual.

### ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

**This policy started from the standpoint that bullying is:**

- **not acceptable;**
- **must be reported immediately;**
- **must be addressed immediately.**

**All members of the school community have a role play, including pupils, parents, Midday Assistants and other non-teaching staff.**

Our **school ethos** values good relationships and promotes respect for individuals, highlighting:

- consideration for others;
- sensitivity to other's feelings;
- responsibility for one's actions;
- respecting oneself and others.

We pride ourselves on having classroom environments which value collaboration and good relationships. Each Class Teacher is responsible for ensuring positive behaviour strategies – in line with our Behaviour Management Policy – are promoted, with plenty of opportunities for children to work in pairs and small groups. Ground rules for good relationships are fundamental.

It is important that we allocate curriculum time to discuss bullying and equip children with the skills to deal with it. At Elmstead Primary School Circle Time provides an excellent environment to talk about sensitive issues such as bullying and develop strategies to deal with any conflicts. Our staff take a positive problem solving approach to any bullies and victims, aiming to resolve issues in the long term and enabling both bully and victim to move on in a positive direction.

We want our pupils to be active members of the school community, in the true spirit of citizenship. Pupils are encouraged to:

- tell a member of staff about bullying;
- challenge bullying behaviour by showing disapproval;
- not exclude somebody from a group.

The Friendship Bench, for example, is where a child can go when they feel isolated – for whatever reason – and other children are encouraged to go over and talk, possibly including them in their game.

The School Council is an excellent forum for allowing children the opportunity for participation and responsibility. Our School Council gives out the message to pupils that this is their community and that they have a responsibility towards it. It can also be an arena for discussing bullying issues through debate.

## PROCEDURES

- **When dealing with bullying it is essential that reference is made to this policy and to define the type of bullying taking place. Appendix 1 must be used to record the incident and each incident should be treated on an individual basis.**
- **Once reported the incident needs to be dealt with immediately. Dealing with it quickly and sensitively sends the correct message to all the parents/carers, the alleged victim and bully and even prevents issues from becoming more complex.**
- **Investigate the incident carefully by interviewing the alleged victim, the alleged bully/bullies and any bystanders, in the spirit of finding a solution to the problem for all concerned.**
- **It is essential to establish that the incident needs to be dealt with by the anti-bullying policy and cannot be dealt with under normal behaviour management procedures. All staff are required to follow the correct procedures noting the importance of consistency.**
- **Take some short-term measures while the incident is being investigated. The victim and the bully may need to be separated, or a monitoring system may need to be put in place, but follow-up measures must be implemented to resolve the issues in the longer term.**
- **Keep factual notes in the incident register (Appendix 1). This is essential, particularly if parents take issues further in the form of a complaint**
- **Ensure that appropriate communication is maintained at all times between the school and all parents involved. The home/school partnership is of great importance!**

## INVOLVING PARENTS

Parents need clear information about the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures and how incidents will be dealt with. A copy of this policy, and the Behaviour Management Policy, may be sent to those involved so that no confusion

occurs as to the process. It is always good practice to involve parents in reviewing this policy and they will be consulted for their opinions. **Parents have a crucial role to play by discouraging their children from using bullying behaviour and also by being vigilant for the signs of bullying.**

Parents should inform the school whenever they have concerns about their child's well-being and should contact the Class Teacher, in the first instance, then the Head Teacher if their concerns are ongoing.

Following an incident of bullying parents and staff should agree a timetable so that adequate time is given to the school to investigate and deal with any problems effectively and so that parents know by when they can expect a response. It is so important that the facts are established first, allowing a considered judgement to be made.

Parents of the alleged bully/bullies need to be involved in positive ways to help resolve the problems. Parents, of either the bully, or the victim, will also be reassured that if they continue to have concerns, or if the problems re-occur, then they can go back to the school and discuss their concerns with staff.

If parents are not satisfied with the way that the situation has been dealt with, they can follow the Complaints Policy and make a formal complaint to the Head Teacher. If still dissatisfied, after the Headteacher has investigated, parents can then write to the Chair of the Governing Body asking that the situation be formally reviewed. The Local Education Authority may also be informed.

## CONCLUSION

**This policy must reflect the whole school community, including governors, parents and pupils. It is important that:**

- **everyone knows what the anti-bullying policy is;**
- **the policy is applied consistently;**
- **everyone believes in the policy.**

**Our aim is to use this policy effectively and:**

- **involve the whole school community to reduce incidents of bullying;**
- **deal with bullying when it occurs;**

- ensure children are listened to and their concerns taken seriously;
- provide support to any victim and bully.

The Governing Body, of Elmstead Primary School, are responsible for ensuring that this policy is delivered effectively and consistently, monitoring its impact and progress. The impact of the policy will be monitored regularly and reviewed annually, with any necessary amendments made.

The Headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy. The PHSCE Subject Leader and School Council staff member also play a key role in the delivery and monitoring process.

<b>APPENDIX</b>
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- Behaviour Management Policy.
- Complaints Policy.
- Physical Restraint Policy.
- School Aims and Philosophy (see School Improvement and Development Plan).
- Bullying Incident Record.
- Managing Violence.
- School Guidance for Discipline and Pupil Behaviour.
- Good Practice Guides.
- Exclusion Guidelines.

**NOTE:** The above policies and guidelines are maintained in a folder in the Headteacher's office and are always available and reviewed regularly.

**ELMSTEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
**BULLYING INCIDENT FORM**

**Name of pupil:**

**Date:**

**Incident details, including those involved:**

**Member of staff initially dealing with incident:**

**Outcome:**

**Parents contacted:**

**Follow up measures:**

**Signed:**