ANTI - BULLYING POLICY

Aims and Objectives

Our aim in The Wherry School is to ensure that Learners learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated or accepted by the school.

Objectives:
- To create an environment in which bullying is considered unacceptable behaviour and where the whole community is willing to take positive action should it occur.
- To encourage all pupils to seek help and support when needed.
- To raise awareness of the problem and to encourage vigilance in all members of the community to detect bullying behaviour.
- To provide opportunities for the consideration of issues relating to bullying throughout the whole curriculum, and thereby addressing the problem through education.
- To provide help and guidance for both victims and bullies and their families.

Background

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The main types of bullying are: -

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), spreading rumours.
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic: Because of, or focusing on the issue of an individuals sexuality.
- Verbal: Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyber: All areas of internet, such as email, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, social networking, misuse of associated technology such as camera and video facilities.

Learners who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Learners are encouraged to report bullying in school.

All staff are expected to be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it.

Bullying is usually distinguished from friendly teasing or conflict situations. The Wherry School differentiates between these two by:

Typical Peer Conflict
- Equal power between students.
- Students involved may be friends.
- Negative actions don't follow a pattern.
- Conflict not premeditated and no real intention to cause harm.
- Followed by sincere remorse.
- Interest in repairing the relationship.
- All students involved play an active role.

- There is an intention to resolve the situation.

Bullying on the other hand involves:
- Imbalance of power between students.
- No real friendship between students.
- Negative actions are repeated.
- Actions are purposeful and possibly premeditated.
- The bully shifts blame and shows no sincere remorse.
- No interest in repairing relationship.
- Incident is one-sided.
- Target is alone without peer support.
- Intent is to gain power, control or possessions.

It is accepted that bullying also occurs with adults. See 'Dignity at Work' policy.

Signs and symptoms of bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child displays:
- Increased anxiety (displayed through increasingly obsessive behaviours, hand movements, repetitive questioning and statements, or short temper).
- Withdrawal.
- Aggression.
- Seeming over-sensitive or over-reacting to minor occurrences (being 'on edge').
- Seeking revenge.
- Repeatedly exposing him- or herself to the same kind of bullying situation. Although the pupil may know it is a negative interaction, they may still consider this better than no interaction at all. It becomes a scenario they are familiar with and which follows a predictable sequence.

Reasons for bullying

There are many reasons why students with language and communication difficulties and ASD may display behaviour that appears similar to bullying, such as poor understanding of interactions and a reaction to previous social experiences.

- It might be learned behaviour that they have witnessed or used previously to gain a desired response.
- They may lack the skills to maintain an interaction appropriately, and have difficulty 'reading' another person's responses, so they don't realise when the other pupil is no longer enjoying the interaction.
- They may seek out interactions in a way that does not respect boundaries.
- They may be seeking approval by joining in with someone else's bullying.
- They may be mimicking incidents or behaviour that they have witnessed or been a part of.
- Their behaviour might be an attempt to retaliate, without any understanding of the consequences of their own behaviour.
- Displaying aggressive behaviour might be a strategy to avoid being bullied themselves.
- They might be feeling frustrated at being left out and want to force other students to be their friends.

Escape

Some pupils with ASDs emit behaviours in order to escape from certain situations. For example a child might kick another child in the hope that they will be taken away from the playground. It is important that time out from positive reinforcement is not the tactic used for pupils emitting escape-motivated behaviours.

In these circumstances, the strategy should be to break this cycle to eliminate the reinforcement of the behaviour. This could involve:

- Pairing positive reinforcement with playground activity so that the child learns to enjoy playtimes.
- Allowing pupils time away from the playground contingent upon an interval of time of appropriate behavior.
- Rewards: allowing pupils to earn tokens for appropriate behaviour in the playground which they can exchange for a reinforcer either during break time or at the end of break time.

Our approach to bullying

Our approach to bullying is set within the context of our behaviour policy and our approach to developing social skills. Our support programmes for the children with the most challenging behaviour involve the families as well as specialist professionals. Staff are trained in managing and improving children's behaviour.

Our programmes and support are aimed at helping pupils know how to: manage and improve their own behaviour; support others to improve their behaviour; develop the emotional resilience to deal positively with their difficulties. We will aim for zero exclusion, but will not tolerate behaviour that put others in the school at risk.

We aim to develop pupils' social, emotional and behaviour skills which will be achieved through:
- a structured Social skills programme across all years in PSHE.
- within structured programmes delivered through Form Time.
- within integrated curriculum approaches.
- Community, Enterprise and Enrichment opportunities.

Responsibilities for preventing bullying

The Principal of the school:
- Ensures that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies and reviewing them.
- Determines the strategies and procedures.
- Discusses development of the strategies with the Senior Leadership Team.
- Ensures appropriate training is available.
- Ensures that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils.
- Report to the governing body.

Teachers are:
- Responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice.
- Expected to know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported.
- Put into practice methods for encouraging pupils to tell someone that they are being bullied.
- Responsible for liaising with relevant member of the Senior Leadership Team over all incidents involving pupils.
- Involved in an agreed strategy to achieve a solution.
- Part of the anti-bullying programme in the PSHE and emotional literacy programmes.

All staff:
- Know where to locate the policy and procedures.
- Deal with incidents according to the policy.
- Never let any incidences of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity.

Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum

The school will raise the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through PSHE schemes of learning, use of Form Time, assemblies and in the programmes of study as appropriate.

Strategies for preventing and reducing Bullying

At The Wherry School we work actively on preventing bullying and ensuring that we are a safe and positive place for all of our students. A named person in the school has responsibility for supporting personal, social and emotional development including issues concerning behaviour and bullying.

Our strategies include:
- Planned transition times between different activities, lessons, etc.
- School rules about bullying are very specific so there can be no misconceptions and students are aware of the consequences.
- Students are taught specifically what behaviours and actions constitute being a good friend.
- Identifying risk times and places e.g.: break times.
- Choosing groups and team in lessons to prevent students being left out or bullied.
- Examining group dynamics.
- Providing positive role models and celebrating positive behaviour.
- Tackling cyber bullying – following DFE guidelines.
- Creating structure at break times (designated areas for activities, Use of equipment and structured games).
- Allowing students to use dedicated quiet areas during break time.
- Promoting tolerance, understanding, respecting and accommodating people's differences.
- Extended PSHE/social skills curriculum e.g. students learn about their own strengths and areas where they need support, writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying, reading stories about bullying, making up role-plays, having discussions about bullying and why it matters, discussing scenarios 'What if...'
- Explicit teaching of acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing feeling, how they behaviour can affect others, calming down as an alternative to expressing their anger and frustration inappropriately.
- Recognising students' achievements in the area of social interaction and reinforce them through the use of praise and rewards.
- If appropriate signing a behaviour contract.
- Because of their difficulties with 'reading' social situations, students with an ASD need to be taught how to distinguish between bullying and accidents or misunderstandings e.g. using Social Stories.
- There are agreements in place for the acceptable use of mobile phones and ICT equipment that are read and accepted when students start school.

Implementation

Staff have a duty to be vigilant and alert to these behaviours. For example, the child who is the target may show fear or anxiety when he/she sees the child who targets him/her. This information must be shared amongst all members of the team, and also shared with other members of staff as soon as possible, particularly with those on duty during playtimes and lunchtime. Incidents of bullying with or without intent are recorded in incident books which are checked regularly by senior management. As the DFE anti-bullying guidance notes, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities may not be able to articulate their experiences.

We require all staff, volunteers and students to provide a positive model of behaviour by treating pupils, parents and one another with respect, friendliness, care and courtesy. We familiarise new staff and volunteers

with our behaviour policy and its guidelines for behaviour. We expect all members of our school community to keep to the guidelines, requiring these to be applied consistently.

We work in partnership with parents. Parents are regularly informed about their child's behaviour, progress and attitudes. We work with parents to address recurring inappropriate behaviour, using our observation records to help us understand causes and to jointly decide how to respond.

Procedures

When incidents of bullying occur the following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents: -

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the member of staff who has been approached will deal with the incident immediately.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Head of Primary/Secondary School and Vice Principal/Principal.
- The Head of Primary/Secondary School, the Vice Principal or Principal will interview all concerned and will record the incident in the incident file.
- Form tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the form tutor will advise other staff at staff briefings.
- Parents will be kept informed.
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted.
- Measures will be taken and used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.
- Work will be done throughout the school surrounding e-safety.
- Parents have the right to make a formal complaint if they feel that the school has not dealt with any incidents sufficiently.

Learners who have been bullied will be supported by: -
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice;
- Reassuring the Learner;
- Offering continuous support;
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Advise on methods to help resilience.
- Having restorative work done with the bully – as appropriate.

Learners who have bullied will be helped by: -
- Discussing what happened;
- Discovering why the Learner became involved;
- Establishing the wrong doing and need to change;
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the Learner.

The following disciplinary steps can be taken: -
- Official warnings to cease offending;
- Detention;
- Placed on a report (the level at which to be determined by the Head of School, Vice Principal or Principal);
- Minor fixed term exclusion;
- Major fixed term exclusion;
- Permanent exclusion. Before any permanent exclusion an emergency review of a child's EHCP would be conducted.

Consequences are to be fair, consistent and appropriate to students' understanding.

Outcomes
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- Accept a period of reflection where the incident is considered and a means of reparation is decided upon. If possible, the students will be reconciled and a positive relationship encouraged.
- If appropriate the person/s displaying bullying behaviour will be asked to apologise. They should accept the undesirability of their behaviour and undertake that there should be no repetition of such behaviour. They should acknowledge that they are personally responsible for their choice of future behaviour.
- They will be helped to understand that, should such repetition occur, it will result in far more serious punishment leading ultimately to permanent exclusion.
- Staff will work with the parents/care and the child to find solutions to the problem, with associated target setting, agreements with parents and counselling.

CYBERBULLYING

Understanding cyberbullying

i. Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying:
- The invasion of home and personal space;
- The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages;
- The size of the audience;
- Perceived anonymity;
- The profile of the person doing the bullying and their target.

ii. Research indicates that cyberbullying is a feature of many young people's lives. It also affects members of school staff and other adults;

iii. Cyberbullying, like all bullying, is taken very seriously. It is never acceptable. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines the power of Principals to regulate the conduct of Learners when they are off-site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items.

iv. Although cyberbullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws that can apply in terms of harassment and threatening and menacing communications. The Wherry School will contact the police if the law has been broken.

v. Cyberbullying takes different forms:
- Threats and intimidation;
- Harassment
- "Cyber-stalking" (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages); vilification / defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images (including what are sometimes misleadingly referred to as 'happy slapping' images); and manipulation.

vi. Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences. What may be sent as a joke may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows in communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy.
It is important that Learners are made aware of the effects of their actions.

vii. In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators – by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. They may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement compounds the misery for the person targeted. The Wherry School regards these 'bystanders' as 'accessories' who actively support cyberbullying. It is important that Learners are aware that their actions may have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated. Learners are encouraged and expected to report incidents of cyberbullying.

Preventing cyberbullying

viii. The Vice Principal is the lead on cyberbullying for The Wherry school. They liaise with the Pastoral Team, Safeguarding Team, IT staff, and School Council regarding cyberbullying issues.

ix. The school aims to increase awareness of cyberbullying through discussion and activity around what cyberbullying is and how it differs from other forms of bullying. Such activities include staff development activities and addressing cyberbullying within curriculum delivery. Internet Safety is addressed in the ICT Scheme of Work. Every student signs our Acceptable Use Policy for school computers. Advice and guidance for Learners who may be victims of cyberbullying is on posters in every classroom and on the school's website.

x. It is important to note that the school's response to cyberbullying, as with all other forms of bullying, may cover bullying that takes place out of school.

xi. Incidents of cyberbullying will be monitored and recorded in the same way as all other forms of bullying.

Responding to cyberbullying

xii. The majority of cyberbullying cases will be dealt with through The Wherry schools anti-bullying and behaviour policies and procedures.

xiii. The person being bullied will usually have examples of texts or emails received - these should not be deleted but stored to aid in any investigation. Staff should ask that the victim of alleged bullying forward offensive messages to them, rather than looking through messages on a student's phone themselves. There are also additional reporting routes available, through mobile phone companies, Internet service providers and social networking sites.

xiv. The Wherry School's response to cyberbullying may include sending evidence to parents, contacting the service provider, confiscating phones, and contacting the police (in relation to illegal content).
Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

xv. The Education Act 2011 gives teachers a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Mobile phones may be confiscated if they are deemed to have been used inappropriately.

If there is concern that a mobile phone has been used to carry out threats or other bullying type behaviour, police may need to be involved as they have more extensive search powers.

Learners (and staff) experiencing cyberbullying will be advised on steps they can take to avoid recurrence – for example:

• Not to retaliate or reply;
• To preserve evidence (e.g. by capturing a 'screen shot' of offensive material) to help any investigations;
• How to 'block' or remove people from friend and buddy lists;
• To be aware that social networking sites encourage the reporting of instances of cyberbullying on their websites;
• That cyberbullying can be reported to the internet service provider;
• Ask them to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain Existing sanctions in place for bullying behaviour will be applied to perpetrators of cyberbullying. Technology-specific sanctions for Learners engaged in cyberbullying behaviour may include limiting Internet access for a period of time or removing the right to use a mobile phone on the school site. The original person who has posted inappropriate material on the Internet will be required to remove it. It is important that the school promote the positive use of technology, and advise users of netiquette and e-safety guidance

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of all types of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, form tutorial time, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour. Work is on going about e-safety, cyber bullying and tolerance of those who are perceived to be different. An emphasis on anti-bullying occurs every year in anti-bullying week, which is held throughout Norfolk Schools. The Wherry uses this week to encourage Learners to be good friends.

Summary

We believe that pupils flourish best when their personal, social and emotional needs are met. We aim to teach pupils to behave in socially acceptable ways and to understand the needs and rights of others so that all have opportunities to develop as successful, confident and caring individuals.