



POLICY TO PREVENT BULLYING

Everyone has a right to work and play happily in our school and bullying will not be ignored or tolerated

AIMS

We think it is important for:-

- Alderbury & West Grimstead School to be bully-free;
- everyone to feel happy about coming to teach, play and learn here;
- everyone at our school to welcome our individual and cultural identities;
- everyone to share responsibility for the prevention of bullying.

To achieve all of this we will ensure that:-

- we have a clear idea of what bullying means and the levels of occurrence in the school;
- parents, staff and children know what is acceptable behaviour;
- everyone knows about our policy to prevent bullying;
- classes discuss what bullying means and what to do if bullying occurs;
- people who ¹have been bullied feel supported and receive good advice;
- as part of school life we teach people about the formation of good, co-operative relationships;
- we work with parents and children to prevent anyone from becoming a persistent bully;
- our playgrounds become safer and more interesting places;

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- issues related to bullying will be discussed in assemblies, as part of Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship, and during special occasions such as Anti-bullying Week

What is bullying?

There are many definitions of bullying but most have these things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated, often over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves
- Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, making someone feel left out and lonely, tormenting, (e.g hiding property, threatening gestures, writing unkind things)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, taking belongings 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 sexuality
- **Verbal** - name-calling, spreading nasty stories, sarcasm, comments about abilities or personal traits
- **Cyber** –using social media such as Facebook, email, text messages or images in an unkind way
- **Transgender** – *because of, or focussing on, transgender issues*

Are Fights and Disagreements Bullying?

NO! Fighting will be dealt with through other parts of our behavioural policy. We want all our children to find better ways of sorting disagreements that all children will have from time to time.

Is it wrong to call each other nick-names?

No it isn't wrong as long as everyone is happy to be called by their nick-names. There is a fine dividing line between friendly jokes and the sort of teasing that is hurtful. The child concerned is the only one who can judge when the dividing line has been crossed, therefore, all children should be made aware of their right to say "No" when something is happening which they do not like. They must also be encouraged to **report all cases of bullying as soon as they begin to happen**. In addition, parents or children who witness bullying or suspect that it is taking place, should be encouraged to report it.

Lunchtimes and Break-times

We ask our mid-day supervisory assistants to be especially vigilant because this is a time when bullying is most likely to happen. **Our duty staff will: -**

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- work separately in different parts of the playground;
- make sure that they monitor the playground for any bullying that may be taking place;
- ensure that the relevant class teacher is informed of any incidents by completing the slip of paper provided for this purpose;
- encourage co-operative games;
- seek to ensure that potentially aggressive games do not take place;
- encourage children to respect and make use of quiet areas and additional playtime equipment.

All adults should watch for early signs of distress in pupils – deterioration of work, fake illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, erratic attendance which may be the outward signs of bullying. This may apply particularly to pupils who have recently moved to the school.

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied and adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child -

- is frightened of walking to or from school;
- begs to be driven to school;
- changes their usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to school;
- begins truanting;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to feel poorly at school;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions that "go missing";
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- has dinner or other monies "lost";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- comes home starving (money/lunch stolen);
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what is wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and investigated.

Procedure to be followed when bullying is reported

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1. Act straight away. The victim will be listened to and supported. Full facts of the incident should be established and written down. If it is found that allegations are more bullying than falling out, then proceed to 2.
2. Witnesses and perpetrators will be spoken to one to one.
3. Both the perpetrator and the victim have a no-blame discussion, in order that the “bully” becomes aware of the effect on the “victim” and agreement will be reached that the bullying will stop. If this is a second offence then parents of both parties should be contacted.
4. The adult/teacher(s) will make a written record of the incident, including sanctions and “repair and rebuild” strategies, countersigned and dated by the children involved, which is passed to the class teacher(s).
5. The class teacher(s) will monitor this agreement after a week and after a month with children.
6. Where they deem it appropriate, the class teacher will inform the head teacher and make contact with the parents/guardians.
7. The adults in the school will work together to combat bullying, wherever this happens. .
8. Bullying incidents will be recorded consistently to allow for monitoring of behaviour.
9. A report of numbers of bullying incidents will be made to governor meetings.

Supporting children who have been bullied

Members of staff will listen carefully and sympathetically to children who allege that they have suffered bullying. They will discuss strategies for preventing future incidents. If children need further support the Headteacher may be involved. Parents will be given the opportunity to discuss strategies.

Dealing with bullying children

- The parents and child should know that if further episodes of bullying occur the child may be liable for exclusion (refer to ‘Exclusion Policy’);
- Records will be kept active, monitored and reviewed;
- There may be occasions when it is thought advisable to involve external agencies in the diagnosis of bullying behaviour and subsequent actions.

Supporting improved behaviour and attitudes with children who have bullied

Children who bully may have major problems and need help and the involvement of external agencies. School can be a positive influence in helping the child with lesser problems who bullies to cope in a more constructive way. The following points might help a child to reconsider his/her behaviour and avoid becoming labelled.

- **Be responsible – tell the truth about what happened;**
- **Be aware – who has been affected and how;**
- **Be thoughtful- what were you thinking and feeling;**
- **Be sorry – what needs to happen now to make everyone feel better;**
- **Be a good friend – treat others as you would like to be treated.**

Parents/guardians

Parents/guardians are reminded of the home/school agreement and that the school's staff, students and parent/guardians need to resolve issues together sensitively and constructively. Modelling positive behaviour and following the school's complaints procedure where there are unresolved concerns is the expectation. Parents are invited to speak calmly and in confidence to the class teacher/Head Teacher, with an expectation of action being taken and outcomes shared, rather than attempting to deal with the situation themselves at the school gate. Parents should never approach another child to find out or admonish, even with a view to protecting their own child. School staff should be trusted to fact find and deal with issues once they have been reported appropriately. This will avoid misunderstandings, set a good example to the children and offer support towards what the school is working to achieve.

How will we know whether things are going well?

- During anti bullying week (November each year) the School Council will encourage others to say whether they think bullying is a problem in our school.
- Information will be sought from pupils through regular questionnaires.
- Information will be sought from parents through annual questionnaires.
- The staff and governors will review this policy on an annual basis.
- The staff will review any bullying issues concerning children during their weekly staff meeting – including actively monitoring progress on written agreements opened and closed that week

Development, Monitoring and Review

This policy was reviewed in January 2015 by the Curriculum Committee

It was accepted and approved by the full Governing Body in January 2015.

Signed by the Chair of Governors:

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Review Date

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually (next review due February 2016).

APPENDIX

"Discussing bullying incidents with pupils" Taken from "BULLYING - Don't suffer in silence"(DfEE 1994)

Children involved in bullying others may feel quite justified in their actions, and may be reluctant to admit to them. Some children may even make false allegations of bullying against a fellow pupil to get them into trouble. It can be difficult for teaching or supervisory staff to build an accurate picture of events or to be sure of who is telling the truth. Tutors and class teachers can often build upon their special relationship with individual pupils to encourage honest and direct discussion.

If the incident is not too serious, a 'problem solving' approach may help. The adult tries to remain neutral and deliberately avoids direct, closed questions, which might be perceived as accusatory or interrogational in style. He or she makes sure each pupil has an opportunity to talk and keeps the discussion focused on finding a solution and stopping the bullying from recurring. It is often more helpful to begin by acknowledging that there is a problem rather than trying to find out the detail of who has done what to whom. The adult can aim to help the pupils find their own solution to their personal disagreement, and also discuss with them how their proposals will be put into action. A follow-up meeting with the pupils can find out whether their solution has been effective or not."

Information for parents and families

All schools are likely to have some problem with bullying at one time or another. It is important that, as we are your child's school, we take steps to reduce and prevent bullying. Please note the definitions of bullying and the signs and symptoms of being bullied, in our policy

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping schools deal with bullying.

Please discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere.

Show them how to resolve the difficult situations without using violence or aggression.

Watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect that a problem exists. Don't dismiss it. Contact the school if you are worried.

If your child has been bullied

- calmly talk about his/her experiences;
- make a note of what is said - particularly who was said to be involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what has happened;
- reassure your child that he/she has done the right thing to tell you;
- explain to your child that if any further incidents occur he/she should report them to a teacher immediately;
- make an appointment to see your child's class teacher;
- explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing

Talking with teachers about bullying

- try to stay calm - bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of the incident;
- be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened - give dates, places and names of others involved;
- make a note of what action the school intends to take;
- ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school;
- stay in touch with the school: let them know if things improve, as well as if problems continue

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Families who feel that their concerns are not being addressed appropriately by the school might like to consider-

- making an appointment to discuss the matter with the headteacher
- if this does not help, write to the Chair of Governors explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happening;
- in the last resort follow the Complaints Procedure (see the School Prospectus).

If your child is bullying other children

Children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware that their child is involved in bullying.

Children sometimes bully others because-

- they don't know it is wrong;
- they are copying older brothers or sisters or other people they admire;
- they haven't learned other, better ways of mixing with other pupils in school ;
- their friends encourage them to bully;
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings.

To stop your child from bullying others

- talk with your child: explain that what he/she is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy
- discourage other members of the family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want;
- show your child how he/she can join in with other children without bullying;
- make an appointment to see your child's teacher to explain the problems your child is experiencing and discuss how you and the school can stop him/her bullying;
- regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- give your child lots of praise and encouragement when he/she is co-operative or kind to others
- co-operate with the school if involvement with outside agencies is recommended.

Through the curriculum the school will explore issues such as-

- What is bullying? What causes people to bully each other? How does it feel to be bullied or to bully?
- What are the effects of bullying behaviour on bullied pupils: on pupils who bully and on bystanders?
- What would our school (or our society) be like if bullying behaviour was acceptable?
- Why should we try not to bully each other?
- What moral dilemmas do we face when we are confronted with bullying behaviour?

What happens if things go wrong?

We believe that rewards will outnumber sanctions and that a **positive** approach is very important. However, it is also important that pupils, parents and staff members have a clear idea of what sanctions will follow misbehaviour and/or bullying. Staff will be alert to potentially difficult situations in order to divert children's attention before trouble or bullying occurs, Games or behaviour which could develop into confrontation e.g. play-fighting will be discouraged.

Bullying can often hide behind such games.

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