



POLICY TO PREVENT BULLYING

May 2018

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 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 have 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;

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.

The definition we use with the children is **STOP – Several Times On Purpose**.

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
- Transgender – because of, or focusing on, transgender issues
- 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

Are Fights and Disagreements Bullying?

No. Fighting will be dealt with through other parts of our behaviour policy. We want all our children to find better ways of sorting out the 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:

- 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:

- changes their usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to school;
- begins truanting;
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares;
- feels inexplicably ill in the morning;
- begins to feel poorly at school;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions that "go missing";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- 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.

Children are encouraged to **STOP** bullying – **Start Telling Other People** – rather than face things on their own.

Procedure to be followed when bullying is reported

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 rather than a normal falling out, then proceed to:
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, which may be countersigned and dated by the children involved (depending on age), and is passed to the class teacher(s).
5. The class teacher(s) will monitor this agreement after a week and after a month with the children.
6. Where they deem it appropriate, the class teacher will inform the head teacher and make contact with the parents.
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

Parents are reminded of the home/school agreement and that the school's staff, students and parents 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/Headteacher, 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 and set a good example to the children whilst allowing the school to resolve the issue.

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 questionnaires.
- Information will be sought from parents through 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