EDGE GROVE

Counter-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Bullying is a "wilful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else" (Tattum & Herbert, 1990).

The Government define bullying as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally and may cause longer-term psychological damage.*

Bullying consists of four basic types of abuse – emotional, verbal, by electronic and digital means ('cyber-bullying') and physical. It is likely to occur between pupils, but can occur between staff and pupil.

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, sexual persuasion, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It includes: name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours. Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others.

In every case, there is an imbalance and abuse of power: the stronger (not necessarily the older or bigger) inflicting an abuse of his/her power upon a person who is somehow weaker.

By clear preventative steps, an open policy against bullying and the creation of an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils, and the celebration of success, we hope that Edge Grove will remain as free as possible from the problem.

Related Policies & Documents

- Behaviour Management Policy
- Safeguarding Policy including the "Prevent Duty"
- Complaints Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Policy for Use of Force, Control and Restraint of Pupils
- E-safety policy
- Guidance in addressing Pupil Concerns
- PSHE Schemes of Work
- DfE non statutory advice – Preventing and Tackling Bullying

Key Elements of the School's Policy

Bullying is wrong and all members of the school, children and adults, have a responsibility to report any incidents.

- Any reports of bullying will be taken seriously.
- The Deputy Head (Pastoral) should be informed, in writing, of any incidents of bullying in order to record such incidents. These will be recorded and retained so as to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the approaches adopted and enable any patterns of behaviour to be recognised.

- In conjunction with the Head and /or the Head of Pre Prep, and Lead Tutor, the Deputy Head (Pastoral) will assess the nature of the incident and decide whether parents should become involved. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) is also the Designated Safeguarding Lead and is responsible for liaison with Herts MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) over the threshold for reporting incidents of bullying to external agencies and also for potentially reporting criminal incidents to the police.
- Teachers should use the curriculum to get across messages about acceptable behaviour - drama, discussion groups, role-play etc.
- **The prevention of bullying is everybody's business**.
- Everybody is encouraged to speak out against bullying. Everybody must care. Silence and secrecy nurture bullying.

The following guidelines must be disseminated to all pupils through the PSHEE programme and is also displayed on pupil notices around the school. The 'Circle of Care' concept is fully addressed in tutor time:

Guidelines for Pupils

Bullying will exist as long as you remain silent.

If you are being bullied, or you observe someone else being bullied, take action:

- Talk to anyone within the 'Circle of Care'
- Write down the information, put it in an envelope, address it to the Headmaster or Deputy Head and hand it in to the School Office. Alternatively, use the eWorry portal on Firefly.

Remember:

- Do not be intimidated by a bully saying it will be worse for you if you report bullying.
- When someone else is being bullied or in distress, take action. Watching and doing nothing may suggest support for the bully.
- Do not tolerate a bully in your circle of friends.
- Always treat others as you would like to be treated yourself. Remember that calling someone names or incessant teasing is in fact bullying. Do not become a bully yourself.

If staff have doubts over any aspect of the school's counter-bullying policy, they should seek the advice of the Headmaster or Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Measures In Support Of the School's Policy

- Pupils are told that bullying will not be tolerated at Edge Grove. This is reinforced through the PSHEE curriculum, assemblies and tutorial group meetings, which focus on aspects of bullying and interpersonal relationships. Openness is encouraged.
- Members of the teaching and pastoral staff are advised on the principals of the School's policy and their responsibilities and on measures to prevent, detect and deal with bullying, whilst members of the support staff are encouraged to report unacceptable behaviour they witness and pupils who seem anxious or unhappy.
- Parental support and communication with the School is strongly encouraged over bullying.
- The "HELP" leaflet is displayed around the school and in the boarding accommodation. This has a copy of the 'Circle of Care' printed in it. These documents are explained to pupils in tutorials, emphasising the options open to them for communication of all problems to someone who will listen and help. The role of the independent listeners is emphasised as an independent 'ear' for all pupils.

- Within Pre Prep and the Years 3 & 4, reliance is placed on the form teacher system as an effective means of identifying bullying. form teachers see their forms for daily registration and will also teach them. Form teachers are alert to pick up ‘atmosphere’ and unusual patterns of behaviour, reporting concerns to the Head of Pre Prep or Head of Lower School as appropriate.
- Every child in the Middle and Upper School is a member of a tutorial group and teachers in these parts of the school act as tutors. These tutors are also the pupils’ form takers and will meet them briefly each day at registration in the morning and the afternoon. Some of the tutorials are structured and are used to reinforce the PSHEE course. These sessions provide an excellent opportunity for tutors to identify problems within the tutorial group which can then be followed up on an individual basis, as appropriate. Any major concerns arising from the tutorials will be reported to the Headmaster or Deputy Heads, via the Head of School.

Dealing with Bullying

Despite everybody’s best efforts, children can sometimes be, and are, nasty to each other and all adults in a school need to have help in how to deal with such situations. These guidelines are for the use of teachers who come across any form of bullying - whether it is verbal teasing or physical assault:

First Steps:

- Remain calm; you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control of the situation.
- Take the incident or report seriously.
- Take action as quickly as possible but give yourself time to think through the situation before reacting.
- Think hard about whether your action needs to be private or public; who are the children involved?
- Reassure the victim(s). Don't make them feel inadequate or foolish.
- Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s).
- Make it plain to the bully you disapprove.
- Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.
- Apply sanctions to the person engaging in bullying if you have to, but be very careful how you do this. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it is right to bully if you have the power. Any sanction must reflect the seriousness of the incident and convey a deterrent effect. Strong sanctions, such as exclusion, may be necessary in cases of severe and persistent bullying.
- Explain the punishment clearly and why it is being given.

Follow-up Action:

- Inform the Headmaster or the Deputy Head Pastoral.
- Inform colleagues if the incident arose out of an unexpected situation where everyone should be vigilant in the future.
- Fill in an Incident Report Form and pass it on to the Deputy Head Pastoral.
- Make sure that the incident doesn't live on through reminders from you.
- Try to think ahead to prevent a recurrence of the incident, if you uncover the trigger factor.

Things to Avoid:

DO NOT….

- Be over-protective and refuse to allow the victim to help him or herself.
- Assume that the bully is bad through and through; try to look objectively at the behaviour with the bully.
- Deal just with the incident and not with the person.
- Keep the whole incident a secret because you have dealt with it.
- Call in the parents without speaking to the Deputy Head or Headmaster first and without having a constructive plan to offer either side.

If bullying occurs, in addition to any sanction that is imposed, support will be given to both victim and perpetrator through the tutor system. Depending on the level of the incident, the situation may be dealt with by the lead tutor or by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will work together towards resolution seeking both to enable the victim to move forward without further harassment and to cause the perpetrator to realise the effect of their action or behaviour on others. The school coach/counsellor may also be asked to help support either party. The Headmaster will be kept informed of any situation.

The School will raise awareness of the staff through training (recent inset has focussed on 'cyber-bullying' and e-safety) and induction and takes action through the supervisory duty system to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points of this policy are discussed with pupils during tutor and PHSEE sessions. Counter-bullying will feature during the year as a discussion point for the Student Council. It will also be reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education.

Pupil welfare and behaviour (incorporating inter-pupil relationships) are discussed at year group meetings and also the weekly pastoral meeting of the Heads of Pre Prep, Lower, Middle and Upper schools and Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Annual pupil surveys will be used to facilitate an understanding of the level and type of bullying that pupils might have experienced. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the School's actions to prevent bullying.

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Deputy Head Pastoral
September 2018

Version History

Version	Description	Author	Date
201609.01	Update for new academic year with new personnel	A Caldwell	September 2016
201609.02	Updated for minor text changes	M Sims	January 2017
201609.03	Updated for minor text changes	A Caldwell	June 2017
201709.01	Update for new academic year – minor text changes	M Sims	September 2017
201709.02	Update with minor text changes	A Caldwell	January 2018
201809.01	Update for new academic year – minor text changes	A Caldwell	September 2018