PensMeadowSchool

Living, Growing, Learning

Anti-Bullying Policy

MAY 2020

NEXT REVIEW DATE: MAY 2021

Staff Responsible: Michal Pawlowicz

Overview

Pens Meadow School does not tolerate bullying or harassment and recognises the damaging effects of all forms of bullying. All members of the school community are dedicated to establishing and maintaining an environment in which everyone can live, grow and learn whilst feeling safe and secure. We recognise that many of the pupils at Pens Meadow have difficulties with challenging behaviours which can be directed towards other pupils and we are committed to helping with these problems.

1. Definition – What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as 'behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. Repeated bullying usually has a significant emotional component, where the anticipation and fear of being bullied seriously affects the behaviour of the victim.

It can be inflicted on a child by another child or an adult. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

It can take many forms, but the three main types are:
Physical – for example, hitting, kicking, shoving, theft as well as peer on peer abuse including up-skirting
Verbal – for example, threats, name calling, racist or homophobic remarks.
Emotional – for example, isolating an individual from activities/games and the social acceptance of their peer group.

Cyber-bullying is defined as 'the use of Information Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else'. It is another form of bullying which can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience.
Bullying often starts with apparently trivial events such as teasing and name calling which nevertheless rely on an abuse of power. Such abuses of power, if left unchallenged, can lead to more serious forms of abuse, such as **domestic violence** and abuse, racial attacks, sexual offences and self-harm or suicide.

Bullying is a type of behaviour which needs to be defined by the impact on the victim rather than the intention of the perpetrator.

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An anti-bullying consultation was carried out with students at Post 16. Students have varying cognitive ability and a range of communication skills including students who are non-verbal. The comments made are included in appendix 1.

2. Issues relating to severe learning difficulties (SLD) and autistic spectrum condition (ASC)

Pupils at Pens Meadow have a range of complex needs including severe learning difficulties (SLD) and autistic spectrum condition (ASC). This can result in difficulties with:
Communication.
Short and long term memory
Maintaining concentration
Understanding abstract concepts
Establishing and maintaining effective and meaningful relationships
Understanding the effect their actions might have upon others
Sensory integration
High levels of anxiety
Social distancing
Physical contact

These factors can contribute to some pupils displaying challenging behaviours that place themselves and others at risk of harm.

At Pens Meadow we understand that such behaviours do not necessarily constitute bullying, but may do so if actions imply a degree of forethought, and of malice. Appropriate action will be taken in accordance with this policy.

3. Preventing Bullying

As a school community we are committed to safeguarding all pupils and will not allow bullying to go unrecognised or unreported.

As a school we:

- Offer a total communication environment, enabling pupils to have an active voice
- Provide opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other through PSHE lessons and sessions such as circle time
- Continue to listen to our pupils' voice through well-established Anti-bullying Ambassadors group
- Expect all staff to follow our school code of conduct and encourage pupils to do the same
- Expect all staff to be positive models
- Ensure all staff are fully trained to be observant of signs of distress and suspected incidents of bullying including cyber-bullying
- Deal with all incidents promptly in line with the policy, contacting parents where necessary
- Treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it

4. Reporting, recording and co-ordination of appropriate action

We believe that, as a first step towards dealing with bullying and violence in our school, we need to cultivate a whole-school atmosphere of mutual tolerance and respect. Respect is just as necessary

when students address teachers, and teachers speak to students, as it is when students interact amongst themselves.

All instances of bullying must be recorded, and the Head and/or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) informed immediately.

Recording of information is extremely important so that:

- We are aware of incidents.
- We are able to track actions taken to prevent bullying
- We are able to check on support given to the victims.
- We can continue to monitor effectiveness of actions taken
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When investigation is warranted, the following information should be recorded:

- Date of allegations.
- Dates and times (where possible) of incidents.
- Statements from witnesses
- Information from the alleged victim where appropriate
- Information from the alleged bully where appropriate
- Conclusions
- Actions taken
- Details of any parental involvement.

All records should be signed and dated.

The ensuing records will be kept in a secure file.

The Head/DSL will ensure that all appropriate people (including parents and carers) are informed.

The Head/DSL will co-ordinate the support required for all parties.

It is the responsibility of the Head to report to the governors and the Local Authority (LA) the number of incidents of bullying.

Help, support and counselling will be given as appropriate to both the victims and the bullies.

Appendix 1

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY CONSULTATION – 2017

What is bullying?

The lower ability pupils struggled to volunteer an understanding. JM thought it was 'good'. GF knew it was 'bad' and was able to identify 'fighting and 'breaking' from a choice of symbols. HA identified a number of symbols.

CP said 'Yes' when asked if you could be bullied on computers and phones.

More able students volunteered an understanding – (DH – 'pulling and pushing, bad names, fighting, rude; AB – 'kicking, laughing, pushing'; ZA-'hitting, kicking bad language; SC – 'not nice'; SP – 'hurt you, shouting, TB – 'when someone is unkind or hurting someone'). On a tick list they were mostly able to agree that it could include '*Nasty texts or messages'* and *'Being nasty on the Xbox'.*

They knew it involved more than just hitting.

If you were being bullied how would it make you feel?

With symbol support the less able students identified *'sad, nervous, angry, upset and alone'.*

HA was clear it would not make you *'happy'* or '*smile'.*

The more able students all volunteered sad. DH said 'annoyed and bit upset'. MG volunteered 'angry'.

With some symbol support SP offered '*alone, upset, nervous'.*

What would you do if you were being bullied?

EM didn't know, but from choices would speak to his Mother, Father, Gran, Sister and Teacher.

GF would 'get angry, pushing', but when prompted to consider speaking to someone she listed some friends and Mrs Lawrence.

HA chose the symbol to chat to someone.

The more able students all volunteered the opinion that they would speak to teachers, and some said parents too.

DH first response would be to 'move away and find new friends'. SC also said 'move away'

If this person didn't listen what would you do?

TB said if he wasn't listened to he could speak to the Police, DH said 'the boss', AB said Mrs Hunter and ZA said Mr Alma.

Can an adult bully you?

Apart from SC all the pupils said no to this question. DH said 'No, The teachers are all nice'

Who could keep you safe in school?

GF and HA felt safe at school. Other pupils answered teachers and some mentioned friends.

Why do you think some people are bullies?

Not many pupils offered an opinion on this. DH said 'People learn him, bad names, Mum and Dad'. SC said 'they are mean'. TB said they 'thinks it's fun'.

What do you think should happen to the bullies?

GF said 'leave me alone', and when asked should they be punished, said 'yes'. EM, ZA and HA said they should be 'stopped'.

DH said they should 'walk away, sit down, listen to songs'. TB wanted them to 'go away'. AB said 'stopped and talk to somebody'.

If you see bullying what could you do?

EM said he would be '*silent',* but most said they would speak to a teacher. When prompted with a scenario DH said 'Help her, give a hand, and stop it'; SP said 'talk to her'. When given choices ZA included '*speak to the person being bully'.*