

The Froebelian School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Objectives:

1. All staff, Pupils and Parents should have a clear understanding of bullying.
2. At The Froebelian School, bullying will not be tolerated.
3. There are clear procedures for dealing with bullying.
4. All members of staff should receive training in dealing with bullying issues.

Background

Bullying is a matter of great concern. It can make children's experience of school miserable and at times frightening. If bullying is not tackled promptly and in the right way the consequences can be very serious. In preparing this policy we have taken into account a variety of professional advice including the DfES guidance 'Bullying: don't suffer in silence'.

In the most recent inspection report (see www.isinspection.org.uk) the inspectors wrote: 'The pastoral care of the pupils and the arrangements for ensuring their welfare, health and safety are outstanding. The school's aim, of providing care of the highest possible standard within a happy, disciplined and purposeful environment in which every member of the community is valued, is fully met, The school has continued to build on the strengths in this area reported in at the last inspection'. This clear endorsement should give parents/carers great reassurance but it does not mean that the school is complacent. Sadly, the possibility of bullying is ever-present in all communities and we will remain vigilant and ready to respond to any concerns.

Definition

A widely adopted definition of bullying was put forward by the Scandinavian researcher, Olweus, in the early 1990s. This states that

Bullying is the repeated or long term exposure of a victim to verbal or physical attack, or social ostracism, perpetrated by an individual or a group.

Another, useful definition of bullying is that used by the NSPCC:

Bullying is deliberately harmful behaviour repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Recent technological developments mean that bullying by abuse of the internet, email and text messaging must be added to the various mechanisms through which bullying might be perpetrated. Bullying of members of staff through use of modern technology (cyber-bullying) will be treated seriously and may result in the use of sanctions including that of exclusion.

Examples of Bullying

The following are considered to be parts of bullying:

- Actions intended to deliberately hurt another person, both children and adults
- Acts of aggression repeated over a period of time
- Something hurtful that it is difficult for a victim to defend themselves against

In this context bullying is often experienced in one of three ways:

Physical abuse (e.g. hitting, kicking or taking belongings)

Verbal Abuse (e.g. name calling, offensive remarks)

Indirect abuse (e.g. spreading nasty rumours, sending malicious emails)

Symptoms of bullying

It is important to be alert to the typical signs of potential bullying. These include the following:

- Children who are reluctant to attend school and/or who are frequently absent
- Children who seem to have few friends and/or complain of being lonely
- Children who present physical problems (e.g. vomiting, stomach aches, bedwetting, sleeping difficulties)

NB Many of the symptoms mentioned above may also be observed in adults who suffer from bullying.

Sensitive Issues

Bullying will sometimes take place on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or disability. These are described, below, in more detail.

Racism

This can be presented in various ways, including name-calling, racist jokes and the wearing of offensive badges. It is important that the school ethos and curriculum promotes acceptance and tolerance, and that any potentially racist problems are treated very seriously.

Sexual bullying

This type of bullying can be seen in a variety of ways, commonly through innuendos or unwelcome comments, name calling and the distribution of pornographic material. In its most extreme form, sexual bullying involves assault.

Through the curriculum and by staff example, it is important that pupils see and understand equality and the proper conduct between genders.

Homophobia

This type of bullying centres around sexual orientation, whether homosexual (gay/lesbian) or bisexual. To challenge this, all staff must be aware of the need to deal with homophobic language, to treat victims with confidentiality and to explore issues of diversity and difference in a very positive way.

Learning difficulties and disability

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are often at greater risk of being bullied. The school ethos and curriculum need to be inclusive and to celebrate different levels of achievement and ability. Classroom organisation and activities will be sensitive to different needs and vulnerable children will be helped to develop confidence and assertiveness.

Procedures:

1. Staff must be responsive to allegations of bullying. The member of staff who is first contacted by a pupil takes initial responsibility for investigating the incident. It is essential that pupils are confident that all allegations are taken seriously and acted upon. If the member of staff concerned considers that the complaint is serious, the form teacher must be informed. Likewise, if incidents of bullying are reported by parents, this must be referred to the appropriate form teacher. The incident must always be investigated and recorded
2. If a matter is considered to be very serious, the Deputy Head Teacher or Headmaster will usually assume responsibility.
3. If a serious incident occurs, the parents of the bully and the victim will be informed.
4. If it is appropriate, the parents of the child who has been bullying and those of the victim shall be asked to come to school for a meeting.

5. Investigations should also be made to try to establish the reasons for the bully's behaviour. Attempts shall be made to correct the behaviour of the bully or bullies.
6. The victims of bullying will receive extra support and help for developing ways in dealing with bullying or similar types of intimidation.
7. The bully or bullies concerned will make an apology and other appropriate measures may be taken.

Preventative Measures (including sanctions):

1. All members of staff will receive copies of this policy, additional advice and training on bullying which will be reviewed on a regular basis.
2. The Anti-Bullying Policy will be reinforced by the Headmaster, Deputy Head Teacher and other staff through assemblies and other opportunities.
3. All members of staff will use opportunities such as story-time, circle-time and PSHE to reinforce anti-bullying and to encourage children to show respect, kindness and tolerance.
4. Peer pressure will be motivated against bullying behaviour, and the Playground Pals (Form III/Y5 pupils) will receive training in helping to identify and deal with episodes of bullying.
5. The playgrounds are supervised carefully to promote social skills, imaginative games and co-operative play.
6. Pupils should be reminded regularly of the principle underpinning the School Code, namely that "Every child has a right to be happy and nobody has a right to make others unhappy."
7. Pupils who are found to be guilty of bullying should be reminded that a written record of the incident will be kept and that this may be used in the future if serious incidents re-occur.
8. Staff and older pupils, particularly those with positions of responsibility, must be aware of the dangers of bullying.
9. Areas where bullying seems a greater risk should be supervised carefully and effectively. When carrying out playground supervision, members of staff should be pro-active in deflecting situations involving verbal abuse or otherwise over-enthusiastic physical games.
10. Persistent offenders should be deprived of break-times and other sanctions imposed at the discretion of the Deputy Head Teacher or Headmaster. All sanctions will be reasonable and proportionate but may include, if necessary, the ultimate sanction of exclusion (fixed term or permanent).
11. All pupils must be encouraged to accept their own responsibility for bringing to the attention of staff any incidents of bullying they experience or become aware of.
12. Questionnaires may be used to help identify any bullying trends or potential hot-spots (i.e. times or places where bullying may be more likely).

This Anti-Bullying Policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated or amended when appropriate.

