

Fairstead House

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY incorporating Early Years Foundation Stage

INTRODUCTION

At Fairstead House School, our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Fairstead House School prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting the school in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together. The school's position on bullying is conveyed to parents through our published school aims and values, during discussions with parents and through school events.

Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all staff, our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration, and in turn we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

AIMS

The aim of this policy is to set out the definition of bullying as agreed by the staff and pupils of Fairstead House School and the procedures the school can adopt to confront acts of bullying by pupils, parents and staff. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all members of the school community.

OBJECTIVES

This policy will:

- provide an agreed definition of bullying.
- provide possible signs to recognise if someone is being bullied.
- provide possible preventative measures to combat bullying.
- provide a procedure for dealing with a report of bullying

DEFINITIONS (agreed by the staff and pupils of the school)

The school has defined the meaning of bullying through a discussion of bullying with the whole school community. The outcome of these discussions gave rise to this policy.

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The whole school community agree/recognise that:

Bullying is something that is repeated over time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or is a carer – it may occur directly or through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

- Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten, humiliate or frighten someone else. It can be hidden and subtle. However, it can also be overt and intimidating.
- Bullying is cruel and wrong.
- Bullying can take many forms including:
 - **Verbal:** name-calling, teasing, taunting, making offensive remarks, making “fun” of someone when they are not enjoying the joke. This can also include using chat rooms and SMS messages as a means of bullying.
 - **Emotional:** excluding someone from the group, deliberately ignoring someone, tormenting them, using inappropriate body language or staring.
 - **Physical:** hitting, kicking, taking or hiding someone’s belongings, deliberately damaging work or possessions. It can also involve sexual physical contact.
 - **Indirect:** spreading unkind stories or malicious rumours, sending malicious emails, text messages or notes. It can also involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone, or being complicit that falls short of direct participation.
- Bullying may involve actions or comments that are:
 - **Racial:** actions and behaviour which are directed at people because of their race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious, cultural differences or nationality and which are unwanted and cause offence and distress.
 - **Sexual:** unwanted conduct on the ground of a person's sex or unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and that conduct has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. This includes homophobic comments.
 - **Special Educational Needs and Disability:** actions and behaviour which are directed at people who have special educational needs, a physical and/or mental impairment, which has a substantial and negative effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.
 - **Cyber:** involves the use of information and communication technologies (including social websites, mobile ‘phones, other electronic devices, text messages, photographs

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and email) to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behavior by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.

Bullying can also involve negative focus on an individual's cultural background, religious beliefs, or physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape).

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on Equal Opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. It is also recognised that bullying can cause not only physical damage, but also psychological damage and even suicide to individuals, and that although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

SEXTING AND PEER ON PEER ABUSE

Fairstead House recognises the risk of sexting and is aware that children of an appropriate age need to be reminded of the risks of sexting, how to stay safe and to know to talk to an adult if they feel uncomfortable.

Sexting is when someone shares sexual, naked or semi-naked images or videos of themselves or others or sends sexually explicit messages. These can be sent using any device that allows you to share media and messages.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTED BULLYING

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the teaching team as soon as possible. This may be the Form Teacher.
- The reported victim will be interviewed and may be asked to write an account of events, depending on the severity of the reported incident. This may be scribed by the teacher.
- The reported bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed and may be asked to write an immediate account of events, depending on the severity of the reported incident. This may be scribed by the teacher.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions, should be agreed.

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- This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures.
- The incident will be recorded to enable patterns to be identified. Any written documentation including the teacher's notes should be passed to the Head or the Deputy Head and recorded in the Day Book on the school's management information system: SchoolBase.
- All members of the teaching and duty staff should be informed so that the situation can be monitored.
- Depending on the severity of the reported incident, the parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- In very serious cases, and on the initiation of the Head, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Fairstead House School to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.
- A bullying incident should be treated as a child protection concern where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm'.

Follow up

- The reported victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a teacher, separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him/her why revenge is inappropriate. He/she will be offered support to develop a strategy to help him or herself.
- The reported bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a teacher, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his/her behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He/she will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Fairstead House School strives to raise the awareness of staff through training, taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely. We take the following preventative measures:

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- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme (and EYFS PSED curriculum) is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.
- Other lessons, including RS, English and Drama, reinforce the message of caring for each other by teaching moral and spiritual values and that show bullying to be unacceptable. Media used can be projects, stories, literature and exploring historical events and current affairs. In the EYFS this message is an embedded theme and features across the curriculum.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents thus enabling patterns to be identified and addressed.
- Members of staff are all alert to possible signs of bullying and give immediate priority to any incidents.
- By using Staff Briefings (and recording comments in the Minutes) and any Behaviour Records, any incidents or concerns are highlighted to the teaching staff. This is disseminated to other members of staff.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur.
- Advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential help lines and web sites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline, are on display.
- Through the House system, we operate a Family group, whereby older pupils are encouraged to support younger pupils.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

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SIGNS OF BULLYING

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent complaints of physical symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

SANCTIONS

Please refer to the Behaviour Policy – Sanctions and Rewards to address sanctions and the school's obligation to reinforcing positive behaviour throughout the school community.

Some possible sanctions for acts of bullying include:

- A verbal reprimand and reminder of expected behaviour.
- Yellow and Red card system
- Loss of free time such as playtimes.
- Letters of apology (good practice would be to photocopy this).
- Loss of responsibility.
- Being unable to take part in a club, trip or activity, or taking part in a school team.
- Speaking to the parent.
- Report Book
- Detention

Sanctions that are not permissible

The following sanctions are not helpful and must not be used

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- Any form **or threat** of corporal punishment or physical violence.
- Aggressive shouting, humiliation or ridicule.
- Loss of House Points

Depending on the severity of the reported incident, the parents/guardians of all parties may be informed and invited into school to discuss the matter by the Head. A note will be made on the pupil's file and the sanction recorded on the school's Bullying Record. The standard procedure for this sort of problem follows a set pattern:-

- Contact is made with the parents informing them of the problem.
- A meeting with parents and a warning given about the next stages unless there is an improvement in the child's behaviour.

If the problem is severe or recurring then exclusion procedures may be implemented after consultation with the Chairman of the Board of Governors. The school Complaints Policy sets out the procedure for raising a complaint.

GUIDANCE ON TACKLING BULLYING

WHAT TEACHERS CAN DO

- Teach students about bullying, what it is, why it is detrimental and where recipients can go for help.
- Model positive roles in terms of communication, showing respect, listening, problem solving etc.
- Provide opportunities within the school curriculum to practise counselling skills.
- Listen, believe and support children who say they have been bullied.
- Teach pupils to talk through their disputes, rather than using aggression or bullying.
- Have debates about bullying.
- Set the topic for project work or as an essay title.
- Use improvisation and drama to explore the issues.
- Discuss incidents of bullying, aggressive behaviour or ostracism if they arise.
- Use non-bullying methods of teaching.
- Teach students who use bullying to use alternative ways of behaving.
- Respond immediately and swiftly to incidents.
- Build positive self-images amongst the pupils.
- Insist on appropriate behaviour.

WHAT TEACHERS AND LEARNING SUPPORT ASSISTANTS ON PLAYGROUND DUTY CAN DO

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- Understand how serious bullying can be for some children.
- Attend appropriate training sessions.
- Be active in eliminating bullying.
- Ensure that the playground is a safe and friendly place to be for pupils.
- Talk to pupils - get to know as many as possible and be known by as many as possible.
- Help children find an interest in the playground - individually or in a group, playing a game or talking.
- Help organise games - teaching children new skills and rules where appropriate.
- Intervene positively when behaviour is unacceptable.
- Talk calmly and rationally to children displaying aggressive and bullying behaviour.
- Protect vulnerable children and, where possible, empower them to take action themselves.
- Join in games.
- Ensure there are no hidden places both inside and outside.
- Understand areas of the playground where bullying could take place or where children feel more vulnerable.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO

- Know and understand the serious nature of bullying.
- Listen, believe and support their children.
- Encourage their own children and children they know are being bullied to tell a teacher.
- Report to the school any incidents of bullying that they are aware of, be it by their child or to their child.
- Encourage recipients of bullying not to fight back.
- Encourage children using aggressive behaviour and bullying tactics to use alternative ways of behaving.
- Stop the bullying

WHAT CHILDREN CAN DO

Action to take if you are bullied -

- Don't keep it to yourself, talk to someone you trust about it. Tell a friend, teacher or parent.
- Be honest - ask yourself if your own behaviour has upset others.
- Ignore what the bully is saying, doing or gesturing. Walk away – do not fight.
- Think through what you can say, or what you can do if the bully taunts you with names.
- Try to look as if you don't mind. Perpetual bullying of one individual occurs when the response is particularly rewarding to the bully.

Action to take if you know of bullying -

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- Report any bullying straight away
- Don't join in

Action against the bully -

- You will have to make an apology to the person you have bullied.
- You will be made to think about why you bullied someone.
- Your parents may be told
- A record of the incident may be put in your file
- You may have to agree to a good behaviour contract.

Our school will be even happier -

- If we help and care for each other.
- If we have respect for each other.
- If we treat each other the way we would like to be treated.

Useful Websites:

www.childline.org.uk
www.kidscape.org.uk
www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying
www.bbclic.com
www.bullyfreezone.co.uk

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