

Anti-bullying policy

1. Rationale

Everyone at Elmfield School has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Social, emotional and academic growth is optimised in an environment free from feelings of humiliation, distress, fear and despair. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent any kind of bullying and to promote an ethos of respect, trust, caring and consideration for others in our school.

This Anti-bullying Policy is a positive step towards creating that ethos and needs to be actively supported by all teachers, students and parents. Everyone has to be clear and confident that our approach to bullying is one of zero tolerance: working at both preventing bullying and dealing swiftly and carefully with issues if they arise.

This document outlines how we make this possible at Elmfield School.

2. Definitions

Defining bullying can be problematic as the line between teasing and bullying is not at all clear. What needs to be considered is firstly, the effect of the interaction on the victim and secondly, the intention of the perpetrator. Some examples of bullying behaviour are:

- Persistent verbal abuse, making offensive remarks
- Physical violence, the threat of physical violence
- Exclusion from social groups
- Intimidation
- Interference with the property of others
- Encouraging or supporting others in bullying behaviour

Bullying of a racial nature is reportable by law.

3. Aims and objectives

To create an environment where:

- All incidents are taken seriously and are dealt with immediately
- Procedures are clear and consistent
- The victim is not put under any greater pressure and the bully is not made a martyr
- "Telling" is OK
- Bullies have no status, bullying is seen as cowardly
- Positive caring relationships, respect and trust are promoted
- Both victims and bullies are supported in developing positive behaviour, self-esteem and social inclusion

4. Our Anti-bullying Policy

This policy supports the ethos we have at Elmfield: promoting the emotional, social and academic development of all pupils in the following ways:

- Bullying is not tolerated and an environment where pupils feel safe to ‘tell’ is created.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to take responsibility for their behaviour – this is especially relevant for those doing the bullying and those bystanders who observe the bullying but do nothing to intervene. Children are more likely to really want to change if they feel ownership of decisions.
- Pupils are given an opportunity to change their behaviour within a supportive atmosphere – this is especially helpful for victims who will benefit from the support of their peers, but also for bullies who may feel isolated which might lead to the bullying behaviour being repeated.
- An ethos of caring and respect is fostered where children are asked to consider the feelings of others and come up with ways in which they might make them feel better – this can turn a very distressing and negative situation into a positive learning situation.
- Patterns of behaviour are changed in a positive way, rather than by simply using threats, punishments or sanctions. Behaviour which supports the ethos of caring and respect at Elmfield is rewarded.
- Through open and frank discussions bullying is portrayed as weak and cowardly behaviour which will not be tolerated, and likewise bullies themselves will be seen as pupils who have made poor decisions rather than someone who should be admired or emulated.
- Strong relationships are created both between pupils and between staff and pupils as the policy procedure promotes active listening, empathy, caring, respect and honesty.
- Pupils are encouraged to be tolerant of diversity and to support those who may be in difficulties, in whatever area of school life that may be.

5. Procedures

- An incident is observed and/or reported immediately. It is taken seriously. The Class Teacher or Guardian is informed and they make a decision based on their knowledge of the children involved/any previous incidents etc. as to whether this is a disciplinary or bullying issue.
- If the incident is a disciplinary issue, the Class Teacher will deal with it and if necessary follow the procedures laid out in the Discipline Policy.
- If it is a bullying issue, a Bullying Incident Form is filled in and details brought to Staff Meeting by Class Teacher or Guardian. Immediately following the incident the Anti-bullying policy is initiated.
 - Class Teacher/Guardian discusses the incident with the victim to find out
 - What happened
 - Where
 - When
 - Who was involved
 - Parents of the children directly involved are informed.

- Teacher meets with the group of children involved, including bystanders and colluders if necessary (6-8 children works well). The victim may not wish to be present. An older pupil/ pupil carer may be present. This meeting should ideally not take place in break times. The aims of the meeting are:
 - **To address the problem.** The group is told that the behaviour was inappropriate and must stop. They are told about the way the victim is feeling by whatever means the teacher feels is age appropriate. At no time does the teacher/pupil discuss the incident itself or allocate any blame.
 - **To share responsibility.** What is important is to let the group know the effect of their actions and that you have confidence that together they can come up with possible positive actions to make the situation better.
 - **Ask the group for their ideas.** Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. Guidelines and rules for problematic games or regularly occurring ‘trigger’ situations could be mutually agreed. The teacher gives a positive response but is careful not to extract a promise of improved behaviour. He/she looks for ways to realistically support the group’s ideas.
 - **Leave it up to them.** The teacher ends the meeting by passing over responsibility to the group to solve the problem, making it clear that any reoccurrence may be reported by anyone involved.
- The outcome of this meeting is communicated to the College of Teachers, the parents and a Bullying Incident Follow-Up report form is completed.
- The teacher arranges to meet the group again to see how things are going about a week later. It is best for these meetings to happen in school time but ideally away from break and lunch times as the children may feel they are being punished and can become resentful if their free time is curtailed. The teacher (supported by the rest of the staff) continues to monitor the situation at regular intervals, which should become less frequent over a period of a couple of months. It is especially useful if the teacher has informal discussions with the group and keeps an eye on the situation generally, especially in the playground. The teacher continues to keep the parents informed of progress.
- It is particularly important that both the school and the parents adopt a similar approach. This can be facilitated by clear, consistent communication between the school and the parents of all those involved.
- If this procedure does not stop the bullying:
 - The class teacher/Guardian should bring the issue to the College of Teachers.
 - The Class teacher/Guardian may need to meet with the parents to discuss possible further strategies, such as team-building exercises/outings with all children involved.
 - Another teacher may be called upon to talk to the children and parents involved.

- **If, after a reasonable time decided upon by the Class Teacher, no progress has been made, it will become a discipline issue and the steps outlined in the Discipline Policy will be followed.**

6. Whole school development

- A caring and positive ethos is promoted through
 - The curriculum, in particular:
 - Teaching friendship skills
 - Promoting tolerance and understanding
 - Promoting inclusion
 - Supporting high self-esteem
 - Assemblies & Drama/ workshops
 - Strong positive relationships between staff and pupils
 - Giving children ownership of their behaviour through involving them in rule-making/ decisions etc. in an age-appropriate way
 - Cooperation rather than competition
 - Positive interaction between different age groups, including:
 - ‘Buddying’ lower and upper school classes
 - Peer - mentoring
 - Emphasis on social and emotional development of all children
 - Good communication between staff, parents and pupils
- One member of staff will have overall responsibility for the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy. His/her responsibilities will include:
 - Policy development
 - Staff training
 - Record-keeping

7. Record keeping

- It is the responsibility of the Class Teacher/Guardian to ensure that the Bullying Incident Form and the Follow-up form are completed. Notes should be taken during any meetings with parents and copies given to all those involved to ensure clear communication.
- It is the responsibility of all members of staff to be vigilant and any incidents, observed or reported, should be taken seriously and details given to the Class Teacher/Guardian. It is particularly important to be observant when on playground duty and during transition times when large numbers of pupils are moving around the school.
- Records will be kept securely.

8. Parental involvement

Parents may be understandably very concerned/upset/angry if they feel their child has been bullied or has been involved in bullying. It is vital that parents trust that the school will deal with the behaviour as quickly and as sensitively as they can. It is also very important that both parents and staff are clear as to how the behaviour is going to be dealt with so there is clarity and consistency which can be very reassuring for the child/ren involved.

Parents of children who have been bullied can:

- Approach the school for advice on how to support their child at home
- Try to remain calm and confident in front of their child
- Resist asking lots of questions which can add to stress
- Assure the child that the bullying will stop and that it is not their fault
- Reassure the child that although bullying is wrong, it is unfortunately something which many people encounter at some time during their lives
- Help the child develop coping skills such as
 - Rehearse appearing calm and relaxed
 - Practice walking/speaking in a more positive/confident manner
 - Help them concentrate on something positive such as a trip, holiday or treat you have planned

9. Conclusions

Elmfield School is committed to providing a happy and healthy environment. We take the issue of bullying very seriously and believe that through working to create an ethos of trust, honesty and openness where bullying is not accepted, we can support the social, emotional and academic well-being of all our pupils.