

## **Northburn Primary School**

### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

#### **Statement of Principle**

Bullying is a complex problem, and one that is taken very seriously by the school. It is recognised that incidents of bullying occur in all schools. It is essential that all such incidents are taken seriously and dealt with in an appropriate manner. Northburn Primary has a zero tolerance attitude to bullying. The positive ethos of the school is reinforced, so that children's self esteem is high, and bullying kept to a minimum. Bullying is an infringement of liberty, and a policy of equal opportunities means that everyone is entitled to basic rights of freedom, regardless of biological inheritance or circumstances of birth, gender, race, disability, age, sex or sexuality.

#### **Aims**

All children and young people have the right to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution, all without fear of intimidation. Bullying when observed, must be challenged and dealt with seriously. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that whenever possible the signs of bullying are observed before they become a serious problem, and where bullying is observed, to offer guidance on how it should be dealt with.

#### **Consultation process**

In the development and implementation of this policy consultation has taken place with children, staff, governors and parents.

#### **Definition and Identification of bullying**

Some of the indicators of bullying are listed below. The Appendix 'School Bullying, Notes of Guidance for Members' (NAS document) should also be read.

**What is not bullying - It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose.**

**Children sometimes fall out or say things when they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.**

#### **Bullying:**

- Bullying is any form of sustained (and substantiated) intimidation of another person. This intimidation can be physical or psychological or both.
- The person who bullies and the victim are both in need of our support.
- Bullying can be constant, regular and intermittent.
- Bullying can be between child and child, adult and adult, adult and child or child and adult. A smaller person can bully a bigger person and a younger person can bully an older person.
- Bullying, when observed, must be challenged and dealt with seriously.

#### **Indicators:**

- Possible change in the victim's behaviour.
- Change in the victim's routine.
- Attitude change in victim to their work, other individuals or school, in any particular way.
- Increased aggression on part of the bully.

## **Strategies for dealing with bullying on School premises**

- Having a school environment where issues of concern to children are discussed including bullying.
- Reading stories where bullying is part of the plot.
- Ensure the children understand that bullying is not tolerated, and will be dealt with seriously.
- Through the school's PSHCE scheme, for example, in sessions on the psychological aspects of health.
- Through a strong pastoral system, that is close relationship between a pupil and an adult, often the class teacher.
- Having a strong, disciplined and caring environment where all children feel secure.
- Having a staff who recognise that bullying does occur, and that its elimination has top priority.
- Being aware that there are characteristics common to bullies and victims.
- Acknowledging situations where bullying is more likely to occur, e.g. playground, corridors, toilets and frequently patrol these areas.
- All staff should take responsibility for discipline and there should be adequate supervision in the whole school.
- The strong feelings held against bullying by adults, should be made very clear to children, so that they are willing to report any incidents to an adult in school.
- Parents should be informed if a case of bullying is suspected.
- All suspected bullying should be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Punishment, where appropriate, will be in line with the school's discipline policy.
- Positive reinforcement of good behaviour.

## **Procedures for dealing with bullying on School premises (not in order of priority)**

### **We have in place:-**

- Inform parents if a case of bullying is reported.
- Parents of the bully should also be fully involved.
- Report all cases of bullying to the Head Teacher.
- Ensure that the child is not physically injured.
- Investigate the problem to ensure that there is some validity to the complaint. For a complaint to be substantiated there must be some corroboration from other children or adults. The school must make every effort to investigate claims fully.
- Show concern, with the bully present if appropriate.
- Try to restore the victim's self-confidence.
- Assure the victim that you will do everything to stop the bullying.
- Discuss with the victim and bully. (Separately and /or together)
- Record the incident

## **Strategies to deal with bullying outside School Premises**

Where a pupil reports bullying off the school premises, it may be appropriate to:

- Talk to the transport company about bullying on buses.
- Talk to the head teachers of other schools, where pupils from these schools are bullying off the premises.
- Plan safe routes to school with the pupils.
- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside school premises.
- Talk to the local police about specific groups and problem areas.
- Assess risk relating to residential trips e.g. children grouping.
- Record the incident

## **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts; no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying can cause stress and can affect a child's health. Schools and parents have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. All staff will be kept abreast of current thinking with regard to anti-bullying through professional development opportunities and support will be given to implement this policy.

## **Preventative Work**

- Education regarding bullying starts in Nursery, by having strategies and responses with parents and children.
- All staff should realise that the victims of bullying include the bully (and their family) and especially the victim's family who may feel all the following emotions: helplessness, doubt, shame, disappointment, embarrassment, despair, failure, frustration, anxiety, inadequacy, dismay or confusion.
- Seek support of the Inclusion Manager / outside agencies in promoting classroom activities to reduce bullying.
- Parents have access to the policy and their opinions are sought via questionnaires.

## **Appendix 1 Checklist for investigating an incident**

- Who was involved – is there or are there apparent victims?
- If so who is it/are they?
- In what way did the victim suffer?
- How did the incident start? Was it spontaneous or premeditated?
- What is alleged to have happened, from the perspective of all those involved?
- When did the incident take place?
- Where did the incident take place?
- Who witnessed the incident (pupils, parents, staff and others)
- Who reported it to whom and when?
- Is there any background to this incident?
- Is there any other reason for considering this to be bullying behaviour?
- Why does the reporter or investigator of the incident perceive this to have been a bullying incident?
- To what extent did the incident affect others?
- What was the response of the victim(s) if such exist?
- What does/do the victim(s) wish to see resulting from the investigation?

A 'first offence' of e.g. name calling or abusive language should be challenged, the nature of the unacceptable behaviour explained and the school policy on such matters outlined. The pupil should be told that any further occurrences will be logged against them as a bullying incident.

In addition to the expectations outlined in the School's anti-bullying policy, the School recognises that cyber bullying is becoming increasingly common and serious.

## **What is the definition of cyber bullying?**

Cyber bullying is different to other forms of bullying because it can happen at any time of day outside of the School grounds even in the safety of your home. The bully and the bullied may never be in the same physical space so cyber bullying can appear anonymous. Cyber bullying can take place between people of different ages and generations including teachers.

Cyber bullying includes the malicious use of:

- Mobile phones
- Social network sites (Facebook, Twitter, Bebo etc)
- Instant messaging (BB messenger and Windows messenger)
- Video hosting sites (eg. Youtube)
- Webcams
- Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs)
- Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds

**What our School will do**

- The School is proactive in preventing cyber bullying by monitoring of ICT use in school and through our internet safety awareness programme which forms part of the ICT curriculum.
- Pupils and staff are encouraged to report anything which concerns them.
- The School is aware that the technologies available to pupils are constantly changing and, as a result, the School's provision to prevent cyber bullying is reviewed annually.
- All incidences of cyber bullying will be investigated by the School and the investigation carefully recorded with evidence being retained on file. In serious cases the School may refer the matter to the police and/or Children's Services.