



THORNHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Thornhill Primary School recognises there is a need to safeguard the welfare of all those within the School community and to encourage co-operation, tolerance and harmony. Thornhill is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We have high expectations of all pupils and strive to create a climate in which all children can fulfil their potential. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Thornhill. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Thornhill is a 'telling' School and anyone who knows that bullying is happening should be able to inform a member of staff in safety.

DEFINITION

Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over a period of time that intentionally hurts or harms. Research confirms the destructive effects of bullying on young people's lives. Although some can shrug it off, bullying can produce feelings of powerlessness, isolation from others, undermine self-esteem and sometimes convince the victims that they are at fault. Those who bully aim to hurt by means of force, intimidation or ridicule in order to control others or perhaps to inspire a reaction that escalates the situation.

FOCUS OF BULLYING

The focus of bullying can be more or less anything that distinguishes an individual and represents a deviation from a presumed norm, e.g. body shape, hair colour. It can focus on personal backgrounds, including parents' jobs, houses and lifestyles and can sometimes derive from deep seated local feuding with disagreements between adults passed to children who then act them out in school. Bullying can focus on sexual attractiveness or the perceived lack of it and sexuality based on homophobia, misogyny or both. Bullying can also focus on race, nationality, culture, religion or a mixture of these. Thornhill strives to celebrate diversity and difference and we welcome pupils and families from ethnic minority backgrounds.

HOW BULLYING IS CONDUCTED

There are differences in how bullying is conducted. It can be a one-off or sustained and damaging either way. It can be painfully obvious, but it can also be surreptitious and subtle. It can also be one student against another or involve several students. Direct physical bullying and threats of bullying, more often used by boys, are usually more evident than verbal intimidation and manipulation, which is more common among girls.

THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

The most common effects of bullying are:

- anxiety and depression, which can lead to intermittent and long-term absence from School, resulting in under-achievement
- poor self-esteem which prevents pupils from forming positive relationships and can lead to feelings of worthlessness and betrayal
- withdrawal which may lead to reduced participation in school and other activities, isolation or self-harm
- loss of identity
- guilt that the victim `allowed` it to happen
- mental health difficulties

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

The pupil may:

- be frightened of walking to or from School
- be unwilling to go to School
- begin to perform poorly in School
- become withdrawn
- have books, clothing or possessions that are damaged
- become distressed/stop eating
- cry easily/have nightmares
- become disruptive/aggressive
- have possessions which go missing
- begin stealing (to pay the bully)

AIMS OF OUR ANTI-BULLYING WORK

At Thornhill we endeavour:

- to ensure all staff, the Governing body, pupils and parents have an understanding of bullying and its consequences
- to emphasise through all aspects of our curriculum that bullying will not be tolerated
- to ensure that there are clear procedures and systems for reporting and recording bullying, which are understood and followed by all staff
- to ensure pupils and staff learn to keep themselves and others safe
- to ensure that students learn to recognise and respect the differences between groups of people within the school community
- to help students develop self-confidence, self-esteem and to fulfil their potential within school
- to support and re-educate those pupils who are both the victims and perpetrators of bullying, providing them with a range of strategies they can use if they are at risk of bullying others or are being bullied themselves
- to create a School which all members of the community can come to without fear of violence, aggression or intimidation of any kind

Pupils are taught that any kind of aggressive behaviour, either verbal or physical is unacceptable.

Incidents of bullying are always treated seriously. All staff are vigilant in school and within the grounds to identify actual or potential cases of bullying. Victims are asked not to retaliate, but to inform a member of staff immediately.

COMBATING BULLYING

Thornhill is aware that bullying must be tackled on two levels, by focusing on preventative work, but also by responding appropriately when incidents do occur. We are working hard to improve behaviour and encourage children and young people to positively manage their own behaviour. We teach our students that as well as having rights, the choices they make will also bring responsibilities.

We shall be using the following strategies to ensure that we have a clear, consistent and effective approach to bullying:

- an agreed definition of bullying with a base line measurement, as the beginning of an awareness raising campaign
- a strong ethos in Thornhill Primary School, promoting tolerance and respect for difference and diversity
- positive leadership from senior staff and Governors on tackling bullying
- a clear anti bullying policy. The policy will be reviewed regularly by staff, governors, parents and pupils
- a planned approach in PSHE Curriculum and tutorial programmes to the issue of bullying in a context which promotes self-esteem and confidence in relationships
- planning and promoting teaching and school routines which encourage learning and positive behaviour
- regular training for all staff to raise and maintain awareness, to alert them to indicators which may suggest bullying and to equip them with ways of responding to it

- periodic consultation with pupils to inform the school's knowledge of bullying
- confidential and varied methods for alerting the School to current instances of bullying
- adequate supervision of the school site, especially toilets, lunch queues and distant areas, including the school gates at the beginning and end of the day
- increased supervision levels and safe areas for pupils who feel threatened at break times
- rewarding non-aggressive behaviour
- encouraging co-operative behaviour
- the use of Individual Plans for those children experiencing interpersonal and peer relationship difficulties
- close monitoring of those children with Special Educational Needs
- sharing proven good practice with colleagues both in Thornhill and in our family of schools

EDUCATION

Pupils will be given the opportunity to increase their awareness of both the effects and consequences of bullying through some or all of the following:

- curriculum areas - English, Drama, RE, PSHE, etc
- assemblies / Schools Council
- class discussions on issues such as friendship, prejudice, assertiveness, coping strategies
- firm and appropriate disciplinary procedures
- students being encouraged to develop their own class/form rules or Bill of Rights

DEALING WITH BULLYING INCIDENTS/ALLEGATIONS

Where a pupil reports / alleges a bullying incident to an adult, or an adult witnesses an incident, the following are agreed School procedures:

- a designated member of staff will be responsible for dealing with incidents
- staff will ensure the immediate safety of all other staff, pupils and property. It maybe that in exceptional circumstances there is a risk of injury to an individual such that physical intervention is required. In which case the member of staff would follow the school's policy on Positive Handling.
- any injured child/children or staff will receive appropriate medical attention as soon as is practicable
- all incidents will be recorded, including the facts of the incident, action taken and a report of the follow up interviews
- both the victim(s) and bully(ies) should be interviewed separately to establish the facts without apportioning blame
- a decision should be taken regarding whether to contact the parents of both the victim(s) and bully(ies)
- in the light of the incident it may be appropriate to review existing behaviour policy and / or procedures.
- appropriate sanctions and support will be discussed and agreed upon
- follow up discussions will take place within 2-3 weeks
- the opportunity should be available after the incident for both the victim(s) and bully(ies) together to discuss their difficulties with a responsible and confident adult

INTERVIEWING THE VICTIM

The pupil will be informed that notes will be taken of the conversation and both will agree at the end that what has been written is a true record. Staff will be aware at all times of possible Child Protection issues. Confidentiality will not be promised

- staff will listen objectively and without favour to what is being said. The pupil(s) will be encouraged to share what they are feeling
- staff will ascertain who has been involved, including bystanders
- staff will discuss with the victim(s) what they would like to see happen and arrangements for the future
- staff may offer coping/preventative strategies if appropriate
- discussions around reparation/compensation will take place if property is damaged/destroyed

- a realistic time scale for investigating and reporting back to the victim(s) will be given

INTERVIEWING THE BULLY/BYSTANDER

Research suggests that by telling the bully(ies) how the victim(s) is feeling, this raises their awareness of the pain they are causing and can cause a positive change in their behaviour. Staff will inform the student(s) that notes will be taken of the conversation and both will agree at the end that what has been written is a true record. Staff will be aware at all times of Child Protection issues. Confidentiality will not be promised. The following approaches may be used as appropriate to the incident:

- staff interviewing the bully(ies)/bystanders will not apportion blame, but rather approach the pupils in a non-confrontational manner with the emphasis on problem solving
- staff will explain they would like to talk to the student(s) as they are aware the student has been unkind to/causing problems for (name of victim). Staff will ask the student(s) if they know how (name of victim) is feeling right now
- staff will explain that the bully(ies)/bystanders are responsible for those feelings and this is not acceptable
- the staff member will ask for suggestions to help the victim(s) feel better and to help solve the problem
- staff will agree to meet with all the students involved again after an appropriate time to see how the situation has changed
- the nominated member of staff for bullying issues should be given a record of the interviews for the student files
- school may wish to send copies of the reports to the parents/carers of those students involved
- appropriate contact will be maintained with both sets of parents/carers until the situation has been resolved

If the bullying persists, this strategy may be combined with other positive interventions and targeted actions such as:

- circle time
- buddying
- a class change after discussions with all involved (last resort)
- support from external agencies, e.g., Behaviour Support Service, Educational Psychology Service, NSPCC, Childline
- school Council
- circle of friends
- schools within the same catchment area working jointly together
- a whole School anti-bullying week as the beginning of an on-going campaign
- the appropriate encouragement of peer disapproval

Any sanctions invoked following the incident will be in line with the school's behaviour policy.

We are aware of the need to deal with allegations or incidences of bullying sensitively. We also appreciate the importance of dealing with all the children and young people involved in a way which communicates disapproval where appropriate, but also treats them with dignity.

WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS

We will work with parents/carers to minimise the likelihood of further bullying regardless of whether one is talking about the child who has bullied or the one who has been bullied. We will endeavour to give parents every opportunity to discuss their concerns as soon as practicable. We will emphasise the importance of working together to solve problems and create realistic solutions that are acceptable to all concerned. A lack of parental support can make conflict resolution much more difficult and is regrettable, particularly if children then mirror the negativity and unhelpful attitude they have seen. Thornhill appreciates there will be occasions when the parents and carers of one or both sets of students involved will feel the School has not sanctioned appropriately. Parents or carers will be given the opportunity to share their concerns and if appropriate, staff will discuss the decisions to impose the particular sanction(s) with them. Where a parent is dissatisfied with the school's handling of a situation

then the head teacher will seek to resolve the situation informally. In the event of a formal complaint then the agreed complaints procedure for the school will be invoked. Should the press be contacted regarding the bullying incident then school should work with RMBC publicity office over any impending publicity.

Thornhill actively encourages and welcomes comments, questions and suggestions regarding our anti-bullying policy. Please contact Mrs K Hill on 01709 335999.

References

OfSTED - Effective action in secondary schools

Key Contacts:

Anti Bullying Support Officer, Behaviour Support Service, International Centre, Simmonite Road, Rotherham S61 3EQ Tel 01709 336619

E mail: deborah.somerset-malia@rotherham.gov.uk

Child Protection Advice from EWS, Norfolk House, Tel 01709 822659

E mail: carol.rhodes@rotherham.gov.uk

Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH.

Telephone: 0207-730-3300 Fax: 0207-730-081

NSPCC, Weston House, 42 Curtain Road, London, EC2 3NH

Childline 45 Folgate St, London, E1 6GL

Telephone: 020-7650-3200 Fax: 020-7650-3201

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