



**Culmore Primary School**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

## Introduction

### What is Bullying?

Bullying takes many forms. Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It can be short-term or can continue over years. It can be physical or verbal or even just a look. It can be overt or subtle intimidation. Bullying behaviour is demeaning, frightening and emotionally damaging and the effect on the individual who is bullied can be long term. All forms of bullying behaviour are wholly unacceptable. Allowing bullying behaviour to go unchallenged results in a failure to provide a safe educational environment.

The main sorts of bullying are:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking or hiding another's possessions, Intimidated or threatened;
- Verbal - name-calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes. It may be directed towards physical/social disability or personality, sexuality or family, academic performance etc;
- Exclusion - spreading stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones;
- Damage to Property or Theft - property damaged or stolen, physical threats.

### What bullying is NOT?

Bullying is *not* an isolated incident of aggression between children. Disputes will take place, and will be dealt with accordingly. Unpleasant as these incidents are, they are not bullying and should not be reported as such.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Culmore Primary School acknowledges that bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

#### As a school we aim to:

- produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied;
- be educated in a safe secure environment where their moral, intellectual, personal and social development is promoted;
- create an atmosphere where pupils feel they will be listened to, sensitivity will be shown and swift action taken;
- create a school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. We believe that where children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour;

- ensure that appropriate measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying;
- The policy applies child/child, adult/child and adult/adult.

## **Preventing Bullying**

### **STAFF**

- Staff are provided with relevant training.
- Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories etc., within the formal curriculum, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.

### **PARENTS**

- Every bully is somebody's child. If you suspect or know that your child is bullying, you must investigate it thoroughly and act immediately. Like all behavioural problems, bullying is learned and practised repeatedly. Early intervention is vital if the destructive pattern is to be broken. Explaining it away, or refusing to believe it is happening simply allows the behaviour to become more ingrained. Inevitably, the incidents become more and more serious as do the consequences.
- Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. The complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow. If parents are not satisfied with the response, contact should be made with the Principal. If parents remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure, as detailed in the school prospectus.
- Question your child as soon as possible and try to unravel the facts.
- Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active role in the children's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent time with, how lunch time was spent, etc.
- Parents should be aware of unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- It is important that parents advise their child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Parents should reassure the child acknowledging there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not his/her fault that he/she is being bullied.
- Parents should make sure that their child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

## **PUPILS**

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG!**
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard, but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends or with other people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive - shout "No!" Walk confidently away.
- Fighting back may make things worse.
- Pupils should tell an adult if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know.

## **SCHOOL**

- Treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our school.
- Use opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Review the school policy regularly and monitor its degree of success.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- Encourage pupils to treat everyone with respect.

## **RECORDING AND TAKING ACTION**

- All staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.
- Teachers keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class, and incidents they are aware of in school involving children in their class. If a member of staff witnesses an act of bullying, they will investigate it themselves and then refer it to the child's teacher. All staff will do all they can to support the child who is being bullied.
- Record incidents that occur both in and out of class. We also record incidents that occur near the school, or on the children's way between school and home.
- When any bullying is taking place between members of a class, the teacher / teacher assistant will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying. Time is spent talking to the child who has bullied: explaining why his /her action was wrong and that child is encouraged to change his/her behaviour in future.
- All incidents of bullying are recorded on the incident record sheet and other relevant staff kept informed as appropriate.

- If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children the principal should be informed. Contact may be made with the child's parents. They may invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation.
- These cases may be discussed / monitored at the weekly school management meetings or at MAST meetings.
- In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the principal may feel the bully should be excluded from their class. This may mean that he/she will spend part of the school day supervised by a member of staff away from the victim or their class.
- Should the bullying continue after this, the principal will consider a fixed term exclusion. A fixed term exclusion form will be completed by the Principal or Vice-Principal. A copy will be sent to the child's parents and to the education authority.