



Abercorn Policy on Bullying

1 Introduction

1.1 It is a government requirement that all schools have an anti-bullying policy. In 2003, Ofsted published *Bullying: Effective Action in Secondary Schools*. This was followed by DfES guidance for schools under two headings: *Don't Suffer in Silence* and *Bullying – A Charter for Action*. This policy reflects this guidance.

1.2 DfES guidance defines bullying as actions that are meant to be hurtful, and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect (e.g. being ignored or not spoken to). It can cause psychological damage and even suicide.

1.3 Bullying is a form of harassment, but one, which is not necessarily motivated by a specific factor. Harassment can be motivated by racial or sexual factors, but it can also be motivated by other factors, such as:

- Nationality, skin colour, race, culture, gender
- Sexual orientation
- Religious or political convictions
- Disability/ learning difficulties

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

1.4 Cyber bullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Cyber bullying can include such acts as making threats, sending provocative insults or racial or ethnic slurs, attempting to infect the victim's computer with a virus, and flooding an e-mail inbox with nonsense messages.

1.5 Homophobic bullying can involve physical or mental violence by a group or an individual. It is often aimed at someone who has poor defences and who, as a result, may be significantly upset. Victims may be male or female. What distinguishes it from other forms of bullying is the language that is used. Words like "queer" and "poof" and "lezzie" have been used abusively for many years. They have now been joined by words (such as "gay" and "lesbian") which were formerly descriptive but which now may be used as general insults. In some youth cultures, "gay" is now used as a derogatory adjective to describe objects and people that may have no connection whatsoever with homosexuality. Both boys and girls may be subjected to homophobic abuse.

2 Aims and objectives

2.1 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.

2.2 We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

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- 2.3 This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- 2.4 We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

3 The role of the Board of Directors

- 3.1 The Senior Leadership Team supports the headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The board of directors will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.
- 3.2 The Senior Leadership Team monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The headteacher is required to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to The Senior Leadership Team on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.
- 3.3 A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask Mrs Greystoke to look into the matter. Mrs Greystoke responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, Mrs Greystoke notifies the headteacher, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to The Senior Leadership Team.

4 The role of the headteacher

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the headteacher to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The headteacher reports to the board of directors about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.
- 4.2 The headteacher ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The headteacher draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the headteacher may decide to use an assembly as the forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong, and why a pupil is being punished.
- 4.3 The headteacher ensures that all staff, including lunchtime staff, receives sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.
- 4.4 The headteacher sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

5 The role of the teacher and support staff

- 5.1 All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.
- 5.2 Teachers keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class, and that they are aware of in the school. If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the headteacher. Teachers and support staff do all

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they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the headteacher, the teacher informs the child's parents.

- 5.3 In the office there is an anti-bullying logbook in which staff record all incidents of bullying 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. Any adult who witnesses an act of bullying should record it in the logbook.
- 5.4 When any bullying has taken place between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim, and punishment for the offender. Time is spent talking to the child who has done the bullying, explaining to them why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in future. If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying, we inform the headteacher and the special needs coordinator. We then invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, e.g. where these initial discussions have proved ineffective, the headteacher may contact external support agencies, such as the social services.
- 5.5 All members of staff attend training, which equips them to identify bullying and to follow school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management.
- 5.6 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, historical and current events etc., within PSHE and the rest of 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.
- 5.7 **Changing Rooms** Some children (and adults, indeed) find the experience of changing for sports worrying and intimidating. The School is aware that changing rooms, unless properly and sensitively supervised, provide the opportunity for harassment and bullying, sometimes of a particularly malicious and insidious kind. Pupils will not be left unsupervised in changing rooms, be they on-site/classrooms or off-site, and the highest standards of supervision and discipline will be maintained in the changing rooms/classrooms at all times.
- 5.8 **Classrooms** Pupils will not be left unsupervised in classrooms and the highest standard of supervision and discipline will be maintained at all times. Classroom rules, which the children worked on during their PSHE lessons, are posted up in the classrooms.
- 5.9 **Corridors and stairways** Pupils will not be left unsupervised, where possible, in the corridors or stairways. Pupils will be allowed to go to the toilets unsupervised and to change rooms for lessons. The pupils will be supervised while lining up on the stairs or corridors for buses, home time, returning to Wyndham, break and for going to PE and games lessons. School rules, which the children worked on during their PSHE lessons, are posted up in the corridors and stairways.
- 5.10 **Playground** Pupils will not be left unsupervised in the playground and the highest standard of supervision and discipline will be maintained at all times. At least two teachers or TAs and in most instances three teachers or TAs in the playground during playtimes. The adults

on duty will be in different areas of the playground so the whole playground is supervised as carefully as possible. There is a buddy stop where children may stand if they wish to have a friend to play with or if they need an adult to talk to. The adults on duty will help the children at the buddy stop. If there are instances of bullying noted the child/children in question will be monitored closely during playtimes. Playground rules, which the children worked on during their PSHE lessons, are posted up.

6 The role of parents

- 6.1 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. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the headteacher. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure, as detailed in the School Prospectus.
- 6.2 Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.

7 The role of pupils

- 7.1 Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know.
- 7.2 Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying, in the annual pupil questionnaire.

8 The guidelines for preventing bullying

- 8.1 The nature of bullying means that it often takes place "secretly" in places where supervision is not constant e.g. toilets, cloakroom areas, less visible areas in the playground or out of earshot of teachers and other adults. This means that everyone needs to be vigilant:

- Check toilets as you go by
- Check cloakroom areas, particularly at play and lunchtimes
- Listen to the children
- Observe the children's behaviour and friendship patterns
- Never ignore aggressive behaviour - to ignore it is to condone it!

The sort of atmosphere that we want in our school is characterised by kindness, friendliness and tolerance. There should be respect for others and every child should feel safe and secure.

8.2 What should the child do?

- Tell a teacher, they will report it and every incident will be investigated.
- Be assertive - try to stick up for yourself.
- You should not keep it a secret and you should not be ashamed.
- Do not think that only violence is bullying - hurtful whispering or ostracizing is very upsetting and can make children miserable.

8.3 In order to prevent bullying, everyone must:

- Remind the children of the rules for acceptable behaviour. Our school rules are drawn up by the children and teachers and are displayed around the classrooms and school.
- Tell the children that bullying (verbal or physical) is not tolerated in this school. Everyone is expected to ensure that it does not happen and has the responsibility to tell - it is not telling tales.
- Encourage the children to discuss bullying in class, what it is, what can be done etc.
- If necessary, break up the group dynamics by assigning places in the classroom. Most bullying groups have a leader with other children being frightened of not bullying. Turn peer pressure against bullying and break up groups.
- Teach children to be assertive. Differences should be acceptable and never a cause for bullying.
- Deal with bullying and intimidation immediately. Sorting it out is the responsibility of adults.
- Report all incidents or suspected incidents of bullying to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

8.4 IMPORTANT

If bullying is happening, find out the facts by talking to the bullies and victims individually. If the bullying is about a particular issue (e.g. death, divorce, disfigurement), mount an education programme about the problem, but not focused on a particular child. Call in parents, ask for their suggestions and solicit their support.

**Procedure for interviewing alleged Bully and Victim
In conjunction with “Advice to staff on interviewing pupils” and
“The Human Rights Act in Schools”**

	What to do	How, Where, Time	Others
1	Listen to victim	In suitable place and give them time	Possibly another adult witness and victim’s friend
2	Ask victim to write down everything (scribe or tape words if child is unable to write)	Date and time on paper and they should sign paper	Warning about giving false accusations
3	Listen to alleged bully	In suitable place and give them time	Possibly another adult witness and friend of pupil
4	Ask alleged bully to write down everything (scribe or tape words if child is unable to write)	Date and time on paper and they should sign paper	Warning about giving false accusations
5	Pass on to Form Tutor, Deputy Head or Head	Form Tutor now follows Anti Bullying Stages	Form Tutor to decide whether to contact both sets of parents and invite them in to school

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PEER ABUSE INCIDENT SHEET

Name of Pupil _____ Form _____

Form Tutor _____ Leading Mentor _____

Date and time of incident _____

Location _____

Witnessed by _____

Reported to _____ by _____

Details _____

Incident details Tick

Incidental, no offence intended _

Inciting others to be offensive _

Racist comments _

Punching / kicking _

Use of weapons _

property _

Graffiti / written comments _

Incident details Tick

Name calling / insults _

Threats / intimidation _

Pushing / jostling _

Physical assault _

Abuse of personal

Extortion _

Electronic _

Anti Bullying Stages

Stage				Tick
Stage1	Referral to Form Tutor	Meeting with Form Tutor and pupil	Discussion/warning	
Stage2	Referral to Deputy Head /Head by Form Tutor	Meeting with Form Tutor and Deputy Head or Head with pupil	Parents contacted	
Stage3	Formal meeting with Deputy Headteacher/Head	Meeting with deputy head, head and parents	Letter to parents following meeting	
Stage4	Formal meeting with Deputy Headteacher/Head	Meeting with Deputy Head, Head and parents	Fixed term exclusion	
Stage5	Formal meeting with AG and Head	Meeting with AG, Deputy Head	Possible permanent	

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		or Head and parents	exclusion	
Stage6	Follow-up consultation	Meeting with Deputy Head or Head and pupil	Parents contacted by telephone/meeting	

8.5 Breaking up Bully 'Gangs'

- Meet with the victim(s) separately - have them write down what happened or write their version for them and read it back to them
- Meet with each member of the gang separately - have them write down what happened or write their version for them and read it back to them
- Agree with each member of the gang separately what you expect and discuss how he/she has broken the school guidelines
- Meet with the gang as a group and have each state what happened in your individual meeting; ensure that everyone is clear about what happened
- Prepare them to face their peer group - "What are you going to say when you leave here?"
- Whatever is decided, reiterate to all children that they are responsible if anyone is bullied - there are no innocent bystanders
- Talk to parents of all involved - show them the written statements
- Keep a file on bullying with all statements and penalties
- Do not accept false excuses:
if the bullying was an accident, did the children act by helping the victim or getting help or giving sympathy?
if it was just a laugh, was everyone laughing?
if it was a game, was everyone enjoying it?

Important:

If a child was injured, take photographs of the injury

If there is serious injury, contact the police.

8.6 Helping the Bully:

- set clear limits
- write them down
- explain the penalties
- work on self-esteem, bolstering any good behaviour
- don't allow excuses
- ensure bully apologises - face to face
- reward good behaviour
- set goals (one day - one hour at a time) regarding selfcontrol
- Help him/her to know what to do
- have time out area for bullies
- practice stress control - deep breathing, counting up to 10 etc.
- role play situations

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- reinforce that it is good to walk away
- NEVER allow bullying behaviour to be reinforced

8.7 Helping victims

- Teach them to tease
- Teach them how to be teased - use role play
- Encourage them to talk about what has happened
- Make a list of what could be said in response
- Teach them not to respond, if appropriate Shout NO! in the mirror
- Practice walking confidently
- Draw or write about feelings
- Eliminate any obvious causes of bullying

Monitoring and review

- 9.1 This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the headteacher, who reports to Mrs Greystoke and the Senior Leadership Team on request about the effectiveness of the policy.
- 9.2 The anti-bullying policy is the Senior Leadership Team's responsibility, and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by examining the school's anti-bullying logbook, where incidents of bullying are recorded, and by discussion with the teachers. The Senior Leadership Team analyses information for patterns of people, places or groups. They look out in particular for racist bullying, or bullying directed at children with disabilities or special educational needs.
- 9.3 This policy will be reviewed every two years or earlier if necessary.

Signed: Senior Leadership Team

Date: August 2009