



Willow Tree Academy



THE LEAF CENTRE



Anti-Bullying Policy

Willow Tree Academy

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Mission Statement:

Willow Tree Academy

Working in partnership to engage hearts and minds in the joy of learning.

INTRODUCTION

Willow Tree Academy recognises there is a need to safeguard the welfare of all those within the school community and to encourage cooperation, tolerance and harmony.

All schools within the Willow Tree Academy are 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 any school within the Willow Tree Academy. If bullying does occur, all pupils should know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Each school within the academy is a telling school and anyone who knows that bullying is happening should be able to inform a member of staff in confidence. There is an expectation that our children will be upstanders rather than bystanders.

DEFINITION

Please be mindful that children by nature will fall out from time to time and we will help them to resolve their issues but bullying and violence will not be tolerated. The Anti Bullying Alliance definition of bullying is: **The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.**

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.

Increasingly these incidents are perpetrated online, parents need to be aware of platforms that their children are accessing online and their age restrictions. It is advised that parents establish parental locks on devices.

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 LGBTQ+ or misogyny. Bullying can also focus on race, nationality, culture, religion or a mixture of these. Herringthorpe Junior School strives to celebrate diversity and difference and we welcome pupils and families from all backgrounds.

This is now known as child on child abuse as per changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education, Sept 2022.

HOW BULLYING IS CONDUCTED

There are differences in how bullying is conducted. It can be painfully obvious, but it can also be underhand and subtle. It can be one student against another or involve several students. Direct physical bullying and threats of bullying are usually more evident than verbal intimidation and manipulation. Online bullying by pupils which is perpetrated when at home will be dealt with by school in the same way as incidents which may happen in school as this impacts on the whole child.

THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING

The most common effects of bullying are:

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

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

Across the Willow Tree Academy 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 give our children the confidence to speak out when they see that something is wrong: be an “upstander” rather than a “bystander.”
- 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. Children will often fallout and can be hurtful to one another but incidents of bullying are rare and will always be 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

Every school in the Willow Tree Academy 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 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 use the following strategies to ensure that we have a clear, consistent and effective approach to bullying:

- A strong ethos across the Willow Tree Academy, promoting tolerance and respect for difference and diversity.
- Positive leadership from senior staff and governors on tackling bullying.
- A designated member of staff who will be responsible for coordinating anti-bullying issues.
- A clear anti bullying policy. The policy will be reviewed regularly by staff, governors, parents and pupils
- A planned approach in PSHCE Curriculum 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 : “Children’s voice.”
- Adequate supervision of the children when on the school site.
- Increased supervision levels and, as appropriate safe areas, for pupils who feel threatened at break times.

- Rewarding non-aggressive behaviour and encouraging cooperative behaviour through the use of restorative practice in school.
- The use of Individual Behaviour 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 across the academy.

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, History etc
- Assemblies / Schools Councils
- Circle times on issues such as friendship, prejudice, assertiveness, coping strategies
- Firm and appropriate disciplinary procedures
- Students are encouraged to develop their own class rules.
- Greater interaction between classes/Year groups
- Friendship week

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:

- All incidents will be recorded, including the facts of the incident, action taken and a report of the follow up interviews using CPOMs: perceived bullying category.
- It may be that in exceptional circumstances there is a risk of injury to an individual in those circumstances physical intervention may be required. Staff would follow the school's policy on Positive Handling.
- Both the victim(s) and bully(ies) should be interviewed separately to establish the facts without apportioning blame
- We will contact the parents of both the victim(s) and bully(ies)
- Appropriate sanctions and support will be discussed and agreed upon.
- The opportunity should be available after the investigation for both the victim(s) and bully(ies) to discuss their difficulties with a responsible and confident adult.
- In the light of the investigation it may be appropriate to review existing behaviour policy and/or procedures.

INTERVIEWING THE VICTIM

A record will be kept of the conversation and will be recorded on CPOMs as an action to the perceived bullying incident afterwards. 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.

- 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. This is part of our school ethos: a restorative approach. A record will be kept of the conversation and will be recorded on CPOMs afterwards. Staff will be aware at all times of possible 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 restorative manner.
- Staff will explain they would like to talk to the student(s) as they are aware of some issues with the victim(s).
- Staff will ask the bully and or bystander to recount the incidents in their own words. This will be repeated back for clarification.
- Where it is concluded that bullying has occurred the bully will be informed that their actions are not acceptable and that their parents/carers will be contacted.
- Staff will ask the student(s) if they can understand why (name of victim) is upset by this and will explain that the bully(ies)/bystanders are responsible for those feelings by their actions and this is not acceptable.
- The staff member will ask the bully how they think these issues can be resolved.
- Staff will agree to meet with all the students involved again after an appropriate time to see how the situation has changed.
- Appropriate contact will be maintained with both sets of parents/carers until the situation has been resolved.

This investigation findings will determine other positive interventions and targeted actions to support with repairing relationships such as:

- Circle time
- Conferencing circle [Restorative Practice*]
- Peer mentoring
- Peer mediation
- Buddying
- a class/form change after discussions with all involved
- Support from external agencies, e.g. Educational Psychology Service, NSPCC, Childline
- School Council
- Individualised friendship programmes
- Additional PSHE sessions targeted at specific issues
- The appropriate encouragement of peer disapproval e.g. behaviour panel

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 type incidents.

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.

All schools within the Willow Tree Academy appreciate 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. All sanctions must be specific to the individual and any needs that they may have.

Where a parent is dis-satisfied with the school's handling of a situation then the Executive Headteacher/Head of School 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 officer over any impending publicity.

Willow Tree Academy actively encourages and welcomes comments, questions and suggestions regarding our anti-bullying policy. Please contact the Executive Headteacher or home schools Headteacher or Academy Pastoral Manager.

*see Restorative practice policy

is it

BULLYING?

When someone says or does something
unintentionally hurtful
and they do it once, that's
RUDE.

When someone says or does something
intentionally hurtful
and they do it once, that's
MEAN.

When someone says or does something
intentionally hurtful and they *keep doing it*—
even when you tell them to stop or show
them that you're upset—that's
BULLYING.