

GREENHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Ratified: May 2006

Review: May 2009

Mission Statement

We will work towards creating a school that values each individual part,
be willing to work together in creating a happy, purposeful and caring
community that promotes belonging and learning

Introduction

This document is a statement of the strategies used in our school to tackle bullying behaviour. It clearly supports the school mission and reflects the observations and guidance contained in the Elton Committee of Enquiry into Pupil Behaviour (1989) and the LEA Behaviour Policy as detailed in the LEA Behaviour Support Plan 2005-2008.

Bullying is a complex issue with a range of possible causes. The school recognises that it is important to have systems in place to

- promote the early identification of children who display bullying behaviours
- assess the needs of children who bully
- identify appropriate support to help them learn new, more appropriate behaviours
- provide support for the victims of bullying
- encourage parents to work in partnership with the school in addressing the issue of bullying.

Bullies

Many bullying behaviours result from low self-esteem, poorly developed social skills and a lack of understanding, or empathy, for the situation of others. If carried out by adults, these bullying behaviours would lead to criminal prosecutions. People who rely upon aggression in order to express their needs or views are likely to experience difficulties

- in their employment
- in their relationships
- in the community.

Victims

Victims can be physically and psychologically hurt by their experiences of being bullied. They may suffer from low self-esteem, anxiety and depression. The experience of being bullied can therefore have a significant impact, and limiting effect, on the rest of a child's life.

Clearly, one of the key issues is self-esteem, that is

- the influence of low self-esteem on the bully's behaviour
- the influence of low self-esteem on the victim's behaviour
- the impact of bullying on the victim's self-esteem.

Pupils' Rights

Every pupil has the right

- not to be bullied
- to take pride in being an individual who is different from everyone else
- to live in a happy and secure environment
- to tell an adult if someone or something is making them unhappy
- to say 'no' and mean it when an action, word or deed causes distress
- to walk away from confrontation
- to belong and be equal to all other children in school.

What is Bullying?

A clear, general definition of bullying is very difficult. Only those who have been bullied can be fully clear as to what it is to be bullied. However it is important that everyone in a school agrees and understands the same definition.

Some suggested descriptions of bullying behaviour to consider when agreeing a definition:

Bullying behaviour

- can be a one-off activity
- can be generally persistent
- is deliberately hostile
- is violent
- causes distress to one or more persons
- involves an imbalance of power

It includes

- verbal and non-verbal threats of violence
- name calling
- teasing
- ignoring and shunning
- incitement by others to commit an act of bullying
- sexually offensive remarks or behaviour
- racially offensive remarks or behaviour
- interfering with property
- fighting
- demanding money, property or favours with menace
- vandalism
- intimidating or embarrassing graffiti
- damaging another's efforts or possessions
- borrowing equipment without permission
- invading someone else's privacy

Signs of Bullying

A person may indicate that he/she is being bullied in a variety of ways but will be most encouraged to report bullying if there is an active anti-bullying policy. Parents need to know what to look for too and they should be aware of the following behaviours which may indicate that there is a problem.

Some possible signs (there may be more)

- unwillingness to go to school
- fear of travelling to and from school
- requests to be taken to and/or collected from school
- changing route to school
- school work deteriorates
- damaged property brought home eg books, clothes
- withdrawn behaviour
- stammering starts
- eating stops
- suicide attempts threatened
- crying at night
- bed wetting
- having nightmares, calling out phrases during sleep eg "Leave me alone".
- unexplained minor injuries
- lost possessions
- stealing money
- refusing to see if there is a problem or what is the problem
- giving unlikely and unreasonable excuses for any of the above.

Why is Bullying often Successfully Hidden from Teachers?

Bullying generally takes place when adults are unlikely to witness the incidents eg unsupervised times or poorly supervised areas of the school or community. Teachers are therefore dependent upon children or parents informing them of any incidents of bullying.

Frequently teachers will not find out about all incidents of bullying because of children's

- fear of becoming a victim if, as a witness, you 'whistle blow'
- fear of the bullying becoming worse if, as a victim, you report the bully
- fear, or knowledge, of teachers not taking your concerns seriously.

School's Response to Bullying

We will not accept behaviour from anyone, whether adult or child, that aims to cause pain and distress to others.

The school uses the curriculum and assemblies and their delivery to identify and promote ways to help children to:

- speak out when they are bullied or when they witness bullying
- understand better what is meant by bullying and to consider its causes and effects
- develop social skills eg to become assertive rather than to resort to aggressive or submissive behaviours.

In response to bullying incidents the school will:

- listen and provide immediate support for victim and bully
- investigate incidents as soon as possible
- ensure that clear record-keeping and reporting procedures are complied with by staff following an incident of bullying
- deal effectively and sensitively with bullying incidents
- ensure that all members of the school community avoid the use of behaviours which may be perceived as bullying
- work effectively in partnership with children and parents or carers in dealing with bullying.

Dealing with a Bullying Incident

The aim is to stop the bullying happening again by encouraging both the victim and bully to

- think about their behaviour and the causes and effects of the bullying
- find the solutions to the problems themselves.

Talking to children about incidents of bullying

The school will help the bully and victim to gain insight into the situation and to consider ways of avoiding or resolving the difficulties they are experiencing and/or presenting.

The behaviour patterns of victims and bullies have often been established as a consequence of the values and experiences they bring to school, so schools need to offer support which is informed by the individual children's needs.

The school will use the Bullying Incident Report Form to

- ensure that all incidents of bullying are addressed effectively through clear and consistently applied procedures
- provide evidence of the actions taken by the school to address incidents of bullying
- monitor, review and evaluate both the progress of individual children and the school's anti-bullying policy.

Key actions in response to a Bullying Incident

The following Key Actions will be taken by the school in response to any bullying incident

1. Complete the Bullying Incident Report Form

The School will complete this as soon as the incident is reported

2. Discuss the incident with the children individually

The school will support the victim by

- ensuring that the child feels that they are being listened to
- assuring the child that all incidents of bullying are taken seriously
- reassuring the child by explaining how they will be supported and how the incident will be dealt with.

In addition, the victim should, ideally, be supported by the member of staff they have confided in. As the disclosure will usually have occurred as a result of the child identifying someone who cares or can help, you should respond to this trust and confidence.

The school will ensure the bully is dealt with fairly by

- describing the reasons for your meeting with them (at the same time, protect the victim and the identity of any witnesses)
- remaining calm and non-judgemental in order to ensure that the child feels they are being listened to
- assuring the child that you disapprove of all acts of bullying
- explaining how they will be supported and how the incident will be dealt with.

The school will attempt to help both the bully and the victim to:

- see the situation from another perspective
- explore the causes and effects of the incident
- identify how the situation could have been avoided or resolved (eg how to be assertive rather than aggressive or submissive)
- how they can resolve the present difficulties.

3. See both the children together for a mediation session

At this meeting the school will do the following:

- Remain calm and non-judgemental when the children talk through their understanding of the problem
- Listen more than you speak. Not assume that we know how the children feel or anticipate what they want to say. Children are more likely to reflect on their behaviour if they feel they are being listened to rather than spoken at.
- Paraphrase what we are told to show that we understand what the children have said. It is how the children perceive the situation which is important, not how we perceive it.
- Encourage the children, through your questions, to reflect on their behaviour and the factors which may have influenced the behaviour of others. When appropriate, encourage empathy.
- Explain that the Bullying Incident Report Form will record
 - the details of the incident
 - the future conduct of the children, as identified and agreed by all parties in the meeting
 - the actions which each child should take if there is further bullying or provocation (eg to report it to their teacher immediately)
 - the monitoring arrangements for ensuring that the problems don't happen again
 - the further action the school will take if the problems do happen again
 - the date when these arrangements will be reviewed (usually after two weeks).

The school will decide at this stage how appropriate it is to punish the bully.

The School will not collude with the secrecy which surrounds bullying. We will make sure that everyone directly concerned with the child's welfare is made aware of what has happened and how it is to be addressed.

4. Follow up session

The school will inform the parents or carers of the incident, the actions taken and the review arrangements. Where appropriate the school will arrange to meet the parents or carers to discuss the ways the school wants to support their child and to discuss how they can help as well.

The school will explain the anti-bullying policy and the rationale behind it.

When asking parents or carers to a meeting school will make sure that they are well prepared with

- records of the concerns
- evidence of the action the school has taken to support their child
- constructive options to try to solve the problems.

5. Review the arrangements

The school will arrange a review meeting.

If there have been no further incidents

- file a copy of the Bullying Incident Report Form in the School Behaviour Report Log, and copies will be placed in the files of both the bully and the victim

If there is evidence of further bullying (or unwarranted accusations of bullying) the school will arrange to meet with the relevant child's parents or carers to

- seek agreement on the needs and behaviours to be addressed and identify any further assessment and/or specialist support which might be required
- plan the nature and level of the support the school will provide
- identify how they might help you to meet the child's needs
- identify appropriate sanctions if the behaviours are repeated.

At this stage the assessment, support, monitoring and review arrangements should be recorded on an Individual Education Plan or a Pastoral Support Programme.

Child Protection

The safety and welfare of the child over-rides all other consideration. Where a bullying incident has occurred and it has been judged to put the child at risk, the school will follow the LEA child protection procedures.

Supporting Documentation

Copies of the following documents can be found in the Headteacher's Office along with a range of anti-bullying resources.

Code of Behaviour
Primary Behaviour File
LEA Behaviour File
Care & Control
SEN

Finally remember

Bullying will not be tolerated - we are all committed to ensuring that our school is a **bully free zone**.