

COSHESTON VC SCHOOL



Anti-Bullying Policy

Cosheston VC School believes that bullying is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. All members of the school community share a collective responsibility for tackling bullying should it occur and in working together to promote positive behaviour.

All children, whatever their race, sex, beliefs and abilities have the right to be safe and to be free from oppression, humiliation and abuse (The Children's Act 2004).

Aims of the policy

Our Policy is a working framework to support our whole school ethos which is to ensure that children feel safe, secure confident and happy. It is designed to prevent bullying behaviour wherever possible, to respond consistently in line with agreed procedures should it occur and to provide support to those involved as appropriate. Our children's health and well-being is of paramount importance.

Prevention includes sending out a clear message that negative behaviour is anti-social, unacceptable and will not be tolerated here.

What is Bullying behaviour?

- Bullying is deliberately hurtful and designed to cause distress.
- It is usually repeated over a period of time and is difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves against.
- It involves an imbalance and abuse of power and is not age dependent.
- It may have a racist or discriminatory motivation and can focus on ethnicity, culture, class, religion, learning difficulties, sexuality, long term health conditions and disability.
- It may be based on small differences between children which are not always clear to us and may shift and develop as relationships change.
- Bullying behaviour may be shown by individuals or groups.
- It may not always be clear who is manipulating the behaviour we see.
- Some children can be 'provocative victims' e.g. by behaving in a tiresome way which eventually triggers a response which may then be seen to be bullying.

Bullying is not falling out with friends, choosing not to play with someone, disliking someone, one off aggressive behaviour such as a fight between children who disagree, accidental physical contact, or the normal rough and tumble of playground life.

Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

- Physical – e.g. hitting; kicking; punching; spitting; biting; sexual harassment; having belongings damaged, stolen or removed.
- Verbal – e.g. name calling; teasing; insulting; sarcasm; threats; offensive remarks; sexual/racial comments.
- Emotional / Psychological – e.g. excluding, humiliating, dirty looks; making distressing comments about family members, spreading stories/malicious rumours;
- Cyber / Hi-Tech e.g. malicious e-mails or comments in internet chat-rooms or text messages on mobile phones; distressing comments about family members; posting stories, pictures etc. on the internet; silent phone calls; using someone else's name to spread unpleasant gossip and rumours; happy slapping.

Bullying affects everyone, not simply the victims and the instigators. It has an influence on other children who may witness violence, aggression and the distress of the victim.

Our whole school approach to preventing bullying includes:

- Developing a positive ethos which includes knowing bullying is unacceptable here;
- Expecting positive behaviour which helps and supports learning and development;
- Promoting co-operation and expecting socially responsible behaviour;
- Encouraging those who witness bullying to act positively by alerting staff and exerting collective peer pressure to deter the bullies;
- Valuing and celebrating everyone's differences, skills and talents;
- Supporting the development of emotional literacy, self esteem and resilience through assemblies, Circle Time, PSE, the Healthy Schools programme, skills development, teaching pupils personal coping strategies, School Council involvement, nurture groups, anger management, counselling, family learning, social skills sessions
- Showing respect for others;
- Making the information in this policy available to all stakeholders;
- Involving all members of the school community in designing / implementing policy.

Why should we be concerned?

Someone who is experiencing bullying will be upset and distressed and find it hard to concentrate on work or learning.

There may be signs such as

- poor attendance
- truancy
- being late
- being off school sick
- becoming withdrawn and anxious
- losing possessions and money
- having mood swings
- showing untypical behaviour.

Encouraging reporting of incidents if bullying occurs:

- Pupils at Cosheston VC School can be assured that their concerns will be responded to with sensitivity. All reports will be taken seriously and investigated;
- Confidentiality for anyone who shares information will be respected;
- Opportunities for children to communicate concerns include: access to **any** member of staff, representation on the School Council who will pass on concerns, use of circle time and social skills groups.

If bullying occurs we will implement the following procedures, as appropriate:

- We will take all incidents seriously and record their occurrence;
- Investigate the incident / establish facts by independently talking to all involved;
- Use appropriate intervention techniques to manage difficulties between bullies & victims; encourage reconciliation where this is possible / feasible. E.g. 'No Blame Circle Time', telling each other what they would like the other to stop doing
- Where bullying behaviour has been established, implement agreed sanctions consistently and fairly as necessary to prevent further incidents;
- Ensure the 'victim' has immediate access to any staff and at least one 'named' member of staff as a 'safe' place to go.
- Ensure the perpetrator knows what they must stop, and have a 'plan' to follow to help them do this.
- Involve parents as early as possible where incidents merit it;
- Apply guidelines from the all Wales Police "School Crime Beat" partnership working document to determine whether official police involvement is needed; as indicated in these guidelines, deal with incidents internally wherever possible;
- Keep accurate, factual records of all reported incidents and the school's response to them;
- Always follow-up incidents after they have been dealt with and review outcomes to ensure bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Provide on-going support for those involved where necessary.

Depending on the type of incident, if sanctions are used, these may include:

- Withdrawing privileges/free time
- Preventing access to parts of school
- lunchtime exclusion
- short term exclusion
- involving parents when necessary
- involving appropriate outside agencies
- exclusion

Please refer to the school behaviour policy for extensive description of strategies and practice for consequences and sanctions

SUMMARY: Strategies and preventative measures to reduce the likelihood of bullying in this school:

- A whole-school approach involving everyone (staff, students, parents & governors) in developing and implementing this policy;
- Awareness raising of the issues, procedures, sanctions and method of monitoring bullying, e.g. assemblies, pastoral work, PSE, parents meetings, letters
- An ethos of personal responsibility where students are encouraged to tell if they experience bullying themselves or see others being bullied – knowing that not taking action condones the behaviour;
- Having a system in place for students to inform staff in confidence when bullying occurs; ensuring staff are appropriately trained and supported to respond to this.
- Staff may use the safeguarding incident form to ensure records are kept and action is planned
- Developing our understanding of collective responsibility through Support Groups, Circle Time, School Council, appropriate curricular work (e.g. PSE and our Healthy Schools initiative; social skills groups, sessions with Police Liaison Officers);
- Having a clear link with the school's Behaviour and Child Protection & Safeguarding Policies;
- Providing clear information and guidance on dealing with bullying and the help which is available for students, parents and staff.

Reviewing the policy

The final details of this policy have been drawn up in consultation with pupils, parents, staff and members of the school community. It will be discussed, reviewed and revised annually.

Additional information

Reference documents and useful links:

- “Respecting Others : Anti-Bullying Guidance” Sept 03 National Assembly for Wales Circular No: 23/2003
- “Evaluation of Anti-Bullying Policies in Schools in Wales” Cardiff University Report 2006
- “School Anti-Bullying Policy Self-Assessment Tool” Welsh Assembly Government Nov 08
- Be-SMART Resource file / Pembrokeshire County Council Internet Safety Group
- All Wales Police “School Crime Beat” guidelines for schools
- www.schoolbeat.org for links to Police School Liaison Programme outline and documents.