

# Emersons Green Primary School



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Draft to Governors – November 2017	Draft to staff- November 2017
Ratified: November 2017	Next Review: November/Term 2 2018

# Emersons Green Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy

## 1. Definition

At Emersons Green Primary School we accept the following as a definition of bullying:

Bullying is when someone (or a group of people) picks on you, hurts you, calls you names, threatens or says nasty things about you, takes your things and friends away **and keeps on doing it**, making you feel frightened and/or unhappy.

It can be (although this is not an exhaustive list):

**Physical** - hitting, kicking, spitting, tripping someone up, stealing/damaging someone's belongings, etc.

**Verbal** - name-calling, insulting a person's family, threats of physical violence, spreading rumours, constantly putting a person down, etc.

**Emotional/psychological** - excluding someone from a group, humiliation, creating a feeling of danger, etc.

**Racist** - insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived ethnic origin or faith, name-calling, graffiti, racially motivated violence, etc.

**Sexual** - sexually insulting language/gestures, name-calling, graffiti, unwanted physical contact, etc.

**Homophobic** - insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived sexuality, name-calling, graffiti, homophobic violence, etc.

**Electronic** - bullying by text message, bullying on the internet (in chat rooms, on bulletin boards and through instant messaging services), hate websites, etc.

**Discriminatory in regard to disability** – including elements from verbal, emotional/physical and electronic bullying, as above, but directly linked to an individual's disability.

Bullying is the abuse of power by one person or a group over another.

All of the types of behaviour listed above are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at this school.

## The 'No Blame' Approach

At Emersons Green Primary School, we believe that when any bullying allegation is made, the primary purpose of this policy is to in the first instance to address the wellbeing of the victim, whether or not bullying has taken place. It is important for children to feel safe to come to school and to reduce any anxiety around bullying allegations or actual bullying. However, it is also important that all adults and children involved are treated fairly, equitably and without judgement throughout any investigation process, to avoid unwarranted blame or sanction being applied.

## Who do I speak to about bullying?

The main point of contact regarding pupil behaviour is normally your child's class teacher. However, you can also speak to any school Senior Leader, including the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

## 2. Aims

The Governors and staff at Emersons Green Primary School believe that bullying damages the way people feel about themselves, lowers self-esteem, increases fears for safety and may affect their life as they grow up. It is an aim for everyone to:

- Not be scared to come to school
- Feel able to trust one another
- Expect people to be kind and supportive
- Not be made fun of
- Not be made sad
- Have friends
- Be included
- Expect their differences to be celebrated
- Feel safe

This policy should be used in conjunction with:

- The school Behaviour policy
- The school Safeguarding policy
- The school e-safety/Acceptable use of ICT policy

## 3. Anti-bullying measures

The following measures will be taken to create a culture where mutual respect and high self-esteem combat bullying:

- i. Explicitly taught PSHE units which address peer relationships, racism and homophobia, and bullying.
- ii. An annual Anti-bullying week and regular references to respecting others in assemblies.
- iii. Combating cyber-bullying explicitly taught in the ICT scheme of work.
- iv. The work of the School Council in bringing pastoral concerns to the attention of the SLT.
- v. Buddy systems throughout the school.
- vi. CPD on identifying and combating bullying for all staff.
- vii. Behaviour policy, child protection policy and procedures, SEN guidelines and school aims.

## 4. Bullying Out of Hours

While it is primarily the school's responsibility to deal with behaviour in school time and we have no direct authority over pupil behaviour outside of this time, we recognise that bullying outside of school can inevitably have an impact within the school setting. We will always work with parents and carers to help advise and manage incidents of bullying outside of school hours. This is particularly important when dealing with incidents of cyberbullying, the vast majority of which occurs outside of school hours. We will still investigate incidents of alleged bullying that occur outside of school hours and take action as appropriate within our authority.

## **5. Procedures to follow**

The following, consistent approach should be used when investigating allegations of bullying:

1. If bullying is suspected or reported, the member of staff who has been approached will discuss the incident with the victim and ascertain whether bullying has indeed taken place (as defined by this policy) or whether the child has been upset by a breach in the school rules, which can be dealt with in accordance with the school Behaviour Policy.
2. Once an incident of bullying has been established, a clear account of the incident/s will be recorded and given to the head teacher / deputy head teacher. The head teacher will keep a confidential record of accusations of bullying in the Bullying File (located in Headteacher's office), although these will not be passed on to any other party.
3. The head teacher / deputy headteacher will talk to all children and adults involved to ascertain the nature of the situation. At this stage, no judgement will be made and all children or adults involved will be treated equally. The consideration of whether bullying has taken place will be based on our guidelines (see Appendix).
4. If bullying or an isolated incidence of mistreatment has occurred, a sanction will take place. This is normally a Red Card. Other sanction may be deemed appropriate by the headteacher / deputy headteacher.
5. Provision for pupils will be reviewed to ensure the correct support systems are in place to ensure pupil safety and wellbeing, including systems of communication with adults and consistent expectations of all adults in regard to allegations of bullying.
3. The head teacher / deputy head teacher will use the 'Circle of Friends' approach, where the bully or bullies are expected to empathise with the feelings of the victim and agree to alter their behaviour. This approach involves including a group of relevant children, including friends of the victim to provide an open, honest and supportive environment where bullying is openly acknowledge and the responsibility of everyone to tackle bullying is made clear. This will be considered a notice to stop, where the perpetrator can alter their behaviour without further sanction in addition to those applied for breaches in the school Rules. Parents will be informally informed at this point, usually by phone, to reassure them that the matter is being resolved.
4. Should further incidents occur, all children involved will then be re-interviewed and the parents of both parties informed. Should conflicting reports of the incident be reported, the Head teacher will determine what has occurred on 'the balance of probabilities'. At this point, sanctions may be applied to the perpetrator/s in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.
5. All following incidents and actions will be further recorded in the Bullying File (in Headteacher's office).

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness throughout the school.

# APPENDIX – BULLYING GUIDELINES

## Introduction

Bullying is a problem that has been in schools for a long time, but the press would have us believe that it is on the increase today in schools all over the country. We are conscious that children use the word 'bullying' to describe a wide range of behaviour, so we thought it might be helpful to parents and carers if we published these guidance notes to indicate what bullying is - and what it is not - and how it can be dealt with.

It must always be borne in mind that probably the most important lessons that children have to learn in life concerns their relationships with others, and just as we all learn through making mistakes in academic subjects, so do we in our learning about relationships.

It is also important to know that in school we always take bullying seriously, and always take appropriate action.

## What IS bullying?

Bullying is the severe, sustained and systematic verbal or physical abuse of a child or children by another child or group of children. It can include intimidation, repeated violence, calculated spitefulness, continued threats or extortion.

## What is bullying NOT?

Children will often say that they are being bullied, but investigation reveals that it is, in fact, one of the following: -

- One-off arguments (or even fights) between children.
- Teasing which stops when corrected.
- Loss of temper by one child with different children at different times.
- Loss of temper during a playground game.
- Retaliation by the victim of a 'one-off' incident.
- Rough play.
- Accidental injury.
- Minor 'one off' insults.
- The falling out of friends (they often make up!).

When these incidents occur in school, they are obviously dealt with - but in a different way to bullying incidents.

## **"How do I know if my child is being bullied?" - What to look for: -**

Children often won't tell if they are being seriously bullied for fear of reprisal. Some of the indicators to watch for include: -

- Unusual quietness or unwillingness to talk about school when this had not been the case before.
- Persistent bruises which the child is unwilling to explain or talk about.
- Change of behaviour pattern - unusual behaviour including unhappiness.
- Child not wanting parent/carer to approach school (fear of reprisal).
- Child talks about persistent problems with one child or a group of children.
- Unusual bed-wetting or refusal to eat.
- Child not wanting to walk to/from school alone (older children).
- Unwillingness to come to school when this has not been a problem before.
- Uncharacteristic and sudden spiteful behaviour to a younger sibling.
- Money/sweets going missing from home (on rare occasions in other schools children have been victims of extortion).

N.B. Many of the above **could** be indicators of other problems/issues apart from bullying.

## **WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE SITUATION**

Firstly, you need to establish if it is a **genuine** case of bullying (as outlined in the definition above).

### **If it is not bullying: -**

- Listen to your child.
- Try to get your child to understand the difference between a bullying and non-bullying occurrence. Talk through the incident with the child.
- Talk through what should happen next - should the child be advised to: talk through the problem with others involved? Make it up with the other children? Forget it? Apologise? Talk to his/her teacher?
- Keep an eye on the situation for any future developments. If in doubt, talk to your child's teacher particularly if you feel that there is potential for things not to improve.
- Adults need to help children to devise strategies to deal with difficult relationships

### **If it IS bullying**

- Listen to your child.
- Reassure your child s/he has done the right thing in 'telling' and that you will support him/her.
- Write down names/places/dates and what happened.
- Discuss with your child what should happen next and how s/he feels about your proposed action.
- **CONTACT THE SCHOOL** (preferably the class teacher or Headteacher). We will discuss the incident(s) with you and your child and decide together what the most appropriate action is. In most cases this will begin with an investigation, about which you will be kept informed.
- **DO NOT** tackle the alleged perpetrator of the bullying or his/her parents/carers yourself as this can lead to misunderstandings and can confuse the issue. **ALWAYS** go through the school.
- The school has a very clear Behaviour policy and a 'no blame Approach' to tackling bullying', which encourages children to make the right choices about their behaviour towards others. There is, however, a Serious Behaviour Clause, which takes account of the rare cases when the normal 'Good Behaviour' policy has no effect. This deals very severely with bullying, but in a systematic way, which outlines a series of consequences if, behaviour does not improve. The ultimate sanction is permanent exclusion.

## **CONCLUSION**

Genuine bullying incidents are rare and will not be tolerated at school any more than they will be at home. Parents/carers need to be open-minded about incidents, therefore, to ascertain whether or not they are genuine. Other incidents are still taken seriously and are appropriately dealt with, but the key word is "appropriate". However, one of our aims is to develop a close partnership with the home so it is important that if you have any doubts or concerns you should always contact the school to discuss them.

We hope these guidelines have been useful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you need further information. Guidelines updated November 2016.