



Policy Document

Policy Area: Anti-bullying

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Reviewed by: Esma Izzidien

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What is Bullying?

There are many definitions of bullying. Most have three things in common:

- (i) It consists of deliberately hurtful behaviour;
- (ii) It occurs repeatedly over a period of time;
- (iii) It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves;

Bullying can occur in four main ways:

Physical - where the person being bullied is hit, kicked, spat at, pinched, pushed, bitten etc. or when belongings are taken or damaged

Verbal - bullying which consist of name-calling, insulting, threatening, racist, sexist or homophobic remarks

Indirect - when malicious rumours or stories are spread or the person is excluded from the social group

Cyber - sending malicious messages by mobile phones, e-mails or social networking sites

Racist and sexual harassment are linked to bullying. They often involve the same kinds of behaviours, but they are usually directed against a person because of their cultural identity, or because they belong to a particular group or gender.

Bullying of a racist nature will need to be dealt with in the context of anti-racist policies required by schools under the Race Relations Amendment Act and the "Guidelines and Procedures for Dealing and Reporting Racist Incidents in Schools". (See the school's policy for 'Equal Opportunities').

Who are the Bullies?

Girls and boys can act as bullies. However, most reported incidents involve individual boys or groups of several boys. When girls engage in bullying, it is usually as part of a group, and it often involves indirect bullying which is more difficult for teachers to detect.

Who are the Victims?

Any child can be bullied, but there are certain factors which can make a child more prone to being a victim of bullying, including:



- a lack of friends
- being shy
- coming from an over-protective family environment
- coming from a different racial or ethnic group
- being different in some obvious respect from the majority
- having Special Educational Needs
- being a 'provocative victim' – a child who behaves inappropriately with others, barging in on games or being a nuisance

None of these factors can excuse the bullying, but they may account for it happening.

Where does Bullying take place?

It is an unfortunate fact of life that bullying occurs in every school. Any school that states that bullying does not occur is in denial, misleading parents and putting their pupils in danger. One must accept that bullying exists and to develop a policy that aims to prevent bullying from occurring, but has rigorous strategies in place to deal with it when it occurs. In primary schools up to three-quarters of bullying incidents take place in the playground. In secondary schools bullying is also most likely to occur in outside areas, but can also occur in the classroom, corridors or toilets. Schools will want to take account of the fact that bullying can occur on the journey to and from school as well as on the school premises. Cyber bullying is an increasing problem in society and parents and schools must monitor the use of mobile phones and computers.

How can Bullying be identified?

By its nature, bullying tends to take place underground, out of sight and earshot of teaching and other school staff. Perhaps the most important element in identifying bullying is the creation of a positive school culture in which bullying is not tolerated and the reporting of bullying is seen as a positive and valued act by pupils. However, there are possible signs of bullying that school staff should be aware of and to which they should respond with enquiry. Some key signs may include:

- a reluctance to come to school / erratic attendance;
- a marked deterioration in a pupil's performance;
- a reluctance to go out to play;
- a reluctance to leave school at the normal time, walk home with other pupils or use the school bus;
- unlikely excuses for possessions damaged or destroyed
- pupils who appear to be isolated in the playground, dining room, on school visits, during games, etc.
- pupils who display withdrawn, unforthcoming behaviour;
- pupils who are anxious and are lacking in confidence;
- pupils who have nightmares or cry themselves to sleep;
- pupils who seem to stammer on occasions;

Anti-bullying Strategies

There are a variety of strategies for dealing with bullying which are set in the context of whole school approaches to positive behaviour. The following are followed at Cardiff Montessori School:

- Our anti-bullying policy which starts from the standpoint that bullying is not acceptable, must be reported and will be addressed immediately. - All members of the school community have a role

to play, including pupils, teachers, teaching assistants, head teacher, parents, midday supervisors and other non-teaching staff.

- Our school ethos and culture which values good relationships and promotes respect for individuals. - We must always emphasise the importance of the following attitudes and values: care and consideration for others; sensitivity to others' feelings; responsibility for one's actions; respecting oneself and others.
- Co-operative classrooms which value collaboration and good relationships. - Our classrooms must have positive behaviour strategies and plenty of opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. Ground rules for good relationships are essential.
- Curriculum provision for opportunities to discuss bullying and equip children and young people with the skills to deal with it. - Circle Time provides an excellent environment to talk about sensitive issues, such as bullying, and develop skills of empathy and assertiveness.
- A positive problem approach from teachers to bullies and victims which aims to resolve issues in the long term and enables both bully and victim to move on in a positive direction.
- Encouragement to pupils to be active citizens of the school community. - Pupils should be encouraged always to tell a teacher or any other member of staff about bullying, not to join in bullying, to challenge bullying behaviour by showing disapproval and not to exclude someone from a group. - Peer support schemes enable pupils to help other pupils. These take the form of "buddying" and "befriending" schemes to generally support others who need it and help those involved in bullying incidents.

Procedures to be followed by pupils if they are being bullied or they suspect that someone else is being bullied:

- Inform a member of staff, parent or another adult.
- Pupils should see bullying as a cowardly and despicable act and it is not 'sneaking' to inform on a bully whether it is them that are being bullied or someone else.

Procedures to be followed by staff following allegations of bullying or when they suspect that bullying is occurring:

- When staff deal with incidents of bullying it is important to take note of the definitions of bullying and to deal with each incident on an individual basis.
- Staff should immediately report any actual acts of bullying witnessed or allegations of bullying to the class-teacher. The alleged bullies and victims should be brought to the Lead Teacher's office so that an investigation can start immediately. The staff member may be asked to write down what they witnessed. Dealing with problems swiftly will stop them escalating.
- Staff should deal with all reported incidents of bullying immediately.
- Dealing with the incident quickly and sensitively sends the correct message to all the parents / carers, the alleged victim and the alleged bully and prevents issues from becoming more complex.
- Staff should investigate the incident carefully by interviewing the alleged victim, the alleged bully / bullies and any bystanders, in the spirit of finding a solution to the problem for all concerned. They should avoid making accusations without being certain of the facts.
- Staff should take some short-term measures while the incident is being investigated. The alleged victim and the alleged bully may need to be separated, or a monitoring system may need to be put in place, but follow-up measures must be implemented to resolve the issues in the longer term.
- Teachers should keep factual notes in the incidents file.
- The Lead Teacher notes these and keeps copies of all correspondence. (This is important, especially if parents take issues further in the form of a formal complaint).



Procedures to be followed by the Lead Teacher

- Following any reported incident, the Lead Teacher might decide to speak generally to the class, a group of pupils or individuals.
- Make a note of the allegation.
- Follow the same procedures as those noted above for staff.
- Give a verbal warning to a pupil/pupils.
- Speak to the parents of the alleged victim and the alleged bully.
- Decide on any sanctions to be implemented
- To provide support if necessary for the victim e.g. a `buddy` to take care of him / her.
- To provide support and guidance for the bully to prevent this happening again.
- The Lead Teacher, after consultation with the director, may decide that the bullying is of such a serious nature that he issues a formal warning of exclusion in the presence of parents. This must be approved by the director.
- The Lead Teacher after consultation with the director, may consider temporarily excluding the bully. This must be approved by the director.

Procedures to be followed by parents if bullying is suspected:

- Parents should inform the school whenever they have concerns about their child's well-being. Normally the concern should be raised with the class teacher. If the incident is deemed to be serious or ongoing, it should be reported directly to the Lead Teacher or Head of Early years.
- When an incident of bullying occurs, parents and staff should agree a timetable so that adequate time is given to the school to investigate and deal with any problems effectively and so that parents know by when they can expect a response.
- Parents of the alleged bullies will be involved in positive ways to help resolve the problems. (All parents need to accept that their child could be the victim or the perpetrator of bullying)
- If parents continue to have concerns or if the problems reoccur, they should go back to the school and discuss their concerns with school staff.
- If parents are not satisfied with the way that the situation has been dealt with, they should write to the Head of Early Years to make a formal complaint. If still dissatisfied after the head teacher has investigated, parents can write to the Director asking that the situation be formally reviewed.

Aims

1. To promote a caring and supportive ethos in the school.
2. To create an environment and code of behaviour in which bullying is seen starkly for the offensive behaviour which it is.
3. To create an environment in which pupils will report bullying to an adult.
4. To deal effectively with reported incidents.
5. To deal openly with the issue of bullying in lesson time and assemblies.
6. To make clear to the school, parents and the whole community that bullying, in any form, will not be tolerated.



Action

The school will ensure that:

1. Open discussion about bullying will be undertaken at least once every half term in class and / or assembly.
2. The Anti -Bullying Policy is posted on our website.
3. Staff are aware of appropriate procedures.
4. Pupils are encouraged to discuss any incidents that cause concern with an appropriate adult.
5. There is adequate supervision during break and lunch times.
6. Issues related to bullying are discussed at staff meetings as appropriate.
7. We will take part in an “Anti – Bullying Week” on an annual basis.
8. The School SLT will discuss bullying during their meetings.
9. The policy is reviewed periodically by the Director.

Where to get further help and advice:

- **Childline:** www.childline.org.uk Tel. 0800 1111
- **Children`s Legal Centre:** www.childrenslegalcentre.com Tel. 0845 456 6811
- **Kidscape:** www.kidscape.org.uk Tel. 088451 205 204
- **NSPCC:** www.nspcc.org.uk Tel. 0808 800 50000
- **Parentline Plus:** www.parentlineplus.org.uk Tel. 0808 800 2222

Conclusion

- The procedures are put forward to ameliorate situations should they have unfortunately and sadly developed.
- On the sure basis that prevention is better than cure; the school will aim to further develop the caring ethos of the school community, being as forthcoming in the presentation of this atmosphere as in its condemnation of bullying.
- Presentation of these attitudes should be made in all school activities, e.g. classroom, assemblies, playtimes, extra-curricular activities, etc.
- No opportunities should be missed for presenting the positive, caring approach which will decrease the need for the more negative anti-bullying campaign.

Agreed by: Director, Esmá Izzidien