

F.6 Eaton Square School Anti -Bullying Policy

Our community is based upon respect, good manners and fair play. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment, so that every one of our pupils can develop his/her full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed; but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

In writing this policy, consideration has been paid to the DCSF guidance on the prevention of bullying contained in *Safe to Learn – Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*, which takes over from the earlier document *Don't Suffer in Silence*. This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Behaviour Policy.

All members of the school staff should be alert to the possibilities of signs of bullying. In some cases bullying is unwitting and not consciously done, in others it is a wilful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the victim and the bullies. It affects the children who may witness violence and aggression and the distress of the victim. It may damage the atmosphere of the school. Less aggressive pupils may be drawn into the taunting and tormenting of victims by group pressures.

Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

Bullying can take many forms including racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, disability and cyber, but the three main types are:

Physical	hitting, kicking, taking belongings
Verbal	name-calling, insulting, racist remarks, including chat room and SMS
Emotional	spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups

There is a difference between the premeditation of cruel words or violent actions and a spontaneous outburst. For this reason bullying can be defined as the repeated behaviour by individuals or groups. The School is alert to the seriousness of bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour).

Our Aims and objectives

It is important to remember that the potential for bullying can exist in all schools in some form or other. We must therefore aim:-

- (i) to encourage and enhance the security of our pupils
- (ii) to recognise that bullying disrupts learning

- (iii) to recognise that bullying can have a knock-on effect on absence from school

A Commitment to our Pupils

The staff of Eaton Square School make a commitment to all pupils that reported incidents will be:

- Taken seriously and dealt with sensitively
- Followed up with necessary action and support
- Brought out into the open where appropriate, demonstrating that anti-social behaviour will not be tolerated

Warning Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Not all victims of bullying will show that they are suffering at school. Many feel that admitting how bad things have become will increase their torment at the hands of the perpetrators if they risk telling someone, are afraid no one will believe or support them, or are too embarrassed to admit what is happening. The school must openly encourage pupils to report all incidents of bullying that are observed or experienced first-hand. Centralised records of bullying incidents are kept to enable patterns to be identified.

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoiled by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the office with symptoms such as stomach pains or headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance or late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiences nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away

How do cases of bullying come to light?

- A member of staff noticing that things are not as they should be
- The victim talking to a member of staff
- Other pupils talking to a member of staff
- Parents contacting the school, sometimes requesting that the source of information be kept secret

Response Procedures

How do we react to parents or pupils reporting bullying?

- Make them feel at ease
- Give them time to explain the situation. Listen
- Make notes
- Pass no immediate judgment
- Make it clear that the problem will be treated seriously and looked into as a matter of urgency

How should we proceed?

- If the matter is of a very serious nature, refer the matter immediately to the Headmaster and the Senior Management Team.
- If you are dealing with a child not in your own form then it is essential that the form teacher and the Senior Management Team is kept informed throughout.

General Procedure

- Make a preliminary investigation by talking to witnesses (if any).
- Consult with colleagues – find out relevant history/background.
- Interview children separately to test their version of events.
- If one party admits to being the aggressor, he/she should be left in no doubt about the School's disapproval of his actions. He/she should also be told that a full account of what has happened will be kept 'on file' for future reference if necessary.
- If, as sometimes happens, both parties feel aggrieved, it may be possible to get the children to shake hands and end the matter with urgency.

Recording incidents

The following procedure should be followed in recording incidents of bullying and also as a means of conveying to all concerned how seriously the school regards bullying behaviour.

- The bullied pupil should record the events in writing (a member of staff may act as scribe if necessary).
- The bully should record the events in writing (a member of staff may act as scribe if necessary).
- The Form Teacher must report the incident without delay to either the Head or Deputy Head.
 - The Form Teacher and Head or Deputy Head should record their discussions with both parties at the time. The details should be retained on a pupil's file.

Reaching a Conclusion

After interviews have taken place and written records have been made the Senior Management Team will:

- Contact the parents of the pupils involved
- Decide upon an appropriate sanction for the bully (as appropriate to the individual case)
- Inform the staff of the details/developments in Staff meetings
- Continue to monitor the situation, alongside the teaching staff

Support

Bullied Pupils

Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Pupils who have been bullied will be given support.

Bullies

It is recognised that support must also be given to the aggressor. Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

Where pupils do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tougher action will be taken to deal with persistent and violent bullying. Sanctions might include:

- Removal from the group (in class)
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum

It also includes a fixed term and permanent exclusion from school.

An exclusion would only be considered in a case of extreme and continuing bad behaviour, bullying, sexual harassment etc.

Involving Parents in Procedures

- In the instance of very serious behaviour, for example, serious bullying or a serious racist incident, parents would be contacted immediately and invited to come to school.
- Should a child be involved in a number of such incidents the Headmaster would ask to meet the child's parents in order to discuss further actions. At this meeting, which will be minuted, the Headmaster would advise the child's parents that should such serious incidents of anti-social behaviour continue exclusion procedures will be implemented.

Tools for Prevention and Education

Eaton Square School adopts the following tools in an attempt to prevent and educate its pupils about bullying:

- Having a visible set of descriptive school rules, which the pupils are familiar with
- Engaging children in role-playing, creative writing exercises and open discussions about bullying in line with the PSHE curriculum
- Emphasising the importance of reporting incidents of bullying, both observed and experienced, and including confidentiality as an option in making such reports
- Holding assemblies that deal with the issue of bullying

- Ensuring strict supervision of all areas of the school and taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely
- Raising awareness of staff through training and through pastoral care meetings and internal training

Cyberbullying

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

Cyberbullying – Preventative Measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Eaton Square School

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as “hotmail” is not allowed.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from “buddy lists”, through using resources from Childnet
- Arranges for Childnet to attend Parent Information Evenings to advise parents on the dangers of the internet and cyberbullying
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Does not permit mobile phones or cameras in School.