

Watchfield Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy 2024

“At Watchfield we SOAR”



Updated September 2024

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Anti-Bullying Approach

Bullying can happen in any school. At Watchfield Primary School, bullying is extremely rare. We have these principles and roles in place to ensure that any bullying is quickly stopped.

Definition

Bullying is actions that are meant to be hurtful and which happen on a regular basis. Bullying can be direct (physical or verbal) or indirect (e.g. being ignored or not spoken to). There can be specific types of bullying, including identity-based bullying.

Aims and objectives

Our school is a safe and secure environment where everyone can learn without anxiety. Bullying is wrong and damages children's social and / or emotional health. We therefore do all we can to prevent it by sustaining a positive, happy and healthy whole school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

The role of pupils

All children should know that hurting someone (physically or emotionally) is wrong and that bullying is wrong. Pupils should tell any adult (school staff or parent/carer) if they are being bullied, or if they think they might be. If bullying persists, they must keep on letting people know. Pupils should tell us their honest views about school in regular feedback e.g. weekly Circle Time or SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) sessions, School Council meetings, informal conversations with Headteacher. These views can be specifically about bullying but may also be about how safe they feel at school.

The role of teachers and other staff in school

All staff take all forms of bullying seriously; they aim to ensure bullying is not acceptable at our school. All staff should communicate to children the message that hurting someone (physically or emotionally) is wrong and that bullying is wrong and unacceptable. If staff witness an act of bullying, they should investigate it themselves and ensure a member of the Senior Leadership Team is informed.

Adults fully support the child being bullied. Time is spent with the child to restore the child's confidence, happiness and other aspects of health – this will usually be by the Pastoral Lead, but other adults will monitor and restore the child's well-being through checks, smiles and other 'signs' that they are being looked after and are safe. The child's parents/carers will be consulted. They also aim to stop the problem: for the child who has bullied, we inform parents/carers. Some time is spent with the pupil who has bullied to explore reasons for the pupil's actions and demonstrating why their actions are unacceptable - as above, this will usually be by a member of the Senior Leadership Team, but other adults will be vigilant about monitoring the child's choices and well-being.

All teachers and support staff should equip themselves with skills and awareness e.g. through available CPD, policy reviews. All teachers and teaching assistants should follow PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Education), SEAL and Circle Time activities on a weekly basis where sessions should centre around bullying and how people can help stop bullying if there are any signs of someone being bullied in school.

On an annual basis, they should participate with their class in national Anti-Bullying Week. They should follow the principles set out in this policy and in our values in order to continue our school climate of mutual support and praise, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to exist.

The role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team ensure all principles and roles set out are implemented. They follow all principles and roles set out for teachers and other staff (above). In particular, this includes ensuring that all children in school know that hurting someone (physically or emotionally) is wrong and that bullying is wrong and unacceptable at Watchfield Primary School. This is on a regular basis and may also stem from any signs of bullying. Assemblies are used to communicate this to the whole school. The Headteacher keeps a record of bullying, including any identity related bullying; he /she is able to report incidents on request. The Headteacher reports to the Governing Body about the effectiveness of the policy on request.

The role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers have the responsibility of supporting this entire policy on positive relationships and behaviour. Parents/carers concerned about bullying should contact their child's class teacher or the Senior Leadership Team straight away. They might be worried that their child is being bullied, but they should also contact school if they suspect their child may be bullying someone else. If they are dissatisfied with the response, they should follow our complaints procedure and submit a formal complaint to the Governing Body.

The role of Governors

The Governing Body supports the school in all principles and roles set out here. It does not condone any bullying at all in school. Any incidents of bullying will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately. It monitors incidents of bullying and reviews the effectiveness of this policy. It requires the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors about the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies. It will respond to any formal complaint from a parent/carer in line with our complaints procedure.

Prejudice Related Approach

Like bullying, prejudice related incidents can exist in any school. At Watchfield Primary School, it is extremely rare. However, our school is committed to having these principles and roles in place to ensure that prejudice related incidents can be quickly stopped.

Definition

In order to understand the definition of prejudice-related incidents and bullying, we use the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry Report definition of racism. Here, racism is defined as: 'conduct or words which advantage or disadvantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin'. A racist incident is defined as 'any incident which is perceived as prejudice related by the victim or any other person'. This definition is subsequently now used to define all types of prejudice-related incidents (A A prejudice-related incident is defined as 'any incident which is perceived as prejudice by the victim or any other person'. Prejudice related behaviour is any hostile or offensive act or expression by a person against a person / group of another identity group. It can also be any incitement to act or express themselves in such a manner that would interfere with the peace and comfort of a person / group, regardless of whether that person / group are present or not. Prejudice related incidents in an educational institution can include:

- physical assault because of race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, or pregnancy and maternity
- derogatory name-calling, insults and jokes;
- discriminatory graffiti;
- provocative behaviour e.g. wearing racist, sexist, homophobic, bi phobic, trans phobic badges/insignia;
- bringing discriminatory materials e.g. leaflets, magazines into school;
- verbal abuse/threats;
- incitement of others to behave in a discriminatory way (whether or not the group are aware or not);
- racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, bi phobic, disablist comments in the course of lessons;
- ridicule of differences e.g. including cultural such as food, music, dress and those related to all protected characteristics
- refusal to cooperate with other people because of their identity

Aims and objectives

Our school is a safe and secure environment where everyone can learn irrespective of their background or identity. . It is not possible to achieve this if anyone faces prejudice or hostility. Prejudice related bullying is wrong. We therefore do all we can to prevent it by sustaining a positive, happy and healthy whole school ethos in which equality of opportunity is fundamental.

We want to:

- make our school safe and welcoming for all pupils, parents/carers, staff;
- sustain an environment in which racist assumptions, attitudes and behaviour are challenged;
- sustain an environment in which we all recognise and celebrate our similarities and our differences;
- provide a curriculum which emphasises the positive aspects of all identities and protected characteristics;
- give all pupils, parents/carers and staff the confidence that prejudice related incidents can and must be eradicated from our society;
- ensure staff are always aware of implicit prejudice related incidents and issues surrounding the use of correct terminology, customs, language etc;
- ensure staff directly intervene when they are aware of prejudice-related incidents.

The role of pupils

All children should know that prejudice related bullying is wrong. Pupils should tell any adult (school staff or parent /carer) if they know of any prejudice related bullying in our school. If bullying persists, they must keep on letting people know. Pupils should tell us their honest views about school in regular feedback e.g. weekly Circle Time or SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) sessions, School Council meetings, informal conversations with staff. These views can be specifically about prejudice related bullying but may also be about how safe and welcome they feel at school.

The role of teachers and other staff in school

All staff take prejudice related bullying seriously; they aim to ensure prejudice related bullying is seen as unacceptable. Teachers and teaching assistants should communicate to all children, other staff and to parents/carers the message that prejudice related bullying is wrong and unacceptable at Watchfield Primary School and in society. All prejudice related incidents will be dealt with no matter how trivial they may seem to be.

If staff are aware of prejudice related bullying, they should refer it to the Senior Leadership Team directly. Adults in our school fully support the victim of prejudice related bullying. Time is spent to restore the victim's confidence, happiness and other aspects of health. For children, this will usually be by a key adult known to the child, but other adults will monitor and restore the child's well-being through checks, smiles and other 'signs' that they are being looked after and are safe. The child's parents/carers will be consulted. They also aim to stop the problem.

For the child who has used prejudice related behaviour, the 'Warnings' consequences are put in place (including informing parents/carers); there is also the possibility of some form of exclusion. Time is spent with the pupil who has used prejudice related behaviour to explore attitudes and reasons and to make clear that his / her actions are unacceptable - as above, this will usually be by the Senior Leadership Team, but other adults will be vigilant about monitoring the child's choices and well-being.

Any prejudice related incidents have to be reported to the governors each term. For a member of staff who has used prejudice related behaviour, disciplinary procedures will be pursued. For a parent/carers, legal advice will be sought. All teachers and support staff should equip themselves with skills and awareness e.g. through available CPD, policy reviews. All teachers and teaching assistants should follow PSHE (Personal, Social, Health Education) and Circle Time activities on a weekly basis; these sessions and other teaching should not shy away from discussing prejudice related bullying, how unacceptable it is and how people can stop it if there are any signs. Where most effective, term topics should promote community cohesion and how to make a positive contribution to society. They should follow the principles set out in this policy, our Ethos and Values Statement and our Equal Opportunities in order to continue our school climate of mutual support and praise, so making prejudice related incidents less likely.

The role of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team ensure all principles and roles set out are implemented. The Senior Leadership Team follow all principles and roles set out for teachers and other staff (above). In particular, this includes ensuring that everyone in school know that prejudice related bullying is wrong and unacceptable. This is on a regular basis and may also stem from any signs of prejudice related bullying.

Assemblies are used to communicate this to children. In the case of serious incidents, an assessment must be carried to find out whether the whole school community must be informed i.e. whether teachers must explain circumstances to pupils in order to reduce distortion and backlash and whether parents/carers should be informed. Serious incidents are reported to the police. If there is an allegation against a member of staff, it should be dealt with according to School Policy. Discriminatory graffiti must be removed /deleted as soon as it is evident; if this is not possible, advice will be sought and pupils, parents/carers and staff are made aware of the situation; movement around school may be re-directed. Issues surrounding prejudice related bullying and its unacceptable nature are made very clear to all.

The Headteacher monitors the effectiveness of staff in promoting community cohesion and positive relationships, and in providing support for victims of prejudice related bullying. The Headteacher reports to the Governing Body about the effectiveness of the policy termly. The Headteacher has overall responsibility for dealing with prejudice related incidents and recording the action taken; reporting to the local governing body any incidents of prejudice related bullying on a termly basis.

The role of parents/carers

Parents/carers have the responsibility of supporting this entire policy on positive relationships and behaviour. Parents/carers concerned about prejudice related bullying should contact their child's class teacher or the Senior Leadership Team straight away. They might be worried that their child is a victim of prejudice related bullying, but they should also contact school if they suspect their child may have used prejudice related behaviour to someone else. If they are dissatisfied with the response, they should follow our complaints procedure by putting a formal complaint to the Governing Body.

The role of governors

The Governing Body supports the school in all principles and roles set out here. All prejudice related bullying will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately. It monitors prejudice related incidents and reviews the effectiveness of this policy termly. It requires the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all prejudice related incidents and to report to the governors about the effectiveness of prejudice related strategies. It will respond to any formal complaint from a parent/carer in line with our complaints procedure.

Support

It is recognised that victims of prejudice related bullying may be fearful of the consequences of reporting an incident. However, systems and procedures are robust and staff, leadership and governors will respond in a caring, positive and thorough way. Victims will receive immediate help from an appropriate member of staff in order to reduce the effect of shock and avoid / reduce longer-term distress.

Cyber Bullying

Definition

"Cyber-bullying is the use of Information Technology (IT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, to deliberately upset someone" There are many types of cyber-bullying, although there may be some of which we are unaware, here are the more common:

- Text messages that are threatening or cause discomfort
- Picture / video-clips via mobile phone cameras-images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
- Mobile phone calls: silent calls or abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
- Emails: threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
- Chat room bullying: menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web based chatroom
- Instant messaging (IM): unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online
- Bullying via websites: use of defamatory blogs, personal websites and social networking sites e.g. Bebo, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter

How is cyber-bullying different?

Bullying is bullying wherever and however it take place. Cyber-bullying is a method of bullying that uses ICT to upset, threaten or humiliate someone and has the following key characteristics:

- Cyber-bullying can take place at any time, in any location; technology allows the user to bully anonymously
- Cyber-bullying can occur on vast and rapid scale
- Electronic content is very hard to control; it can never be guaranteed to be removed totally from circulation
- Bullies can take actions to attempt to be anonymous and can feel 'distanced' from the incident
- 'Bystanders' can easily become perpetrators
- The 'profile' of a cyber-bully or a target varies – age /size is not an issue
- Cyber-bullying incidents can be used as evidence
- Cyber-bullying can occur unintentionally often due to a lack of awareness/empathy – 'It was only a joke'
- Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe
- Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults (e.g. the numerous acronyms used by young people - POS – Parents Over Shoulder, TUL– Tell You Later); this makes it difficult for adults to recognise potential threats

At Watchfield Primary School, we take this bullying as seriously as all other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually. An episode may result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in a parental discussion. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, a member of the schools safeguarding team may follow up concerns as appropriate. Clearly, more serious cases will result in further sanctions. Key advice to pupils adapted from DCSF guidance, the following points are taught to pupils on a regular basis, especially when teaching about internet use:

- Always respect others – think about what you say online and what images you send/post
- Remember that anything you publish online can be made public very quickly and you will never be sure who may have seen it; once something is posted you lose control
- Treat your password like a toothbrush: never share it with anyone and only give your personal information like mobile phone number or email address to trusted friends
- Learn how to block or report online bullies or anyone behaving badly!
- Don't retaliate or reply.
- Save the evidence – text messages, online conversation, pictures etc.
- If you're worried, always make sure you tell an adult you trust or contact someone like Childline, the service provider e.g. website, mobile phone company, school or police
- If you see cyberbullying take place then support the victim and report the bullying

- There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, www.kidscape.org.uk has some useful tips.

Key advice for Parents/Carers

Adapted from DCSF guidance, the following points are communicated to parents/carers in newsletters:

- Be alert to your child being upset after using the internet/phones—they may be secretive, change relationships with friends
- Your child is just as likely to be a bully as to be a target
- Talk to your child and understand how they are using the internet and their phone
- Use safety tools and parental controls – if you're not sure how, contact your service provider. Please note tools are not always 100% effective
- Remind your child not to retaliate
- Keep any evidence of cyber-bullying – emails, online conversations, texts etc
- Report the cyber-bullying
- Contact the school so they can take action if it involves other pupils
- Contact the service provider e.g. website, phone company etc
- If the cyberbullying is serious and a potential criminal offence has been committed then consider contacting the police.