

The St Neots Learning Partnership Preventing and Tackling Bullying

Bullying can have a profound effect on the health and well-being of children and young people. The aim of this policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated within the Learning Partnership.

This policy document has been developed and constructed in consultation with a working party of students from both Academies, supported by the In-School Support Service.

Context

The St Neots Learning Partnership (SNLP) recognises fully its responsibility under the *Education and Inspections Act 2006* to prevent and respond to bullying as part of its overall *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*. Through day-to-day contact with students, the staff at each Academy have a crucial role to play in preventing and tackling bullying.

Under the *Equality Act 2010* schools are required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty under which schools have a duty to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the *Children Act 1989* a bullying incident should be investigated to assess the potential of triggering a child protection concern when there is *'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'*. The member of Academy staff investigating the bullying incident who feels this is the case should liaise with the designated Child Protection staff at each Academy, who will work with Pastoral Support Teams to take the most appropriate measures to resolve the situation.¹

This policy sets out how the Governing Body discharges its statutory responsibilities in relation to preventing and dealing with bullying involving children who are students at Longsands and Ernulf Academies.

How Can Bullying be recognised?

The St Neots Learning Partnership supports the Cambridgeshire Office of Children and Young People's Services (OCYPS) adoption of the definition of bullying as:

" the persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone"(Cambs OCYPS 2007).

¹Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence; for example, under the *Malicious Communication Act 1988*, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

It has also been defined as:

“Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally” (Safe to Learn, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2007).

Longsands and Ernulf students have further defined potential or actual bullying as follows:

When a person or people’s behaviour, over a period of time, leaves you feeling one or more of the following:

- physically and/or mentally hurt or worried;
- unsafe and/or frightened;
- unable to do well and achieve;
- “badly different”, alone, unimportant and/or unvalued;
- unable to see a happy and exciting future;

...it *could* be bullying.

When a person has, or people have, been made aware of the effects of their behaviour on another person, but they continue to behave in the same manner, this *is* bullying.

Both Academies also subscribe to the St Neots Schools’ Forum’s “Bullying – A Charter for Action” and endorse the Forum’s adoption of the “4 Ps” test for the description of Bullying, which is that it:

- * abuses *power*
- * is *premeditated*
- * is *persistent*
- * is *painful*.

Types of Bullying

As noted above, bullying is being **intentional, persistent, involves an imbalance of power and has a negative effect on the victim**. Students identified the following examples of bullying:

Name Calling

is the most prevalent form of bullying. Verbal bullying can often carry a strong hint of violence. The use of modern technology means that this kind of verbal bullying can extend beyond the school day and invade life at home.

Physical Bullying

includes hitting, kicking, biting, scratching, pushing, and tripping up on purpose. Anything that hurts you by touching you is physical bullying.

Social Isolation/Exclusion

is behaviour leading to social isolation. It includes spreading gossip and ignoring and can be especially difficult to identify.

Indirect/Collusion Bullying

includes spreading rumours or stories about someone, telling others about something that was told to you in private, and excluding others from groups.

Racist Bullying

occurs when someone does or says things that offend someone else, in connection with their colour, background, culture or religion. It can include a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that can make a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded, powerless or worthless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith community, national origin or national status. Examples include when a person is:

- teased or called names because of their culture or the colour of their skin, their religion, the country they come from, their language and the way they talk, the food they eat, clothes they wear or their background;
- stereotyped by their colour or religion;
- rejected or excluded from a group because of their colour or religion;
- made fun of – or their family is made fun of;
- treated unfairly because of their way of life.

Homophobic Bullying

is directed towards young people who are openly gay, bisexual, are perceived as gay, or show characteristics often associated with the opposite gender. When heterosexual young people are subject to homophobic bullying they can be reluctant to report it, as this may reinforce the stereotypical way in which they are already viewed by others. The bullying is often verbal, but can also be physical, and in serious cases constitutes assault, leading to investigation by the police.

Cyber Bullying

is the latest form of abuse. As new technologies develop, new forms emerge, such as text and e-mail messaging, and most recently malicious postings on websites. *Cyber bullying* involves sending messages, pictures, or information using electronic media, computers (email & instant messages), or mobile phones (text messaging & voicemail).

Bullying Outside School Premises

In accordance with the *Behaviour and Discipline Policy*, members of Academy staff have the legal right to discipline students for inappropriate behaviour, including bullying, which occurs when they are off the school premises, such as on school or public transport. Staff may also take action in relation to 'off-site' bullying that originates in school or has impact on a student's well-being or progress.

Prevention

The SNLP Statement of Purpose, Values and Outcomes implicitly supports the prevention and tackling of bullying by working in partnership with students, their families and the wider community to ensure each pupil should:

- be safe;
- be respected as an individual, and;
- enjoy and achieve in school and beyond.

The response to bullying does not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. More proactive approaches, in which Academy staff gather intelligence about issues between students which might provoke conflict, enable us to develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place, such as:

- use of Pupil Attitude to School and Self survey (PASS) at the point of primary/secondary transfer, discussions with primary school teachers and members of the Locality Team;
- sharing good practice via Student Support Teams and Departmental teams, including high levels of staff patrol at break and lunch;
- talking to students about issues of difference, in ECM lessons, through dedicated events or projects (Anti-Social Behaviour Day Event, Anti Bullying Week) and through assemblies.

Procedures

How can students voice concern and ask for help?

Those who have been bullied can be greatly demoralised. They can be concerned that “running to the teacher” will make the issue worse. Therefore, to help the victims of bullying ask for help there are a number of ways to raise alarm:

- ask to discuss the problem with your tutor;
- tell a friend and ask for their help in telling a teacher/tutor;
- visit the KS3/4/5 Student Support Offices;
- talk to a parent who will contact Student Support;
- fill in a ‘Help’ form on the “We Can Help” page on each Academy’s intranet.

When staff are alerted to a problem with bullying we will activate our recording procedures. Both Academies have well established systems of recording key events, both in a paper-based student file system and via the School information Management System (SiMS). In addition, when there is a reported incident of bullying, a centralised record is kept for the purpose of monitoring. The Monitoring process is described later in this document.

Support to the victims of bullying and the bully

A clear message from the student working party was that both the victim and the bully need support to tackle current bullying and to prevent repeated bullying. However, it is unlikely that a ‘one size fits all’ cure can be applied. Therefore, once the full extent of the bullying is clear, members of the relevant Student Support Teams will use a variety of support packages, including Restorative Approaches.

Restorative Approaches involve:

Meeting with the victim of bullying...

in which they have an opportunity to outline the upset of their experience. Such a meeting will be designed to ensure the victim has been listened to, feels supported, and has their confidence rebuilt. Once the process is finished the victim should feel stronger and believe

that they are safe. During this meeting possible enhanced support will be explored e.g. counselling.

Meeting with the bully

in which the bully can be encouraged to develop a sense of empathy for the feelings of the victim and an understanding of the impact his/her behaviour has had. Equally, the bully must be listened to and given an opportunity to outline why he/she has behaved in an inappropriate manner. Such a meeting will explore whether the bully needs additional support to enable a change in displayed behaviour, which could include counselling.

Before or after this meeting, and once the investigation has been completed it may be appropriate to issue relevant sanctions due to the level of inappropriate behaviour displayed by the bully. Such sanctions may vary from a reprimand and/or internal exclusion (LinE) to fixed term exclusion or, ultimately, permanent exclusion.

Further details about Restorative Approach practices which aim to promote mutually respectful relationships and manage behaviour and conflict to build on community cohesion are set out in Appendix 1.

Monitoring and reviewing incidents of bullying

Records of incidents will be stored electronically by the SIMS Manager. The following monitoring process will then take place:

- Heads of KS3/4 and 5 ensure that all bullying incidents are identified and recorded; at the outset of a bullying allegation, a bullying incident form is completed (see appendix) and filed with the Sims Manager;
- the Sims Manager tags the relevant file electronically and stores the incident form;
- at the start of each half term the Sims Manager produces a log of bullying incidents and updates the relevant incident form;
- as the investigation progresses statements, file notes and other information are recorded and stored on pupil files in the normal way; copies of relevant information are placed on the files of all students who have been involved;
- on a half termly basis, staff with responsibility for key stages use their "bullying incident" file to review progress in on-going cases, and update the relevant incident form;
- school records are routinely destroyed after 10 years; however, using the electronic archived file as an index, relevant electronic files can be identified and stored indefinitely.

Appendix 1

Restorative Approaches

In the *Learning Behaviour Report* (April 2009), Sir Alan Steer recommends that schools have in place systems to address bad behaviour that are "...swift, intelligent and effective. The interventions must protect the interests of the majority while aiming to change the behaviour of those causing difficulty." Steer also states that "...tough love towards children can be appropriate, but a purely punitive approach is immoral, damaging to society and doomed to failure."

Restorative Approaches in Schools (RAiS) provides schools with a range of practices which promote mutually respectful relationships and manage behaviour and conflict, address bullying and absences and build community cohesion. Restorative approaches are not new, but offer a framework upon which to build on existing good practice. There is a wealth of evidence that shows how the use of Restorative Approaches alongside Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) helps to develop more resilient and self-regulating learners, thus creating positive learning environments.

The Restorative Approach is to challenge those who behave inappropriately to find a solution that is meaningful and meets the needs of those harmed. It is solution focused, personal and more likely to build bridges.

The Restorative Approach has become embedded when all members of the school community see incidents where harm has occurred as 'teachable moments' to be learnt from and seek opportunities to facilitate conversations in which harm can be repaired, thus empowering all those involved to own the situation, and find the solution.

Restorative questioning allows those involved to tell their story, from their perspective and to be listened to in a way which assures no pre-judgement.

The Five Questions:

- What's happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Who has been affected?
- In what way?
- What needs to be done to make things right?

A restorative intervention is voluntary for all those involved. Paradoxically, it is the voluntary nature of the approach that encourages people to participate.

Once participants have found a way forward, they agree on the best way for the harm to be repaired and what outcome would best meet their needs and ensure that the incident will not be repeated. The agreed actions form an outcome agreement.

Appendix 2

Further Sources of Information

DfE resources:

DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance

<http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/f0076803/advice-forheadteachers-and-school-staff-on-behaviour-and-discipline>

Make Them Go Away (SEND DVD)

Let's Fight it Together (Cyber bullying DVD)

Specialist Organisations:

The *Anti-Bullying Alliance* (ABA), founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

Beatbullying is a bullying prevention charity with an emphasis on working directly with children and young people. In addition to lesson plans and resources for parents, Beatbullying has developed the Cybermentors peer support programme for young people affected by cyber bullying.

Kidscape is a Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection, giving advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people.

Cyberbullying:

ChildNet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.