

Water Orton Primary School

Anti-Bullying Toolkit

Sept 2024

This document is designed to be used alongside the Anti-Bullying Policy and the Relationship and Behaviour Policy to support children, staff and parents.

Introduction

This document is to enable the Governing Body of the school to fulfil its statutory responsibilities under Section 175 and that the school complies with legal requirements regarding the safeguarding of children of the Education Act 2002.

This document used good practice identified in a best practice guide developed for Warwickshire by Rachel Evans. Rachel sadly passed away in 2011 and the county names the guidance 'RACHEL'S Anti-bullying Guide'.

The Legal Context of Bullying

Everyone who works with children and young people has some legal responsibilities:

• **Children Act 2004:**

Section 10: the third outcome, 'protection from harm and neglect' specifically mentions bullying.

Section 11: 'safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children'.

• **Common law 'duty of care':**

Taking 'reasonable care to avoid causing foreseeable harm'.

• **Equality Act 2010:** Schools and other agencies that receive public funding must promote equality of opportunity for those with a protected characteristic to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against because of these things.

Schools should be reporting prejudice related incidents. Schools (including maintained nurseries) have further responsibilities:

Head teachers have a duty to encourage good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. They should also have a written anti-bullying policy (which can be incorporated into their behaviour policy).

• **The Education Act 2002 as amended in the Education Act 2011**

Schools must 'safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils'.

• **Education and Inspections Act of 2006 as amended in the Education Act 2011**

Schools have powers under this act:

- To regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off site or not under the control of teachers 'to such extent as is reasonable';
- To search through mobile phones if they suspect they are being used for bullying and/or to confiscate them if they are being used to cause a disturbance.

Definitions of Bullying

WHAT IS FALLING OUT AND WHAT IS BULLYING?

Sometimes it can be hard to tell the difference between **bullying** and the normal 'ups and downs' or 'falling outs' of peer relationships. The following checklists may help with this.

Falling out can involve:

- *equal power*
- *those involved are friends*
- *no pattern or very isolated previous negative actions*
- *there is no premeditation to upset or harm*
- *the aggressor shows sincere remorse afterwards*
- *both parties are interested in repairing the relationship*

- *both children are involved in the actions - not one-sided*
- *the children want to stay friends after the incident*

So what is bullying?

Water Orton's and Warwickshire's Definition of Bullying

Young people frequently describe bullying as a subjective experience – it is about how someone feels, not about what is actually done to them. Lots of things can leave us feeling bad, sometimes it depends on the situation we are in, and **it is not always bullying**

However, it can be hard to put effective anti-bullying strategies in place, unless we have a common understanding.

A definition, adapted from one written by the Anti-bullying Alliance, is also useful:

Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- **is meant to hurt** – the person or people doing the bullying **know what they are doing** and **mean to do it**
- **happens more than once** – there will be a pattern of behaviour, **not just a 'one-off' incident**
- **involves an imbalance of power** – the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves
- *Bullying is defined as **deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time**, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The bullying results in pain and distress to the victim or target.*

So bullying is likely to involve...

- a power imbalance, **one-sided** (not a fight where both parties are to blame)
- no underlying or previous real friendship
- the target/victim is isolated without peer support (so not groups against groups)
- a pattern of **repeated negative actions**
- actions are **premeditated and purposeful**
- the aggressor will gain control, power and/or items
- the person who bullies shifts blame
- the aggressor shows **no sincere remorse**
- the aggressor is not interested in repairing relationship

Bullying and equality issues are very closely linked. People can have prejudices about all sorts of things, for example size, family background, social class and lifestyle choices including fashion and music taste.

The different types of bullying are changing all of the time:

- **physical** - (hitting, kicking, pushing, punching or any use of violence theft, damaging belongings)
- **verbal** - (name-calling, sarcasm, taunting, teasing, threats, offensive or racist remarks)
- **emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **relational** (e.g. spreading nasty stories, gossiping, excluding someone from social groups)
- **cyber** (e.g. texts, phone calls, e-mails, picture/video clip bullying, Instant Messaging (IM), sexting or social media: Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook etc.
- Where individuals or **groups target different people**, this should be seen as a pattern of bullying behaviour and treated as such.

Prejudice driven bullying

Prejudice-driven bullying can destroy a young person's sense of individual and cultural identity.

The four main types of **prejudice driven** bullying are:

- **racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures. Bullying someone because of their ethnic background, nationality, religion or skin colour
- **sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments. Bullying someone because of their gender or sexual orientation
- **homophobic** - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- **disablist** – bullying someone because they are disabled and/or have specialist educational needs.

However, **anyone** can be targeted due to prejudice – it is about perception, not fact.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO BULLYING?

Bullying is wrong. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

The effects on the **victim/ target** can include any or all of the following:

- Low self esteem
- Loss of confidence
- Impact on achievement – personal, social and academic
- Behavioural problems – including adopting bullying behaviour themselves
- Depression
- Self harm/suicide

Signs of Bullying

Sometimes it can be very hard to see any signs of bullying – young people who are bullied are often too scared or embarrassed about it to tell anyone and may go to great lengths to hide it. This can be especially true of cyber bullying, where they may worry that the solution adults give them will be to stop them from using the technology involved. However, there can be some tell-tale signs of bullying, both in those being targeted and those doing the bullying.

School staff, family and friends are often the first to notice signs of bullying but it is important that all adults working with children and young people, including those in informal roles (e.g. lunchtime assistants, play workers) know the signs and know what to do if they spot them. Parents and carers should be alert to the possible signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy.

The following are not in themselves, signs that bullying is occurring, but should be considered in the context of the child's 'normal' behaviour:

- headaches/stomach-aches (feels ill in the morning)
- anxiety, clinginess to adults, begins to stammer or show new signs of nervousness
- irritability, becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable, lacking concentration
- is cruel or is unusually unkind other children or siblings and sees violence as fun
- is repeatedly unwilling or reluctant to go to school or begins to truant
- higher than average level of and /or unusual absences
- is anxious of walking/ travelling to or from school
- sudden changes in routine behaviour
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- has unexplained cuts or bruises, attempts or threatens self-harm or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares

- has lost or damaged personal possessions or comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- asks for money, money starts to go missing or monies are continually 'lost'
- comes home starving or stops eating
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- begins to do poorly in school work
- is withdrawn, exceptionally non-communicative or is frightened to say what's wrong
- seems worried about using the internet or mobile devices
- is nervous or secretive when messages or emails are received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

A Child/young person who is bullying others might show the following signs:

- Cannot explain where they got money or other things
- Talks aggressively/negatively about others
- Lacks empathy or understanding of other people's feelings
- Is increasingly aggressive or sees violence as something positive or fun

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in schools.

Cyber Bullying

As the use of technology increases so does its misuse of it to bully others.

The impact of cyber bullying can be devastating for several reasons, including:

- There is no escape – it can reach you anywhere, even in your own home
- The audience can be very large and reached very quickly
- One incident can become repeated attacks as it is passed around or posted onto different websites.

Technology is a powerful and positive force in lives and we want to encourage children and young people to use it. What is important is that we educate them to be responsible and to keep themselves safe. We also need to make them aware of the possible consequences if they choose to engage in cyber bullying, as it is something that some young people can become involved in without being fully aware (e.g. forwarding a 'funny' text). Although cyber bullying itself is not a specific criminal act there are several laws relating to the use of technology that can be used to tackle it – full details are available in the government guidance. In addition, since September 2007 schools have had the power to take action when pupils misbehave outside of school, —to such extent as is reasonable. This includes involvement in cyber bullying.

Therefore, if you become aware of concerns about cyber bullying, even if you are not based in a school, it may be helpful to contact the relevant school about it.

We also need to educate adults – professionals, parents and carers – so that they are able to support children and young people in relation to cyber bullying. In our research we asked young people what their 'top tips' were for professionals/agencies.

Their suggestions were:

1. Provide more support to those who are cyber bullied and challenge and support those who choose to engage in cyber bullying

2. Provide more education and raising awareness of the issues and how to keep safe
3. Provide more protection, for example monitoring of internet use, blocking of certain sites
4. Provide centre/group support, e.g. somewhere to go, schemes to provide support
5. Make more use of punishments – harsher sanctions for those who choose to engage in cyber bullying
6. Create and/or signpost to local and national sources of support including helplines and websites.
7. Inform the police – support young people in doing this if it is serious
8. Research the issues more to find out what is needed

Roles in Bullying

The nature of relationships between children and young people is often complex and at times very difficult to manage. Children and young people are learning about themselves, about social values and expectations and inter-personal relationships all the time. Bullying is essentially about the misuse of power within those relationships. Research suggests that most bullying situations involve several people in different roles; these are described as follows:

- **The target**, the person who the bullying is aimed at
- **The ring-leader**, the person who through their social power can direct bullying activity
- **Assistants/associates**, who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader)
- **Reinforcers**, who give positive feedback to the ring leader/assistants, perhaps by smiling or laughing
- **Outsiders/bystanders**, who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour
- **Defenders**, who try and intervene to stop the bullying or comfort pupils who experience bullying (adapted from 'Safe to learn' guidance, DCSF 2007)

The people involved may switch roles or adopt more than one role at a time. However, if we can identify the different roles that people are playing, we will be better able to change the power dynamics involved. Young people frequently say in research that getting support from their friends/peers is the most effective way of stopping bullying – so as professionals we need to build upon this, giving young people the skills and confidence to help each other.

Children and Young People Who Choose to Bully Others

Anyone can choose to bully others. It is important to remember that **bullying is a behaviour**; it is something that **someone chooses to do**. For some children and young people it may simply be that they are 'experimenting' with power and, as soon as they realise the impact of their behaviour, they regret their actions. For others though, the reasons may be more complex and the bullying behaviour much more sustained.

For these young people it may be that:

- They are being bullied themselves
- They feel unimportant
- They want to be accepted by a particular group or gang
- They want to get their own way
- They don't know it is wrong
- They are copying people they admire
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out their anger
- They lack empathy and so do not understand or care about the impact of their behaviour

Children and young people who initiate/lead bullying activities are also likely to suffer adverse effects, although at times these may seem less obvious. These can be:

- exclusion
- low self esteem

- need to sustain 'public' image
- see aggression/violence as a solution to problems
- more likely to get involved with the criminal justice system
- learn to build relationships based on abuse of power.

People often talk about 'bullies', applying a label about behaviour to a person. Research tells us that labelling can be self-fulfilling. It is extremely unhelpful in the management of bullying.

Talking about people having '**chosen to use bullying behaviour**' is much more effective

Research tells us that....

- almost 90% of school bullying takes place with bystanders present
- when peers intervene, they may be successful in more than 50% attempts to stop the bullying.

How Can We Use This Information in Our Practice?

Whatever the reasons, recognising that bullying is **a behaviour** is crucial in two ways; firstly **it is something that can be changed** and secondly it is **something that needs to be continually highlighted as unacceptable**.

Targets of bullying

Just as anyone can choose to use bullying behaviour, so anyone can be bullied – there are no easily definable reasons why some people are targeted and others are not.

We do know that **children from some groups are more likely to be bullied than others**.

Vulnerable groups

Whilst we know that anyone can be targeted in bullying, there are some groups who are more vulnerable than others.

What research tells us	Possible reasons
<p>Children with disabilities/special educational needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disabled children and those with visible medical conditions can be twice as likely as their peers to become targets for bullying behaviour • The National Autistic Society found that two out of five children on the autistic spectrum had been bullied at school. • Mencap found that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 out of 10 children with a learning disability were bullied • 50% had been bullied in more than one place • Bullying did not stop for 4 out of 10 children when they told someone <p>Sources: ABA Disability Briefing 2007 Mencap report 2007</p>	<p>Children with disabilities/special educational needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may not realise they are being bullied • may return to bullying situations – any attention is better than none • may not understand the impact of their behaviour on others • may be manipulated by others • may be less able to report and/or access support

What research tells us	Possible reasons
<p>Children from black and minority ethnic communities</p> <p>There has been no large scale research into racist bullying. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that bullying of children from Muslim backgrounds in particular is increasing, and the bullying of children and young people from Traveller communities is also known to be a major issue.</p> <p>In Warwickshire, research with young BME people suggested that they do not connect racism with bullying so therefore would not say they had been bullied even though they had experienced racist abuse. They also said they would be unlikely to report racism as they did not feel it would be acted upon, and that people generally take bullying much more seriously than racism.</p> <p>Source: Warwickshire Children's Trust Needs Assessment Field Study 2009: Racist Bullying</p>	<p>The main reasons for racist bullying are often not about the targets themselves but about the wider social climate, for example</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political tensions • Media influences • Stereotyping • Learned racist attitudes • Separate incidents of racist abuse from a range of individuals not being recognised as bullying <p>However, in addition, children and young people from BME backgrounds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be isolated and lack support, in some cases even within their own families • may accept racism as 'part of life' • may 'act out' anger related to their (sometimes subconscious) wider experiences of racism • may collude with racism so that they are accepted by the majority group
<p>Children/young people who are, or are perceived to be, gay or lesbian:</p> <p>Stonewall found that:</p> <p>Just over half (55%) of young lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils have experienced direct bullying. 99% of young gay people hear the phrases 'that's so gay' or 'you're so gay' in school.</p> <p>Over half of lesbian and gay pupils don't feel able to be themselves at school.</p> <p>1 in 5 of gay pupils do not feel safe or accepted at school.</p> <p>Sources: The School Report, Stonewall 2012</p>	<p>Homophobic bullying may be linked to wider social issues, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learnt attitudes/values about gender roles and sexuality • Political/religious tensions • Homophobic bullying may be linked to the ring leader's insecurity about his/her own sexuality
<p>Looked after children:</p> <p>60% of looked after children report being bullied in school compared to 17 per cent of all children</p> <p>Looked after children are 13 times more likely to be permanently excluded than their peers</p> <p>Sources: Social Exclusion Unit 2003. BAAF 2004</p>	<p>Looked after children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may have lower self esteem/self confidence • may have less stability - friendship groups/ support networks • may associate 'telling' with negative experiences • may have lower expectations of relationships • may be 'acting out' previous experiences/ issues • may have learnt aggressive and/or 'victim' behaviour • may feel they have less control over their life generally • may have carers who don't know them well enough to recognise warning signs • may have carers who may be less involved with their school life

In addition to the above groups, young people have told us that they feel there is a link between bullying and mental health issues.

The Impact of Bullying

Bullying can have a negative impact on all of those who are involved.

Children and young people who are targets of bullying may be at risk of physical harm. They may also internalise the issues, that is, blame themselves and/or believe what is being said about them. Even if they understand the bullying is not their fault, their confidence and ability to deal with it may be affected.

Children and young people in ‘bystander’ roles may be affected in different ways, depending on how they respond within those roles.

Effects may include:

- fear of becoming a target – leading to bullying behaviour
- gaining a sense of power that they want to continue – leading to further bullying behaviour
- need to sustain public image
- guilt and helplessness at not stopping the bullying
- may become a target if they try to withdraw or help

Anti-Bullying Practice

Preventing Bullying

There are several things we need to put in place to help us tackle bullying, in particular:

- Taking a whole school/agency approach
- Having an effective anti-bullying policy and named lead person
- Having clear processes to respond to bullying
- Recording and monitoring bullying

Whole School Approach

All people who work at Water Orton Primary School should put the welfare and wellbeing of children first.

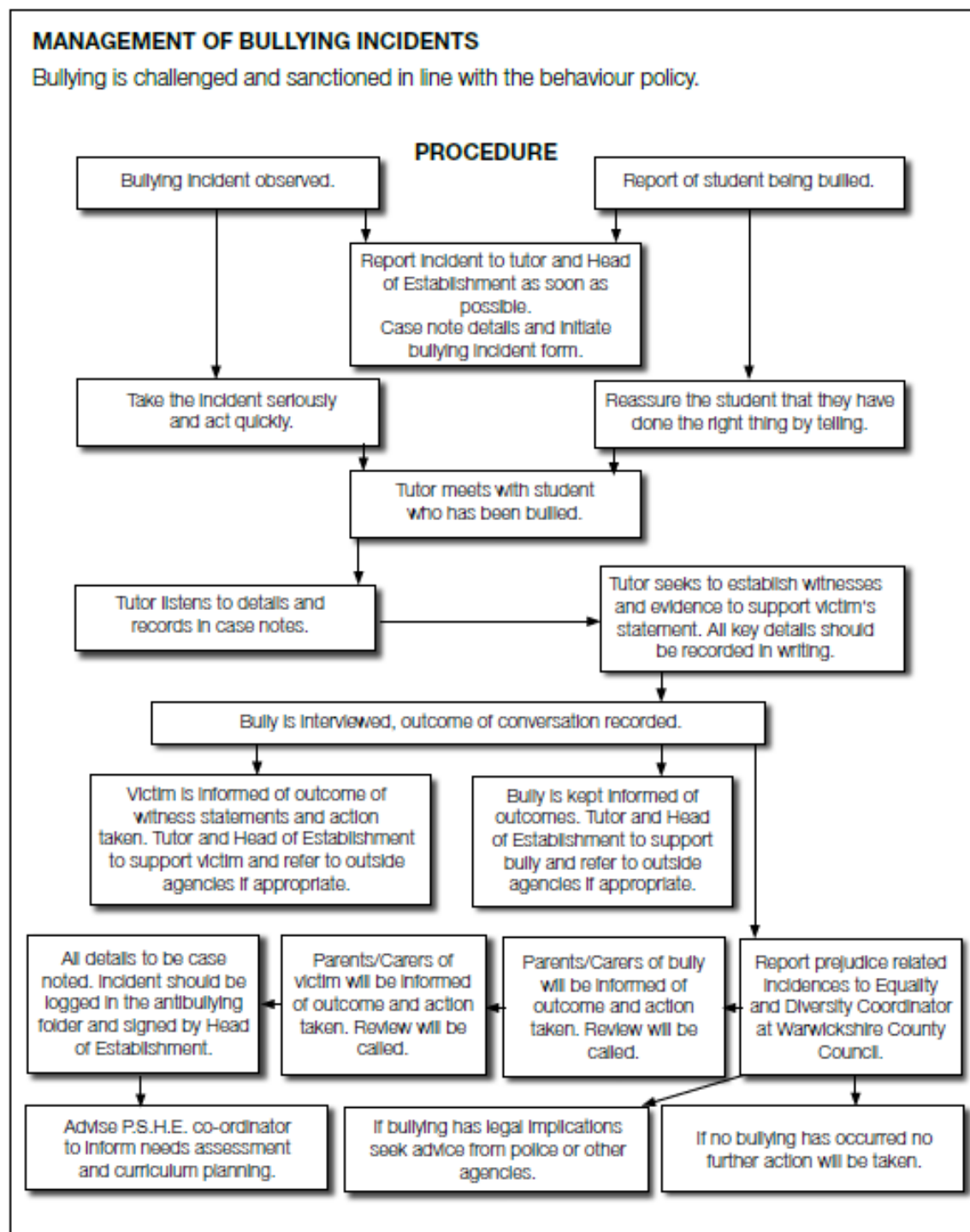
The school achieves this through consultation, policy development and training over time. It means embedding an ethos throughout the school which supports the idea that bullying is not acceptable, that children are valued, have a right to be safe, and that promotes open communication about issues and concerns.

Other specific areas to think about in relation to anti-bullying work are:

- Linking anti-bullying work with existing anti-discriminatory work, e.g. in PSHE, citizenship and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning activities in schools
- Embedding this work across the whole curriculum
- Conveying key messages to children, young people and parents/carers

Developing a process for dealing with bullying

It can be very helpful to develop a process map or flow chart of the process that will be followed when bullying occurs. This helps everyone to know what to expect and what their specific role is.



Recording and Monitoring of Bullying Incidents

If we are to tackle bullying effectively, it is important to build up records of what bullying is taking place and how it is being dealt with. This information can help in three ways:

- It can help us to measure the success of our anti-bullying strategies and to identify and address any

- issues that may arise can provide evidence, both to highlight good practice, for example in inspection processes, and also in case of a need to defend our practice, for example in complaints processes
- It can help us to identify patterns and trends, which in turn can help us to address any issues that become apparent.

This could be at different levels, for example:

- patterns across the whole setting, e.g. is there a particular issue with cyber bullying?
- patterns for groups of children/young people e.g. is there a particular problem on Monday night after school club or with year 6?
- patterns for individuals – are the same names cropping up? Are there particular times of day/
- activities in which problems seem to arise?

Staff members are instructed to record bullying incidents on a 'beige, bullying form'. These forms are available to staff and can be found in the office and onedrive. Staff are trained annually on safeguarding and how to use these forms is part of this training and inductions for new staff.

Often when organisations become pro-active about tackling bullying they see a rise in reports of bullying incidents. This can be very disheartening, but is in fact often an indication that children and young people know better how to report and are more confident in doing so. Comparing our own statistics with other organisations, or with national data, may not be that useful and a more helpful measure will be a comparison with your own data year on year. What is also important is that you record not just the number of reports but also the number that are resolved.

Responding to Bullying

There are three elements to consider when looking at how to respond to bullying:

1. **record and investigate concerns**
2. **support the person being bullied**
3. **support the person/s doing the bullying and also apply sanctions**

Recording and Investigating Concerns

As already noted, **the school has a system in place for recording reports of bullying incidents and all staff should know what the process is.** The next step is to **investigate** – this may involve talking with the child or young person being bullied, those accused of bullying, other people in the peer group and/or looking at other evidence e.g. texts or web pages. Where there is hard evidence it is important to preserve this. It is also important, in the case of cyber bullying, that you don't rely wholly on technological evidence, but also use real life witnesses as well. If the bullying involves a criminal act, you may need to involve the police, for example:

*obscene images on phones or the internet *hate crime – prejudice driven activities *physical assault.

If an allegation of bullying is made against a **member of staff or adult working with children**, this should be investigated as a safeguarding allegation, with referral to the **'Keeping Children Safe in Education Policy and Staff Behaviour (Code of Conduct) Policy**. These policies are on the school's website.

Working With the Person Being Bullied

- Listen to them and try not to judge any actions they have taken/not taken so far. They have done the best they could.
- Reassure that they have done the right thing in telling, provide emotional support
- Try to contain the incident if needed e.g. cyber bullying
- Talk through options/strategies and agree next steps.
- Involve other support/agencies as required
- Agree when/how to review the situation

When supporting young people who are being bullied, it is important to try and balance 'rescuing' with 'empowering'. It is extremely important that the bullying stops and it may be that direct adult intervention is

needed to make this happen. However, if every time something happens an adult comes along and sorts it out the young person may learn to be 'helpless' and may not gain skills that can help them to deal with future problems. Therefore, it is important to help them build resilience and problem-solving skills, helping them to develop skills they can use again. This could involve:

- Helping them to externalise the problem
- Acknowledging and 'giving permission' for feelings – fear, shame, hurt, anger – whatever they are, feelings are OK and natural. Help them to think about ways of managing them
- Exploring ways of coping and addressing the problem and talking through the possible consequences of each. It is important to help them explore all the options, even if you don't agree with them
- Help them consider, what do they want to happen next? What help/support do they need?
- Let them try it their way and agree when/how to review it
- Make sure they know that you will step in if they need you to

Things that they can do	Things that they (or you) can ask other adults can do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running away • Making a lot of noise • Ignoring • Fogging (e.g. taking the power out of verbal insults by agreeing with them) • Blocking (texts, websites etc) • Fighting back • Staying with groups • Asking friends for support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct action – challenging those who are bullying • Indirect action – assemblies, group work • Give help to identify and access other sources of support
<p>If you have serious concerns about a young person's physical or emotional well being, treat it as a safeguarding/child protection issue</p>	

Working With the Person/people Doing the Bullying

There are several things to think about when working with children and young people who choose to bully. Whilst it is important to recognise and address underlying issues, it is also vital to ensure that they know that bullying behaviour is unacceptable. For this reason it may be that a combination of support and sanctions is needed.

Support

- Talk with them about what they have done and help them think about why they have done it
- Try to identify other issues in their lives which may be impacting on their behaviour
- Involve other support/agencies as required
- Help them to develop positive behaviours by thinking about the following:
 - Bullying is BEHAVIOUR; you CHOOSE to do it
 - How would they feel if it was them or their brother/sister being targeted?
 - What are their triggers/motivations for bullying?
 - What are their long term goals, and how might their behaviour now affect them?
 - What would help them stop choosing bullying behaviour?
 - What actions/small steps can they take?

Sanctions

The aim of sanctions should be to:

- Help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop
- Hold the perpetrator/s to account, getting them to recognise the harm caused and deter them from repeating the behaviour
- Demonstrate to others that bullying is unacceptable and that the school/organisation has effective ways of dealing with it
- The way that you use sanctions will depend on the ethos of your organisation. It is important that children, young people and parents/carers know what sanctions may be used and in what circumstances

Supporting Parents/Carers

Finding out that your child may be involved in a bullying situation can be very difficult. A parent or carer who is worried that their child is being bullied may experience many emotions, for example fear, anger, guilt, a sense of failure, a primitive urge to protect their young. A parent or carer whose child is accused of bullying others may also experience a range of emotions and become very defensive and/or simply refuse to believe it.

General Advice

If you are talking in general terms about bullying with parents/carers, here are some general things you might like to say:

- Talking with their child about their life, friends and school whenever they get the chance will help them identify any possible problems
- Children learn from the examples we set them - so parents/carers need to show them what is acceptable behaviour and what isn't. Children who live in a home where people bully each other can learn to bully or to think it's OK when other people bully them
- Changing schools can be difficult for some children as they have to sort out new friendships and how to cope in a different environment. If a parent/carers is concerned at any point, talking with their teacher can nip any possible problems in the bud
- Children and young people do have to learn about relationships - and falling out with people is part of that process. There will also be battles for power within groups, which may be unpleasant at times. However there is a difference between the normal ups and downs of relationships and bullying
- Sometimes the parents/carers of children who are involved in bullying start to take it out on each other. This should be avoided because it can make it worse, and make it harder for schools or other organisations to sort out
- If the bullying is related to school, even if it is outside, the school may be able to help
- If the bullying is nothing to do with school, other organisations like youth clubs, community centres or the police may be able to help

Reports of Bullying

If a parent reports a concern about bullying, we aim to:

- Listen to them, acknowledge their concern and the range of emotions they feel
- Encourage them to keep a written record of what has happened and keep any evidence e.g. nasty texts or emails (take a screen shot or screen grab and give a copy to the headteacher – or lend them the device so that they can do this).
- Help them to agree the best course of action. This will depend on where the bullying is happening – if it is your own setting, you will need to explain what action you will take and then follow your own procedures. If it is happening elsewhere you will need to help them identify who they need to tell, and/or agree to report it yourself as appropriate.
- Help them find other sources of support for themselves if they need to. Supporting children in bullying situations can be very stressful and can also trigger memories of bullying for the adults concerned, which can be hard to manage

The Complaints Process

If the bullying is happening in school it can usually be sorted out through discussion with the class teacher. Parents/carers can also ask at any time to see the school's Anti-bullying policy. If the bullying isn't easily sorted out, there is a formal process that parents/carers need to follow:

- Talk to their child's teacher. Ask to speak to them in private (not on the playground) and preferably give the teacher notice to arrange an appointment rather than 'catching them' on the playground
- If a parent speaks to or contacts the admin staff, **they need to be clear who the call is about, that it relates to bullying** and that they would like the teacher to contact them (with the appropriate details)
- Whilst it may be private or sensitive, **the more information that the teacher has in advance, the more they can do or find out before they speak to the parent/ carer**
- **Parents / carers need to try to stay calm, to be patient** and to remember that **the teacher will want to resolve the issue**, but will be teaching a whole class with limited chances to return a call
- When meeting with the teacher, be calm and reasonable; allow them to talk and suggest a plan to find out more
- Agree a way forward and **be clear about what both parties expect to happen** and by when
- Check regularly with their child to see if things have improved. If not, they should make an appointment to talk with the teacher again. If this is unsuccessful, the phase or team leader can sometimes assist
- If this is not successful, the parent or carer should **contact the office to make an appointment with the deputy head or the head teacher**. They should plan for the meeting by thinking about the key issues/points they want to make and taking any notes or evidence they have about what has happened and consider a range of options they would wish to be implemented in order to address the matter

If after meeting with the head they are still not happy, they can write formally to the Chair of Governors. There is a complaints form and this should be sent to the **Chair of Governors** at the school address and the enveloped marked "**Private and Confidential**". They should check the school's Complaints Policy for more information about how to do this. This is available on the school website.

If their complaint is unresolved, a parent feels that the school has or is proposing to act unreasonably, or has failed to discharge a legal duty, they can write to the Secretary of State for Education.

Specific Strategies to Address Bullying

In addition to general anti-bullying work, there are some specific strategies that **can be used**. The diagram below highlights some of these strategies. Around the edges are the elements of a whole school/agency approach that support effective anti-bullying work. Other strategies have been grouped as follows:

- Specialist – for those who need more intensive support
- Universal – i.e. for general use with all children and young people
- Targeted – i.e. for those who have been identified as needing some extra support to prevent more serious issues developing

Who to Talk to Signs

The school has signs placed in all classes and main areas reminding children what to do if they are worried about something.

They act as prompts for the child to decide if they need to talk and have photos to show other people who may be able to help including: the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the learning mentor.

If there is a perceived need in a given class or year group, a box is placed in each class, where pupils can put notes about bullying concerns. Pupils could write their own notes asking for advice. When these are set up, the class teacher or assistant checks the box regularly and follows up on concerns raised in a discreet and sensitive manner.

CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services – Now rebranded as RISE)

RISE is a multi-agency service that provides specialist support to children and young people in relation to mental health issues, for example psychotherapy and psychiatry. They also commission a range of services that are available to schools, for example, counselling and play therapy. Local research has indicated that young people feel there is a strong link between bullying and mental health problems, so an awareness of these services is important for everyone who works with children and young people.

PSHE Sessions

Time is set aside for workers and children/young people to take part in enjoyable activities, games and discussion. The positive atmosphere generated usually spreads into other areas of activity.

This:

- Creates a safe space to explore issues of concern
- Explores relationships with adults and peers
- Enhances effective communication
- Affirms the strengths and enhances the self-esteem of each member.

Participants listen carefully, making eye contact with one another, and address particular problems - for example, relationships, anger, fighting and bullying. The group agrees on simple, positive rules which encourage them to:

- Focus on their own feelings and those of others
- Listen to one another, and tolerate each others' views
- Learn to take turns
- Discuss difficult issues using a problem-solving approach

Putting this method into practice needs good organisation and links to other anti-bullying strategies. School staff are trained in this activity.

Circle of Friends

Sometimes known as 'Circles of Support', these build relationships around a vulnerable child.

The method must first be explained to the child and the parents, whose agreement and support are essential. Circles aim to:

- Improve the level of acceptance and inclusion of the child
- Help the child make friends inside or outside the Circle
- Increase insight into the child's feelings and behaviour

The class or group meet with a trained member of staff who explains it is unusual to talk in this way about a child who is not present, but making clear that the child has agreed to the discussion.

The class/group members then:

- Describe the child - only *positive* things may be said
- List things about the pupil that they find difficult
- Discuss how *they* would feel and behave if they were isolated or socially excluded - Consider how they might help. They typically produce two clear solutions: offering friendship, and

- finding ways to keep the child on track.
- Identify what might stop the child changing
- Volunteer to form the child's Circle of Friends (between six and eight pupils)

Soon afterwards, the initial Circle of Friends meeting takes place, including the focus child. Ground rules are negotiated and aims clarified about helping them to make friends and change any negative behaviour. In turn, circle members explain why they volunteered. The leader asks '*What do we like and value about this person?*' and responses are written down. Next, the leader carefully asks about the child's negative behaviour. The group brainstorms strategies for helping the child, which are recorded and then prioritised. Finally, Circle members come up with a name for their group, and subsequent weekly meetings of thirty to forty minutes are set up.

Mentoring and Sulp Groups

Individual and/or group support may be helpful for some children and young people to help them explore what is happening and ways of coping with situations. There are a range of different approaches from the child knowing that they can drop in and talk to the learning mentor, to regular times each week where the child and mentor can talk. There are groups which follow the Social Use of Language Programme (Sulp) method of helping children to become more aware of communication and how to interact appropriately with others. In this process the target child(ren) will join a group of peers in which there will be at least two role models who can demonstrate good social skills and communication along with two or three other children. They will undertake structured activities which allow for discussion, modelling of good communication and social skills to take place. This can include taking turns in playing a game. There may also be Social Stories or role play, which helps children to understand a challenging scenario.

Counselling

Individual and/or group counselling may be helpful for some children and young people to help them explore what is happening and ways of coping/changing. There are a range of different approaches to counselling, and a number of different agencies who can provide this service. Counselling may be provided via an Early help or through RISE.

'No Blame' / Support Group Approach

This approach to tackling bullying was very popular a few years ago but is less so now. Like most approaches, it may work in some situations and/or with some adaptation. In particular it may be a useful approach to use when there are allegations of low-level bullying but **no clear evidence and/or it is difficult to determine** whether it is more a case of children/young people 'falling out'.

A technique which can be used to tackle bullying in school is the No Blame Approach. As the name suggests, one of the most important things about this approach is that it deliberately avoids accusations, blame and punishment. The first step is to interview the child that has been bullied, with the aim of finding out how he/she feels. The child will be asked to draw a picture or write something to communicate his/her distress. With the child's full knowledge and approval, the next step involves getting together the children involved in the bullying (including bystanders) and perhaps some non-involved children. This group (which does not include the child who has been bullied) will then be made aware of the distress of the child who has been bullied and will be encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to come up with ideas for helping the child who has been bullied feel happier. It should be mentioned that the No Blame Approach (which may mistakenly be viewed as a technique which condones bullying) can also be described as the Support Group Approach.

It should be noted that the No Blame Approach is particularly useful in dealing with group bullying and name-calling. However, it may be an inappropriate response to other types of bullying. It should only be applied with the full agreement of the bullied child and after a professional judgement has been made about whether the bullying children are capable of understanding the hurt they have caused. A small number of children who bully others have serious social, emotional and behavioural problems. In such cases the No Blame Approach could expose the victim to the possibility of even more bullying.

Peer Mediation and Mentoring

These are two different approaches that are often confused. Both involve young people supporting each other but in very different ways; peer mentors have a befriending, advisory role while peer mediators are impartial facilitators.

Peer Mentoring

Peer mentoring involves training young people to act as mentors for others, often through transition, either on a one-to-one or group basis, for example a year 6 pupil might mentor one year 4 pupil or two year 6 students might mentor a small group of year 3 pupils. Mentors can provide useful support for pupils who are dealing with bullying or other difficult issues.

Peer Mediation (Play Pals)

This involves a neutral person helping others resolve their disputes in a structured way. The aims are to:

- Enable both the pupils to identify problems and solutions, defusing tension between peers
- Ensure that all involved come away with a sense that the outcome is fair to both sides
- Peer mediation in Warwickshire has often been developed in primary schools, e.g. training all school staff and year 5 pupils in mediation skills. This way, in addition to the impact of the mediation itself, all year 5 pupils also gain insight and awareness through the training process.
- Whilst it is common in anti-bullying work to focus on peer support, there are also mentoring and mediation services provided by adults like our learning mentor, which can be a very useful source of support to children and young people.

Protective Behaviours (The Taking Care Scheme)

Protective behaviours is a national approach to helping children learn to keep themselves safer; in Warwickshire it is also known as The Taking Care Scheme. This scheme aims to improve the safety and well-being of children in Warwickshire by teaching them skills that will empower them to keep themselves safer in a variety of situations.

The Taking Care Scheme aims to do this by:

- Training school staff so they understand the principles of the Taking Care Scheme and are able to carry on with this work independently after the project workers have left, and deal appropriately with situations that arise within the school.
- Using tried and tested age-specific resources.
- Protective Behaviours is about empowerment, communication, self-esteem and other life skills.

Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)

RSE is statutory in Primary Schools in England. Its aim is to help children learn about relationships and to help keep themselves safe by teaching them skills that will empower them and make them more aware of how to manage relationships and particularly about consent, as well as reinforcing messages about E-safety and social media, making themselves safer in a variety of situations.

HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Warwickshire Family Information Service

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis> or

<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/bullying>

The FIS have a good anti bullying guide that you can download

<http://apps.warwickshire.gov.uk/api/documents/WCCC-859-135>

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 0207 354 8321

Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

Bullying Online www.bullying.co.uk

Children's Legal Centre 0845 345 4345

Youth Access 0208 772 9900

Useful Websites

General anti-bullying

- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.bbclic.com
- www.beatbullying.org
- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.childrenslegalcentre.com
- www.kidscape.org.uk

Equality and diversity

- www.schools-out.org.uk (Homophobia)
- www.stonewall.org.uk (Homophobia)
- www.eachaction.org.uk (Homophobia)
- www.britkid.org (Racism)
- www.un.org/cyberschoolbus (Racism)
- www.theredcard.org (Racism)
- www.ncb.org.uk/cdc (Disability)
- www.mencap.org.uk (Disability)
- www.nas.org.uk (Disability)
- www.youngminds.org.uk (Disability)

Cyber Bullying

- www.childnet.com – a range of resources for primary and secondary schools, for children and young people, for teachers and for parents
- www.cyberbullying.org – one of the first websites set up in this area, for young people, providing advice around preventing and taking action against cyberbullying. A Canadian- based site
- www.chatdanger.com – a website that informs about the potential dangers online (including bullying), and advice on how to stay safe while chatting
- www.netismartz.org – an American online safety site with activities for children, young people, parents/carers and professionals
- www.stoptextbully.com – a website dedicated to mobile phone bullying, contains advice for young people including how to contact your operator
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk – UK online safety site of the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre with lots of information and activities
- www.wiredsafety.org – an American internet safety site with lots of information and activities

Support for parents

- www.ace-ed.org.uk – general advice about all education issues
- www.familylives.org.uk – site for parents specifically about bullying
- www.childrenslegalcentre.com – legal advice
- www.warwickshire.gov.uk/fis – information about local support and services for families

POLICY MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The school will review this policy every two years and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school. Monitoring data will be reported to the Governing Body as a section of the Headteacher's Report. Statistical information that falls within the following categories will be reported in the following ways:

- records of incidents
- frequency of incidents
- patterns of incidents
- meetings with School Council and pupil conferences
- surveys of parents, pupils and staff

APPENDIX 'A' CHECKLIST FOR DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH PARENTS

- ❑ Think about what you are going to say to the parent(s) first and tell a colleague where you will be meeting them. In a hostile situation, you may wish to ask a senior colleague to join the meeting
- ❑ Find a quiet and private place in which to discuss the incident
- ❑ Listen patiently and attentively
- ❑ Talk calmly and with compassion
- ❑ Although you may disagree with the parent's viewpoint, try not to become aggressive or accuse the parent of being 'wrong'. Try to allow them the opportunity to express their feelings or 'let off steam'
- ❑ Discuss the possible reasons for the problem or misunderstanding and focus on practical steps that can be taken to resolve it and avoid future occurrences (eg. Reward systems, communication through homework diaries and report books)
- ❑ If unable to answer questions there and then, inform the parent that you will investigate further and arrange another appointment to discuss the outcome
- ❑ Reassure the parent that you will give the issue your full attention and make them feel that their concern is important and that if appropriate, something will be done about it. If appropriate, for example, in the case of a specific issue you might offer to refer it to a colleague (e.g. SENCO)
- ❑ If the meeting is not the first regarding the issue and the parent remains unhappy because the matter has not been resolved, offer to refer it to your line manager eg: the phase leader, deputy head or head and ask for details of the best way that the parent can be contacted (phone no. Etc.)
- ❑ If a concern suggests a need for change to your current practice then make changes and if appropriate inform your phase manager that it may be an appropriate topic for discussion at management team level
- ❑ You may wish to make a note of the concern for future reference
- ❑ If a situation becomes hostile, remove yourself from the situation and seek help