

Anti-Bullying Policy – School

Statement of intent

At The Villa we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school. Staff, pupils and parents have a responsibility to ensure that bullying does not happen.

If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell a suitable person and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and efficiently.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the abuse of power [e.g. position, physical strength, numbers etc] to dominate or intimidate someone else. It is behaviour intending to hurt another person, resulting in pain and distress for the victim.

Bullying is a serious issue which can cause psychological damage and even suicide in extreme cases. While it may not be a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

Bullying can be:

Emotional

Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting [e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures]

Physical

Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any other use of violence

Racist

Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures

Religious/cultural

Because of or focusing on religious beliefs or cultural differences

Sexual/sexist

Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments

Homophobic

Because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality

Verbal

Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

Disability

Focusing on an issue of disability

'Cyber-bullying'

Unpleasant texts/emails/website postings either to or about an individual/group

Bullying may be long-term or short-lived; it may involve groups or individuals. It is important to respond to bullying because no-one deserves to be the victim of bullying. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

The Villa has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Likely victims of bullying could be, (but not necessarily are):

- New in a class
- Difference in appearance, speech or background
- Very high or low achievers
- Suffering from low self-esteem / unable to stand up for themselves
- Shy, anxious or nervous

Bullying is not...

It is very important to remember that bullying is NOT the odd occasion of falling out with others, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if this is done over a period of time on purpose.

Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset with someone else or a situation. When occasional problems of this kind occur it cannot be classed as bullying. It is an important part of all children's development to learn how to deal with conflict and friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop the appropriate social skills to deal with or repair relationships. It is also important for children to understand that if they themselves are upset or hurt someone and that person retaliates, it is not necessarily bullying on behalf of the other person (retaliation is not acceptable but it is not bullying).

Signs and symptoms

A pupil may signal by signs or behaviour that she/he is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a pupil:

- Is unwilling to go to school [school phobic]
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries him/herself to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions go 'missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money [to pay bully]
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

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

Advice for Pupils

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Wherever you are in the school you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you it is important to remember that there are people who can help you. TELL someone, preferably your teacher but all adults in our school are approachable and ready to listen.

When you tell an adult it is important to give as many facts as you can (What, Who, Where, When/How often, Why, How).

- Never be afraid to do something about it quickly.
- Always remember to talk to others about how you are feeling.

What can you do if you see someone else being bullied? (The role of the bystander)

- Ignoring bullying is cowardly and unfair to the victim.
- Staying silent means the bully has won and gives them more power.
- There are ways you can help without putting yourself in harms way.

Here are some useful tips on what you can do as a bystander:

- Remember not to smile or laugh at the situation
- It is important not to rush over and take the bully on yourself
- It is important not to rush over and join in
- If safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop bullying
- If you can, let the bully know you do not like his/her behaviour
- Get help from any adult at the school
- Tell a member of staff as soon as you can
- Try and befriend the person being bullied
- Tell the person being bullied that he/she must tell a member of staff

Advice for parents

Parents who have concerns about bullying should tell an appropriate person. In most cases this is likely to be their child's Class Teacher but, where there is a cause for serious concern, the Head Teacher must be informed in writing.

Staff Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying Incidents

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying at The Villa. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to any allegations of bullying or incidents:

1. Report all allegations of bullying and/or incident/s to staff
2. Staff will make sure that the victim/s is and feels safe
3. Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately
4. The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested
5. Staff will attempt to adopt a problem solving approach which will help to move children on from them having to justify their behaviour

6. Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying
7. Staff will reinforce clearly to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable
8. The bully (bullies) may be asked to make a genuine apology. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied (see next section)
9. If possible all pupils will be reconciled
10. An attempt will be made and support given, to help the bully (bullies) to understand and change his/her/their behaviour
11. In all cases of bullying the incident will be recorded. If an incident occurs at playtime/lunchtime the member of staff must report this to the appropriate class teacher who will also record the incident.
12. The class teacher (or senior member of staff depending on the seriousness of the incident) will report the incident to the parent/s (of the victim and perpetrator) either by telephone or verbally after school.
13. In serious cases the incident will be reported to a senior member of staff and parent/s (of the victim and perpetrator) will be invited to come into the school separately for a meeting to discuss the issue
14. After the incident or allegation/s have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
15. Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings
16. Parents will be encouraged to report to the school any concerns they have related to bullying and firm partnerships will be fostered with all parents.
17. The Headteacher will inform the Proprietor of any incidents of serious bullying

The following sanctions may be used as part of whole school procedures (these will obviously be in relation to the severity of any incident/s)

- Apologise to the victim/s verbally or in writing
- Lose playtimes
- Spend lunchtimes with an adult inside the school
- Parents invited into the school
- Behaviour recorded in form of behaviour chart/monitoring system
- Work in another classroom for a period of time
- Report to senior member of staff daily, weekly as appropriate
- Be withdrawn from participation in school visits, clubs, events that are not part of the statutory curriculum
- Fixed term exclusion (must relate to the severity of the behaviour)
- Permanent exclusion (must relate to the severity of the behaviour)

Strategies for the prevention of bullying

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school (as part the curriculum development and planning) to develop a positive learning environment in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

These include:

- Each class to agree own set of class rules
- Anti-Bullying information to be high profile
- Awareness raising through regular anti-bullying assemblies
- PHSCE scheme of work
- Circle time on bullying issues
- Children writing stories, poems, drawing pictures about bullying

- Children being read stories about bullying
- Using drama activities and role-play addressing conflict/friendships/bullying
- Implementation of positive play at break-times and lunchtimes
- Code of behaviour prominently displayed around the school
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce positive behaviour
- Encouraging the whole school community (that includes our parents/carers) to model appropriate behaviour towards one another and towards the school
- Children who require support relating to behaviour will be identified early and given the necessary strategies through behaviour plans and/or group work.
- Parents will be encouraged to work in partnership with school staff, including the SENCO, when necessary.