

## Crowton Christ Church Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy

### Introduction

This document outlines the practises to be followed in tackling bullying at Crowton Christ Church Primary School.

### A Policy-Statement For Bullying And A Statement of Commitment

The Governors and Staff of Crowton Christ Church Primary School recognise that as part of a whole school approach to behaviour, it is essential to address the problem of bullying. We recognise that bullying is a problem in all schools and it is essential to plan for its occurrence rather than merely react when a problem occurs.

Research indicates that the single most important thing a school can do to prevent bullying is to have a clear policy to which staff, parents and governors are committed.

Schools in which bullies are allowed to operate become stressful and unwelcoming places; not just for the victims but for all those who look on and feel threatened and helpless. Bullying affects everyone - other children, teachers, the class and indeed everyone associated with the school.

A whole school approach to discipline is essential. In isolation a policy on bullying is unlikely to make any impact. Being bullied can have a devastating effect on victims ranging from absenteeism and under achievement in school to depression and even suicide. Therefore this policy needs to be used in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Bullies and victims are not always stereotyped characters and a policy based on stereotyped assumption about the cause of bullying will probably fail.

Bullying can take many forms. It may be short-term or can continue systematically over months or years. Bullying can be verbal, physical or just a look. It can be overt or subtle intimidation. Different teachers, parents and children may define bullying differently - indeed some may not even recognise bullying when they see it. Such conflicting viewpoints and definitions need to be aired and discussed.

### Definitions

'*Bullying*' happens when a person is subjected to *repeated* hurtful acts over a period by another person or persons (NOT occasional fighting or falling-out), making them afraid or unable to work properly. Bullying can involve physical or verbal attack, social isolation, malicious gossip, damaging or stealing property or forcing the victim into acts, which they do not agree to.

*Retaliation* is not the solution as it only encourages more violence and tends to make matters worse turning victims into bullies. *Awareness* of bullying will be raised through Assemblies, PSE and informal discussions. We believe the most important strategy will be prevention and thorough investigation.

### Procedures For Dealing With Incidents Of Bullying

Bullying is dealt with in a similar manner to any other disciplinary incident and must be fully documented (see discipline policy).

Interviews between staff and alleged bullies is written down on a bullying report form and this information used in consultations with parents. These reports are kept in the pupil's files for one year. Sanctions may be used, as agreed in advance, to avoid any recurrence.

Following investigation by senior staff, parents who are not satisfied have the right to complain to the Governing Body about alleged bullying in accordance with the complaints procedure.

*Bullying is generally regarded as the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else.*

Given this definition it becomes necessary to state the kinds of behaviour, which we consider to constitute bullying. Such a statement needs to be publicised widely and must be compiled with reference to the views of all the adults and children in the school as well as governors and parents.

In order to bully someone, a bully has to have some sort of power over the victim.

Home and school values may conflict. This makes tackling the problem very difficult. The school may have to work in a climate where the values of the school differ from the values of home and at times of society itself.

*All bullying is hurtful either physical, verbal or psychological although not all aggressive behaviour is necessarily bullying.*

Any behaviour, (regardless of the age or sex of the child) which is the illegitimate use of power in order to hurt others, is bullying behaviour.

Silence and secrecy undermine the power of the school and affirms the power of the bully. This can be tackled through open discussion and the creation of an active, practical policy. To be seen to act is as important as taking action - silence and secrecy nurture bullying.

Traditional stereotypes of bullies are unhelpful. However, bullies do have some things in common: -

- i) Bullies tend to have assertive, aggressive attitudes.
- ii) Bullies tend to lack empathy: they cannot imagine what the victim feels.
- iii) Bullies tend to lack guilt: they rationalise that the victim somehow deserves the bullying treatment.

*However, stereotypes of victims can also be unhelpful.*

There are some children that are bullied because they speak, behave or look different. However, vulnerability is not always visible or obvious to adults - a victim may look like any other child.

How the school tackles bullying problems sends out a clear message to pupils and parents. One good reason for having an active school policy is that it helps to create a positive ethos. Such a policy can be a first step towards help for bullies and victims.

In order to be successful, any school policy on bullying must address a number of key issues. This is not done in isolation. It is seen as a whole school approach to discipline, consequences and rewards for good or acceptable behaviour. Unacceptable

behaviour of all forms is seen in terms of the consequences, which will follow such behaviour. If unacceptable behaviour has been defined and made known then choosing to behave in such a way is an acceptance of the set consequences, which will follow.

The most important and fundamental approach to the problem is to acknowledge that problems exist and that the school intend to deal with them. Bullying is a form of unacceptable behaviour, which needs modifying.

#### Identifying children at risk.

*We remember! Vulnerability is not always obvious.*

Such children often have: -

- i) No friends.
- ii) Unusual physical characteristics.
- iii) Poor communications and, or, poor co-ordination.
- iv) Volatile, or sulky or tearful behaviour.
- v) Illness.
- vii) Accent or racial differences.
- vii) Unpopular families.

Child protection issues run parallel with bullying issues (please refer to the Child Protection Policy for guidance on dealing with such issues).

#### Rights And Responsibilities

There is increased public awareness and media coverage. Most people in society would agree that individuals have rights. It seems obvious that children have basic rights and if this is so then it follows that adults have basic duties. Children have the right to feel confident enough to tell us what is happening to them - we have the duty to act.

The majority of children have a fear of bullying. However, most children are reluctant to talk about it. We need to consider why children do not talk to adults about bullying.

All staff are approachable and children know that they can go to all adults to raise issues of bullying. However, sometimes children do not tell anyone.

#### Why don't they tell us?

- i) Sometimes the victim feels that parents and teachers cannot or will not help.
- ii) Parents and teachers don't understand.
- iii) If you tell, it makes things worse.
- iv) They feel shame and guilt.
- v) They feel that in some way they must have deserved it.
- vi) They are frightened.
- vii) If it is hidden it might go away.
- viii) It is an accepted part of life - they must just put up with it.

If a child feels confident and has the confidence in us or is so desperate that they want to tell us then it is extremely important how we react. We can help by being positive.

As bullying is a form of abuse there are some general guidelines for adults when a child confides in them that they have been or witnessed bullying.

#### We:

1. Tell the child we are glad they have told us.
2. Acknowledge that they have been brave to tell us.
3. Reassure them that what has happened was not their fault.

4. Show sympathy - empathise but never patronise.
5. Reassure them that they are not alone - it happens to many other children.
6. Be honest about our position - we explain who we will have to tell and why.
7. Confidentiality is important, as is a realistic, positive offer of help.

We never:

1. Make promises we cannot keep.
2. "Interrogate" with lots of questions.
3. Cast doubt on what they tell us - we remember it has taken courage to tell us.
4. Say anything that makes them feel responsible for the bullying (e.g. Why have you never told me before?).
5. Communicate feelings of anger without saying it is the bully we are angry with (the child may think we are angry with them).
6. Panic - feeling that immediate action is required. (Acting in haste can be counter-productive).

What should we do if a bullying incident is reported or observed?

If a child reports a bullying incident then the first reaction of the adult to the child is of paramount importance. (See above guidelines).

Similarly if behaviour which could be bullying is witnessed, or we are told about it by another child or adult or we have a feeling that something is going on, but we are not sure, then the way in which the incident is handled initially can affect the outcome and the success of the investigation into the incident.

When an incident occurs we follow set procedures, depending on the severity of an incident.

We:

- i) Remove the victim and the bully from their audience.
  - ii) Do not enter into any discussion with victim or bully in front of other children.
  - iii) Separate the bully and the victim.
  - iv) Talk to the victim - we are sympathetic and non-judgemental. We tell them that action will be taken.
  - v) Speak to any witnesses or participants in the incident.
  - vi) Make brief notes of important evidence.
  - vii) Talk to the bully, stay calm - we let them have their say.
  - viii) Confront them with any evidence. We invite their comments.
  - ix) Tell them the incident will be written down.
  - x) Tell them their parents will be sent for and told about what has happened.
- ❖ If the behaviour is serious enough then the serious incidents procedure (see Behaviour Policy) will take immediate affect.
  - ❖ If the behaviour is repeated then the serious incidents procedure will come into affect. (Explain what this will mean to the bully).
  - ❖ Send for the victim's parents and tell them what has happened.

We do not get side-tracked. For example, if the victim is upset, crying, shouting or even swearing, we try not to see this as the most important element in the incident thus neglecting or forgetting the bullying. Similarly if the victim is always complaining about the way other children treat them we do not assume that there is no validity in the accusation.

Also if the bully has a past record of bullying it may not be the case that in this instance (s)he has been bullying. Sometimes, a child with a record of bullying, is accused unfairly by other children, of bullying. We do not jump to conclusions.

Children who are not participants but observers in the bullying incident can be encouraged to act in a positive way. They can, for example, be encouraged to write down what they saw happening.

When dealing with parents the class teacher does not get drawn into discussion or arguments in public. All parents are referred to the Headteacher. They are told that this is 'school policy'.

We always remember: An aggressive child is not necessarily a bully nor is the child who is upset always the victim.

#### Curriculum Opportunities For Preventing Bullying

Children are encouraged to tell - talk - trust. They need skills to deal with incidents. Drama is useful.

Books, both fiction and non-fiction, which relate to bullying are available in school. This will provide children with a vocabulary and encourage them to discuss feelings, fears, attitudes, and points of view.

We encourage discussions about bullying, consequences, ways of acting and speaking. Such discussions are a regular part of the curriculum. Religious Education and PSHCE provide opportunities to discuss the moral analysis of bullying and the discussion of its consequences. They also provide time for moral reflection. However, all subjects provide regular opportunities to work in groups, develop cooperation skills and encourage children to value their peers.

#### Reviewing This Policy

Because the School Discipline Policy will necessarily be reviewed from time to time, this policy is to be reviewed with the staff after two years. Staff will receive further training and more research and literature will be made available to keep staff up-to-date with modern thinking on bullying. Parents, children and staff will become aware of the intention to act positively in all cases of bullying.

As a consequence of this, the policy on discipline and bullying will be regularly monitored and updated. Further strategies and approaches to the problem will be required.

**Policy adopted by the staff in Nov 2022.**

**Policy adopted by the Governing Body in Nov 2022**

**Reviewed in Nov 2022 with the Behaviour Policy.**

**To be reviewed Nov 2023**