

## **Greenwich Steiner School**

### **Anti-Bullying Policy/Procedure**

**This policy reflects the guidance provided in *Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools – dcsf -00656-2007* )**

#### **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

- Physical violence and/or threat of physical violence including kicking, hitting, pushing
- Persistent verbal abuse including name-calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments.
- Prolonged and aggressive exclusion of another from the group activity, spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- Intimidation including through the use of text messaging and e-mailing, sending degrading images by phone or via the internet, producing graffiti, gossiping.
- Interference with the property of others.
- Incitement of others to carry out any of the points mentioned here.

GSS aims to create a school community where bullying is not tolerated. This means it is committed to:

- Discussing, monitoring and reviewing the school's anti-bullying policy on a regular basis and at least every two years.
- Supporting staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- Ensures that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn.
- Reports back quickly to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy and reflect its principles in their own relations with other adults in the school.
- Seeks to learn from anti-bullying good practice elsewhere and utilises the support of the local authority where appropriate and other organisations.

#### **PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING SITUATIONS.**

##### **Response levels:-**

1. An incidence of bullying is observed or reported. The staff member expresses disapproval and assures that it will be dealt with. Class teacher is informed
2. If the incident was serious or is one of a number, the Class teacher or Teacher responsible for anti-bullying policy initiate the 'No Blame' approach. Teacher

meeting, and parents are notified. Special stress is placed on all playground duty teachers being informed.

3. If the incidents persist, a letter will be sent home from the teachers and.
4. If incidents continue to persist the school doctor may be seen; possible curative/remedial/counselling help is sought.
5. Persistent deliberate bullying which does not respond to the previous levels is formally reported to the Management Group where the child's continued presence in the school is reviewed.

### **THE NO BLAME APPROACH**

When a bullying incident is observed or reported, the following steps can be taken if 'response level two' is required.

#### **1. Meet the pupil experiencing bullying**

Consider the age of those involved and adapt the guidelines accordingly. (For example, for the six, seven and eight year olds, a story may be told. A special verse or prayer may be given. Since the child still lives strongly in a pictorial consciousness these more subtle approaches can be very effective. For the nine year old and above these methods still have value but around this age the child is more aware of him/herself and you may chose to adapt the 'no blame' approach that follows).

The Class teacher does not spend much time discussing the incident, but needs to know who was involved and where and when it took place. They may ask the victim to write down or draw a picture showing how they feel about the situation. They may ask the child to tell him/her about the various symbols or colours etc. that have been used. This diffuses and deflects the situation, rather than polarising and inflaming it, which can easily happen if the whole class is involved. The parents of the children more directly involved are contacted.

#### **2. Meet with the people involved**

The teacher arranges to meet with the group of pupils who have been involved. This may include some bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate any bullying. A group of six to eight children usually works well.

##### **- Address the problem**

The group is told about the way the victim is feeling. A poem, painting, drawing or story may be used. These feelings could either be written or communicated by the victim to the teacher. Some published material may be used; however, the emphasis should be placed on communicating to the group the situation the victim finds him/herself in. Generally with pupils under twelve these feelings are best spoken by the teacher. The victim may like to be present and contribute, but alternatively may not wish to be present. At no time does the teacher/pupil carer discuss the incident or allocate any blame. The parents of the central figures are informed of the meeting and may be asked to contribute ideas.

- **Share responsibility**

At this stage there are two options:-

1. Talking to the class could be considered. This could involve a process to encourage empathy and social responsibility. This is helpful particularly if the bullying is non-specific in focus and a majority of the class are involved.
2. However it may be more appropriate to limit the discussion to those immediately involved. What is important is to let the group know that you have confidence that together they can do things to make the situation better.

- **Ask the group for their ideas**

Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. Guidelines and rules for problematic games or regularly occurring 'trigger' situations could be mutually agreed. The teacher gives a positive response but is careful not to extract a promise of improved behaviour. Look for ways in which to realistically support the groups ideas.

- **Leave it up to them**

The teacher ends the meeting by passing over responsibility to the group to solve the problem, making it clear that any recurrence may be reported by anyone involved and help, not punishment will be given. They arrange to meet with the group again to see how things are going. It is best for these meetings to happen in school time and away from play and lunch times as the children feel they are being punished and can become resentful if it happens in their free time.

- **Communicate to Teachers' Meeting and all staff involved.**

In these meetings the ideas the pupils are trying to initiate should be reported so that the whole staff is aware and can support them.

### **3. Meet with them all again**

About a week later the teacher and the group, including the victim, discuss how things are going. This allows for the monitoring of the bullying and keeps the children involved in the process.

### **4. Continue to monitor the situation at regular intervals**

These meetings should become less frequent over a period of a couple of months. It is valuable if the teacher makes a point regularly to initiate informal discussion with the group and generally keep any eye on things especially in the playground. It is particularly important that both the school and the parents adopt a similar approach. In this way the pupil experiences a coherent approach. In some situations it has been very helpful to bring the pupils together outside the school. Usually this takes the form of an outing or some semi structured activity. In this way preconception and old behaviour and relationship patterns may be positively affected.

## POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Punishment as normally understood is seldom effective in bullying, particularly in the long term. However by using what we call the 'no blame' approach:

- The pupil engaged in bullying does not gain status amongst his/her peers.

Gaining status is one of the main motivating forces in perpetuating bullying. The need to rise higher in the social order and increase 'security' at another's expense. By making an 'example' of a bully and berating him/her in front of a group will usually succeed in 'making a martyr' and increase the likelihood of further incidents. The group will also seek to protect the bully.

- The pupil who is bullying does not receive attention for his deeds.

Receiving unfocused, open-ended attention, especially from adults, even if it is punitive, can often encourage both bully and victim to perpetuate the cycle they have become involved in.

- The pupil experiencing bullying is not put under extra pressure.

If the bullying pupil is punished this very often leads to reprisals against the pupil being bullied and increases his/her isolation from the group. These reprisals simply become more hidden and therefore more difficult to detect. The 'shame and guilt' that victims often feel is deepened.

- Peers and those being experiencing bullying feel free to 'tell' about the incident.

Because so much bullying is covert, creating an environment where 'telling' becomes socially accepted is vital if incidents are to be detected.

- This encourages and exemplifies how a positive caring approach can be effective.

This process also is an opportunity to encourage emotional literacy and a habit of listening to and empathising with the other.

Even if a pupil who is bullying is punished strongly and the bullying stops in that particular case, both the that pupil and the group often experience this as a type of negative role modelling. 'A bully being bullied'.