

THE BRIDGE EDUCATION CENTRE

Anti-Bullying Policy

Principles

At The Bridge Education Centre we regard bullying as totally unacceptable. All pupils should be able to come to Centre free from the fear of being bullied in any way.

We aim to address most, if not all, incidents promptly (by the following guidelines) due to the close supervision of pupils.

1. Aims: We aim to eradicate Bullying in the Centre by:

- i) Creating a positive, caring ethos in the Centre by which people are valued and celebrated as unique individuals, regardless of age, status, race, gender, class, religion, culture, mental ability, physical ability, personal character or sexual orientation.
- ii) Dealing seriously with every known instance of bullying in a thorough informed and positive way which has previously been agreed by the staff.
- iii) Providing education and training for pupils and staff so that the stereotyping, misunderstanding and mythology surrounding bullying are dispelled and replaced by a high level of awareness, knowledge and understanding.
- iv) Modelling appropriate behaviour for our pupils so that they see us handling difficult, frustrating and stressful situations, including conflict situations, in an adult, non-aggressive fashion.
- v) Demonstrating, in our dealings with pupils and others, a respect for others by seeking to influence them from a basis of good personal relationships and through the use of personal skills rather than by the use of power and/or the threat of punishment.
- vi) In our dealings with others avoiding the use of nicknames, sarcastic comments, put-down comments and comments of a personal nature.

2. A whole staff responsibility

The Centre will regard bullying as a serious matter and all instances will be dealt with accordingly. To ignore bullying is to condone it and this we shall not do. We are all responsible for the safety and welfare of our pupils and combating bullying is a responsibility to be shared equally by every adult on our staff

3. Procedures and Guidelines

i) Background

Bullying - some definitions:

“Bullying is a behaviour which can be defined as the repeated attack, physical, psychological, social or verbal in nature, by those in a position of power which is formally or situationally defined, with the intention of causing distress for their own gain or gratification”.

“.....behaving in a way which might meet needs for excitement status, material gain or group process and (which) does not recognize or meet the needs and rights of the other person/people who are harmed by the behaviour”

“The wilful conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone else”

Some behaviours that the Centre will regard as bullying include:

- verbal or physical abuse
- threatening language or behaviour
- sexist language and harassment
- racist language and harassment
- demanding money, goods or favours
- social ostracism
- denying someone access to their property
- spreading rumours or gossip

Some other things to bear in mind about bullying:

- It is never a joke, or funny or a laugh to the person being bullied
- It is never an acceptable part of “just growing up”
- It is never an accident
- It is never excusable on the grounds that ‘he or she asked for it’ or ‘he was being lairy’, or ‘giving off evils’. Irritating behaviour can always be dealt with in a non-aggressive way.
- It is never a matter of weakness on the part of the person being bullied

ii) Procedures

Any member of staff becoming aware of an incident should intervene and give immediate help. If appropriate the incident should be dealt with at that time using the guidelines outlined in the policy. If this is not possible the member of staff should report the incident to the tutor(s) of the pupils involved. Tutors should deal promptly with the incident using the outlined guidelines involving other staff, SLT, as appropriate. Parents should be informed when action has been taken. A file note should be prepared as soon as possible after dealing with the incident (logged in pupil files) and SLT informed.

If SLT considers that further action should be taken, then the following guidance should be followed:

- a) Interview both the person(s) who is said to have done the bullying and the person(s) who has been harmed, seeing them separately and getting them to write down everything that happened.
- b) Adopting a no-blame approach, get agreement about what occurred.
- c) See the person(s) who is said to have done the bullying and the person(s) who has been harmed together. **This must be with the latter's consent.** Get an agreed understanding of all that went on when the bullying took place. Seek to get the person who has done the bullying to understand how the other person felt at the time. Encourage a mutual understanding between the parties involved. Encourage the person who has done the bullying to accept responsibility for their behaviour.
- d) Put to the people concerned the questions, "what do you think we ought to do now?" "What do you suggest?"
- e) Act on the suggestions made by the parties if this is at all feasible. Establish goals and ground rules on the basis of what has been suggested. Make sure that you have agreement. Arrange to meet again in a week's time to review the situation.
- f) Inform parents of the person who has been bullied and the person who has done the bullying with details of action taken. Review with the persons concerned at appropriate intervals to ensure that there is no recurrence of the behaviour or any displacement of it.

Experience shows that this approach works: it does depend on several factors however, principally the ability to facilitate the interviews successfully, the readiness to use listening skills, the readiness to empathise with all the individuals concerned and the ability to adopt a no-blame approach.

iii) **Guidelines**

For everyone involved in dealing with a case of bullying the following further guidelines should be kept in mind:

- a) Give assistance and reassurance to the person who has been harmed.
- b) Deal with the matter seriously and act promptly.
- c) Give the message that you disapprove of bullying behaviour.
- d) Stay calm: getting emotional yourself can add to the fun for the person who has done the bullying.
- e) Stay assertive and keep to the point.

- f) Do not bully the person who has done the bullying (that would only confirm that it is O.K. to bully if you have the power).
- g) Do not use the terms 'bully' or 'victim'. We want to rehabilitate the one who has done the bullying, not brand him/her and we do not want to add to the other person's sense of humiliation.
- h) Adopt a no-blame approach: take the attitude "something has gone seriously wrong, so how are we going to put it right?"
- i) Encourage the person who has done the bullying to see the other person's point of view.
- j) Encourage the person(s) who has done the bullying to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- k) Punish but be careful not to humiliate - otherwise you will give the message that it is all right to bully when you can get away with it.
- l) **Remember always, it is the behaviour that is unacceptable, not the person.**

4. Raising awareness: training and education

- i) For staff we shall arrange INSET as appropriate and taking into account all the other whole staff training needs with which we are faced.
- ii) For pupils, education about bullying will begin on entry to The Centre and will continue throughout their period of attendance at The Centre along the following lines, (the persons mentioned in brackets are the people whose responsibility it is to see that the action is taken):

- Induction visits: reference made to this policy for combating bullying with the message being given that bullying is not condoned and will always be taken seriously. (SLT and/or tutors)

- liaison with referring Centres: identifying children who are likely to be involved in bullying and learning from colleagues about any previous histories of bullying. (Head teacher /Deputy Headteacher - Intervention and Inclusion)

- iii) Other means of raising awareness of bullying that could be used in tutor times and in PSHE are as follows:

Discussions, brainstorming, group work

Drama

Role Play

Video

Assertiveness Training

Surveys

Sentence Completion Exercises

Card-sort exercises

Looking at scenarios of bullying
Written work.

- iv) Induction of new pupils: new pupils should always be made aware of this policy and the Centre's attitude towards bullying along with related matters. Newcomers must be advised that their tutor and SLT are points of contact should they experience any unacceptable behaviour from others.

- v) Further opportunities exist within the curriculum areas for educating our pupils about bullying. Colleagues might consider the following:

English - using bullying as a focus for creative and objective writing and research. Picking out bullying/power dominance themes in literature.

Art - poster and picture making using bullying as a theme.

Drama - using bullying as a theme for presentations.

Humanities - giving emphasis to power-dominance themes in national and international affairs, stereotyping and scapegoating, genocide, moral and ethical education.

PSHE - counteracting sexist and racist and anti-social attitudes, promoting self-awareness, good self-esteem and the valuing of others, learning about in-groups and out-groups, assertiveness training.

In all areas of the curriculum (even where the subject does not naturally lend itself to considerations of bullying behaviour), time and effort should be given to dealing with pupils in a supportive, enabling ways that accord regard and respect to pupils and which thus encourages them to adopt similar attitudes in their own dealings with others.

5. Evaluation

We shall review the effects of this policy by the only means possible; logged accounts of the reported incidents of bullying. Such logs will enable us to compare the number of incidents year by year and thereby give us some idea of the effectiveness of our efforts. To enable this to happen, Tutors should keep a record of incidents of bullying.

Date Reviewed: January 2014.

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