



Acorn Education
Momenta Connect
Options Autism

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ashley Park School recognises that young people with disabilities remain, in general, a vulnerable group in society.

Young people who attend Ashley Park School may, therefore, encounter bullying in both the community and their living situation. It is vital that staff are aware of this potential, given the cumulative effect of negative experiences that any one young person may suffer. Bullying is frequently described by young people on the Autistic Spectrum Condition as the main reason for negative behaviour as a retaliation, resulting in exclusions and changes in school placement.

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

2.0 DEFINITION

Many people have written a definition of bullying and for the purposes of this document, we will use the following one: *“Persistent, offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, abuse of power or unfair sanctions which makes the recipient feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable which undermines their self-confidence or which may cause them to suffer stress”*.

3.0 GENERAL

Who bullies?

Bullying often involves a person in authority abusing their authority and bullying those below him/her. An individual may also bully a peer and groups of people may pick on and bully an individual. It is often a person with low self-esteem who bullies in order to gain a sense of self-worth and respect for the wrong reasons.

Forms of bullying

Bullying can broadly occur in four ways:

1. Physical: actions such as hitting, kicking or threats of harm.
2. Verbal: actions such as name calling, threats to other family members.
3. Racist and discriminatory: remarks or suggestions made in a derogatory way in relation to race, gender, ability, religion, culture, etc.
4. Homophobic: remarks or suggestions made in a derogatory way in relation to sexual orientation, sexuality or gender in the context of transgender issues.
5. Prejudiced based bullying because of a protected characteristic.

The effects of bullying

Bullying of young people takes place in a number of areas:

1. At school – this is more often out of sight of staff and usually takes the form of being shouted at, physical and verbal threats and physical intimidation and attacks.
2. On transport – in unit cars and minibuses the pecking order of “who sits in the front seat” syndrome can be indicative of subtle bullying.
3. During activities in the community – young people can sometimes refuse to participate in activities for fear of being bullied in the same ways as described above.

Problems of talking about bullying

There are many reasons why young people will not discuss the fact that they are being bullied. Among them are:

- They are afraid they won't be believed;
- They are afraid that nothing will be done;
- There are often no witnesses and it would be one person's word against another;
- Where there are witnesses, they may be afraid to support the victim;

What can we do?

Ashley Park School is clear that it will not tolerate young people in their care being bullied in any way. We see bullying as an infringement of a person's human rights.

Responding to Bullying:

When a pupil reports bullying or staff observe incidents that may be bullying:

- Find a place where you will not be interrupted;
- Tell the pupil you are worried about them/ask them to tell you about the bullying;
- Listen in a non-judgemental way;
- Tell them that no-one should have to experience bullying;
- Tell them that the school will help them stop the bullying;
- Encourage them to agree to the incident being formally logged as an incident of bullying;
- Ensure their safety immediately after the incident and thereafter;
- Seek support from the senior school staff;

4.0 THE CURRICULUM

The Curriculum addresses bullying at all Key Stages in Computing/ICT, PSHCE, Citizenship and Life Skills. There are permanent Anti-Bullying displays around the school and peer mentors are in place to facilitate a smooth transition into the school. Anti-Bullying Week is an annual event embedded in the Collective Worship Assembly cycle, the week's anti-bullying focus culminates in a student led Anti-Bullying Assembly as well as work designed by the Clinical Psychologist being delivered by class teachers every day of that week. Therapy input is used to address the underlying causes of bullying and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy may be used to modify behaviour.

5.0 STAFF & MANAGEMENT

Staff

We see our staff as being the main resource we have in ensuring our young people are not bullied. We expect staff to do the following:

- Challenge any young people who are witnessing bullying another person. This is to be done in a nonaggressive and non-confrontational way;
- Report incidents of bullying to their line manager/senior management;
- Ensure they record instances of bullying and the action taken on an incident sheet (info-exchange);
- Work with young people in a way that enables/empowers them to complain about being bullied by ensuring they know about the complaints procedure and who they can complain to;
- Work with young people who are bullies to enable/encourage them to alter their behaviour;
- Take time to be with young people who have been the victims of bullying;
- Work with young people to enable them to report any serious incidents to the police;
- In cases of serious and persistent bullying, managers, in consultation with Social Workers, the parents and the bully, may decide to move a young person in order to protect those being bullied;

Any staff member who is seen to be bullying young people will be disciplined. Bullying will be seen as gross misconduct and a staff member could be dismissed if found guilty at a disciplinary hearing.

Management

Managers at Ashley Park School are responsible for ensuring:

- Staff are aware of all the issues that surround bullying and the impact it has on all;
- Staff are trained to be able to counsel young people, resolve conflict and use the complaints procedure;
- Action is taken when bullying is reported – zero tolerance policy and immediate consequence will be supervised by a senior manager;
- Monitor incidents of bullying and the action taken;
- Services have an open and honest culture that allows each issue such as bullying to be discussed; regular anti-bullying assemblies will be organised;
- That they have a good working relationship with the local police that facilitates the reporting of more serious incidents of bullying;
- The Schools' Police Liaison Officer will be informed of serious incidents of bullying and may choose to meet with perpetrators;

Ashley Park School aims to enable young people to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. This cannot be achieved if they are being bullied on a regular basis and we are committed to ensuring that incidents of bullying are reduced.

6.0 UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE

Dealing with taunts or verbal abuse; this will depend on the pupil and the relationship the member of staff has with them:

1. Dismissive response: I am not going to listen to language like that.
2. Questioning response: What makes you think that? What do you mean by that?
3. Confronting response: Language like that is not acceptable; a lot of people would find that offensive.
4. Personal response: I am not happy with what you said; I find that language offensive.
5. Organisational response: The school does not tolerate language like that.

7.0 CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying may be defined as an individual or a group of people using mobile phones, the internet or other technologies to make recipients feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable.

In what ways can cyber bullying occur?

Mobile phone

Sending humiliating and abusive text or video messages, as well as photo messages and phone calls over a mobile phone. This includes anonymous text messages over short distances using Bluetooth technology and sharing videos of physical attacks on individuals.

Email

Sending emails that are threatening or upsetting.

Instant messenger and chat rooms

Sending instant messenger and chat room messages to friends or direct to a victim.

Social networking sites

Setting up profiles on social networking sites to make fun of someone.

Abusing personal information

Posting personal photos, emails or blogs where others can see them without the permission of the individual concerned.

Social networking sites make it a lot easier for web users to get hold of personal information and photos of people. It is also possible to get hold of someone else's messaging accounts and chat to people pretending to be the victim.

Interactive gaming

Games consoles allow players to chat online with anyone they find themselves matched within a multi-player game. Sometimes cyber bullies abuse other players and use threats. They can also lock victims out of games, spread false rumours about someone or hack into someone's account.

Sending viruses

Some people send viruses to another person that can destroy their computers or delete personal information from their hard drive.

How is cyber bullying different?

There are several factors that differentiate cyber bullying from other types of bullying that can make it more difficult both to detect and to prevent:

- Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- No place provides sanctuary from the intrusion of a threatening text message or an abusive e-mail.
- Young people are particularly adept at using new technology, which can seem a closed world to adults. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people in chat rooms and in text messages may make it difficult for adults to identify and address potential threats.

What can Ashley Park School staff and managers do?

As with any other type of bullying, staff and managers need to focus on creating an ethos in which cyber bullying is recognised to be unacceptable, take steps to prevent its occurrence, support young people who are bullied, and work with young people who are bullies to alter their behaviour.

The Kidscape and further websites listed below website provides useful guidance for young people and carers about how to use technology safely and what to do if they are on the receiving end of cyber bullying.

www.kidscape.org.uk

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>