

Skelton Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy

Definition

Bullying can be described as being 'a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status, or other gratification to the bully. It can range from ostracising, name calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident that casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents.'

At Skelton primary School staff, parents and children work together to create a happy, caring, learning environment. Bullying, either verbal, physical or indirect will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Research has shown time and time again that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated.

Consequently, the Governors have approved this policy.

Bullying can be brought to the attention of staff either by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or other interested people.

Strategies for dealing with bullying

The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) list five key points as possible strategies to combat bullying:

- Never ignore suspected bullying
- Don't make premature assumptions
- Listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same does not mean they are telling the truth
- Adopt a problem-solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves
- Follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed. Silence does not always mean the bullying has stopped.

The following is a list of actions available to staff at Skelton Primary School depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too – that is why they bully.

- Discussions at length with the victim. This will require patience and understanding. Remember – Listen, believe, act
- Identify the bully/bullies. Obtain witnesses if possible. Notify the Headteacher.
- Discussions with the bully. Confront them with the details and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that bullying is not acceptable at Skelton Primary School
- If they own up follow the procedure outlined below
- If they do not own up, investigate further. If it is clear that they are lying, continue with the procedure. Children usually own up if presented with all the facts.
- Separate with parent of bully and victim
- Sanctions for the bully may include withdrawal from favoured activities, loss of playtimes, exclusion from school during lunchtimes, exclusion from school, depending on the perceived severity of the incident
- Continue monitoring the situation by observing at playtimes/lunchtimes and having discussions with the victim to ensure no repetition
- As the behaviour of the bully (hopefully) improves, then favoured activities etc can be reinstated, and the child should be praised for good behaviour. This will rebuild the child's self-esteem, which may have been damaged after being caught bullying, or could have been low anyway, hence the bullying.

In order to identify incidents of bullying and the identities of the bullies, at Skelton Primary School we have agreed to carry out the following strategies:

- All staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils
- All staff listen, believe, act
- Posters in school advertising the measures dissuading children from bullying
- The Childline telephone number to be displayed clearly in school – one in both buildings

Playground Buddies

A playground buddy scheme has been set up within Skelton Primary School. Children in Y5 and Y6 complete job applications and attend interviews prior to the buddies being selected. New buddies are selected each year. Their main job is to offer friendship to any child feeling unhappy or lonely during playtimes. Each playground has a buddy bench where children who need someone to talk to or play with can sit. Buddies are also trained to teach children games, which encourages co-operation and sharing. The buddies are easily identifiable as they wear red baseball caps.

Curriculum approaches to bullying

We can use the curriculum to help children understand the effects bullying can have on children and an insight as to why some people bully. We also use the curriculum to:

- Raise awareness about bullying and the anti-bullying policy
- Increase understanding for victims, and help to build an anti-bullying ethos
- Teach pupils how to constructively manage their relationships with others.

Strategies for working with children to prevent or reduce bullying

There is no one strategy that fits a particular type of bullying. Each case of bullying can be unique, as can the children bullying or being bullied. Therefore we need to have a range of strategies available and on occasions use a combination of the strategies. Staff at Skelton Primary School are aware of and are developing the following strategies: (A brief explanation of each strategy is given but if you require more information please contact the school who will be only happy to discuss the strategies further)

- **Co-operation Group Work (usually from age 5)**
Children work together on shared tasks, involving co-operation and individual accountability. They learn to be more tolerant of others and more willing to listen, also they become integrated into the peer group. Children help each other when working together and learn strategies for managing conflicts within the group.
- **Circle Time (usually from age 5)**
This is a set time each week for teachers and children to sit in a circle and take part in enjoyable activities, games and discussions. The positive atmosphere generated in the well-managed circle usually spreads into other areas of class activity. Circle time creates a safe space to explore issues of concern and helps to enhance the self-esteem of each member

- **Circles of Friends (usually from age 5)**
Also known as 'Circle of Support', they build relationships around a vulnerable pupil. The method must first be explained to that pupil and parents, whose agreement and support are essential. The circle helps to improve the level of acceptance and inclusion of the pupil.
- **Befriending (usually from age 9)**
This involves assigning selected pupil volunteers to 'be with' or 'befriend' peers whom staff have referred. Befrienders are picked carefully as the need to have appropriate qualities so as to enable them to help the child they are befriending
- **The Support Group Approach (usually from age 9)**
A support group is formed for the bullied pupil made up from those involved in the bullying and bystanders. Responsibility for change lies with the participants in the bullying
- **Mediation by Adults (usually from age 9)**
Methods focus on pupils who have been bullying others regularly for sometime, as well as those being bullied. The aim is to establish ground rules that will enable the pupils to interact positively at school.
- **Mediation by Peers (usually from age 9)**
This is held in a structured way and a neutral person helps voluntary participants resolve their dispute. It aims to enable the victim and the bully to identify problems and solutions, defusing tension between peers.

Parental Support

School and Parents/Guardians have a shared responsibility to ensure that children achieve their full potential and get the best possible start to their lives from their time at school. Skelton Primary School has a duty to the pupils to ensure they feel safe, sacred and valued. Parents/Guardians can help the staff achieve this by working in partnership with Skelton Primary School. Parents/Guardians can help their child to stop bullying others by:

- Talking to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes other unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- Show your child how to join in with other children without bullying
- Make an appointment to see your child's class teacher; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop them bullying others

- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind other people