



Northenden Against Bullying

An Anti-Bullying Guide for Parents and Children

Updated
September 2014

*Respect for Each Other
A Caring Partnership
Quality and Success for All*

Dear Parent or Carer

I am pleased to issue this booklet '**Northenden Against Bullying**'. We have produced this booklet to provide you with information about the school's approach to dealing with bullying and to provide support for you and your child should you need it.

On the whole, the children at Northenden Community School support each other extremely well and reported incidents of bullying are very rare. I would like to be able to say that bullying never occurs at this school and give you a guarantee that your child will never be affected by bullying. Realistically, however, we have to accept that there will be occasions when the actions of one child or children may affect the feelings of another and that, from time to time, all schools encounter cases of bullying. Of importance, is how the school and parents work in partnership to encourage good relationships between the children and deal quickly and constructively with problems when they occur.

This booklet draws together a number of ideas and approaches. I hope you find it useful. If you require further information or have concerns about your child, please get in touch with your child's class teacher or myself.

Ian Beard
Headteacher

What is bullying?

Bullying is defined as an intentional, usually repeated, hurtful action by one person or group of people towards another.

The children in school have identified that bullying can involve:

- hitting, pushing, kicking or punching someone
- calling someone names
- leaving someone out of a game
- talking about someone behind their back
- making fun of, laughing at or humiliating someone
- making fun of someone's appearance, size or clothing
- regularly invading someone else's personal space
- making someone feel frightened or threatened
- teasing someone or 'winding them up'
- being hurtful to someone because of their skin colour
- spreading rumours about someone
- not sharing resources or leaving them out of an activity
- ganging up on someone else
- encouraging other children to break friends with someone
- stealing someone else's belongings
- sending nasty messages to someone via a text message or on social networking sites such as Facebook



Frequency

The children in school know that **bullying is usually deliberate, is aimed at hurting someone else and happens more than once**, rather than being

- a one-off incident, fight or squabble
- a falling out between friends
- an argument about a game
- a disagreement
- an accidental scratch or bump

Examples:

To help you and your child understand when incidents might be classed as bullying and when they might not, read the following examples:

*A child encourages her friends to stay away from another child. The other child feels lonely and has had no-one to play with for two days. **This is bullying. It is intentional and repeated behaviour and is aimed at making a child feel isolated.***

*Two friends playing football have a squabble about whether or not a goal should be allowed. There is an argument between the players and it is decided that the goal will not be counted. The scorer leaves the game clearly upset that others do not agree with him. **This is not bullying. It is a one-off incident and is not intentionally aimed at upsetting someone's feelings.***

A child comes to school with a sweatshirt which has a hole in it. Someone makes fun of the child and makes a comment to others in the class. The children make fun of the child at playtimes and at lunchtimes for weeks, making the child feel that he does not want to come to school. **This is bullying. It is deliberate and is aimed at making fun of and hurting the feelings of someone else.**

A group of children do not wish for another child to play with them because this child disrupts and spoils their games and reacts very badly to losing which gets everyone into trouble. **This is not bullying. The group would like the child to join the game but the child has to learn to play successfully with the other children and not spoil the game for everyone else.**

A boy reacts to a disagreement in a playground game by shouting abusive words towards other children. Although not always directed at the same person, this is not the first time the boy has reacted in this way towards others. **This could be bullying. There is a repeated pattern of behaviour by one individual towards others.**

One child regularly pushes another child out of line and prevents her from sitting next to her friends at lunchtimes. When the child tells an adult, she is teased, called a 'snitch' and is told that if she tells an adult again she will be hurt. **This is bullying. It is intentional and repeated. When the bully knows that an adult is involved, she is threatening towards her victim.**

What does it feel like to be bullied?

The children have thought about what it feels like to be bullied. When bullying occurs, children may ...

- feel physically hurt
- have hurt feelings
- feel 'small' and helpless
- feel frightened or threatened
- feel lonely
- feel anxious or worried
- not want to go out at playtime
- not want to come to school
- feel sad or, at worst, depressed over time
- feel that they cannot tell an adult
- feel that they cannot stand up for themselves



How do you know if your child is being bullied?

Children who are genuinely being bullied and feel that they cannot do anything about it often try to keep the problem to themselves. Whilst they might not talk about how they feel, they may show these signs:

- reluctance to talk about the school day
- lack of enthusiasm for school
- not wanting to play out
- being unusually clingy
- wanting to be alone or being withdrawn
- looking worried or anxious

- imaginary or genuine sickness or 'tummy pains'
- finding excuses for not wanting to come to school
- wanting parents to accompany them to the classroom
- being anxious about being collected from school on time
- wanting to change their appearance or lose weight
- not wanting the parent to talk to the teacher

All of these can occur for other reasons than just bullying. You will know your child best and have some idea of how he or she normally reacts to stressful situations. Don't always think that your child will tell you everything. However close a relationship you have, he or she may not want to worry you, especially if he or she thinks that you have other things on your mind. Children are often sensitive to what is happening at home.

When you find out that your child is being bullied ...

If you do think or find out that your child is possibly being bullied at school, you will genuinely feel that you want to protect your child and sort it out yourself. Please don't!

The most important thing is that you listen carefully to your child, write down what he or she tells you, suggest some strategies to your child to avoid the person who is affecting them and talk to your child's class teacher or the Headteacher as soon as possible.

You should ...

- praise your child for sharing the problem
- treat the concern seriously and listen carefully
- gather all the facts and build a picture of what is happening
- make sure your child is not in any danger
- share some strategies with your child (see next page)
- reassure your child that you will help to sort it out
- help your child to manage their feelings
- help your child to think about what they would like to happen
- make an appointment to see the class teacher or Headteacher as soon as possible

You should not:

- advise your child to 'get even' or act in a similar way
- approach the other child or his or her parents yourself
- rush in without knowing all of the facts
- show that you are angry or make threats

Strategies for Children

The children have identified a number of strategies they can use to try and take control and stop the bullying from happening. They can ...

- play with or seek the support of a group of friends
- play in a safe area
- stay away from the bully

- 'fog' the issue and take away the bully's satisfaction
- ask the bully to stop behaving the way they do
- tell an adult in school (there are reminders all over school)
- tell someone at home

School Policy

The school has a **zero-tolerance** approach to bullying. The children know that if they feel that someone is intentionally spoiling their day at school, they must not suffer in silence but do something about it. If they cannot take control themselves, they should tell an adult.

The pupils know what is expected of them and know that bullying behaviours are not accepted in school. The school welcomes open discussion about bullying and staff are always willing to listen to children's fears and concerns.



How will school deal with a bullying problem?

When a problem is reported to a member of staff, the school's Anti-Bullying Policy comes into effect. Staff will follow the policy to ensure that ...

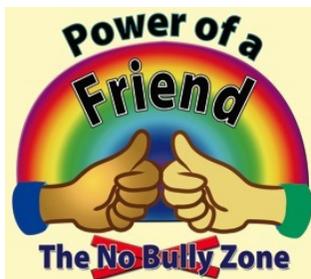
- the victim has an opportunity to talk about what is happening
- the matter is investigated
- the victim (if appropriate) has an opportunity to explain to the bully how he or she has been made to feel
- the bully has an opportunity to explain his/her actions
- the bully has an opportunity to apologise, possibly in writing or via a 'sorry card'
- the bully knows how he or she should change their behaviour
- the victim knows that something has been done to resolve the situation
- the victim feels 'free' from further hurt or worry
- the victim feels safer and more confident
- both sets of parents are informed and involved in the investigation and any outcomes
- sanctions are applied as appropriate
- the situation is documented and monitored
- the situation is monitored and the child is encouraged to report any further incidents immediately
- the child receives further support from staff, perhaps even counselling



How does school promote positive relationships?

Clearly the most effective way in which the school and parents can encourage positive relationships between children and minimise bullying in school is to reinforce the benefits of **friendship** and **good citizenship**. This is done in school through:

- the opportunities children have to work together
- positive play at break times and lunch times
- circle time and class discussions
- our Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum
- our Citizenship curriculum
- our SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) curriculum which explores relationships and emotions
- assemblies and stories promoting friendships
- the school's positive ethos and high expectations
- the school's rules and behaviour policy
- good relationships between staff, pupils and parents
- a partnership with parents
- posters placed around school



Cyberbullying

Since the more widespread use of mobile telephones and social networking sites, a new way of 'bullying' has become a problem for children. This is known as **Cyberbullying** which is any hurtful or intimidating behaviour which occurs by **text messaging** or **online chatting** or posting on websites such as *Facebook*.



If allowed at all, we advise parents that any use of a mobile telephone or internet site is heavily monitored and controlled and that parents are always aware of who children are chatting to or texting. We have another *publication* 'Keeping your Child Safe in a Digital World' that you may find useful. Cyberbullying can be particularly easy for 'bullies' because they are not face-to-face with their victim (they do not see the hurt) and their identity can be hidden by a username. It can be particularly harmful and nasty messages or rumours can often be seen by many people and spread very quickly.

Children know that they should ...

- ask parents' permission to use a website or mobile phone
- not share personal information with strangers
- share their password with anyone else
- not send nasty messages or pictures
- show any nasty messages to a parent or other adult
- not reply to nasty or bullying messages

Why do some people bully others?

It is hard to say why children bully, as the reasons are not always obvious. Some children do not always realise that they are bullying others or making them feel unhappy or unsafe. Some that do, do not always chose the same person to hurt or intimidate.

Some children who bully may do so because it is a way of making themselves feel better, raising their own self-esteem or having control over others, particularly if there is little control or support in their own lives. Some bullies think it is 'fun' to humiliate others or do it to look good in front of their friends whilst others may have been bullied themselves and are taking out their hurt or anxieties on someone else.

Some children bully others because they have 'learned' that treating others in a negative way is **acceptable** because that is the way adults behave towards each other at home.

As adults, we must remember that children, from a very early age, learn what acceptable behaviour is by watching those around them. Adults must ensure that they model good behaviour and show respect towards other people.

Whatever the reasons, hurtful actions towards others are never acceptable.

The Bully

Changing Behaviours

Parents should be reassured to know that in the majority of cases, the behaviour of a bully usually stops when he or she realises that the actions have been reported and that the child, their parents and the school will not accept the actions of a bully. However, in rare cases, the bully may continue to behave negatively towards the same child or direct his or her actions towards someone else.

Persistent Bullying

When the bully continues to behave towards others in a way that is hurtful and unacceptable, the school will take steps to ensure that the bully changes that behaviour. Parents are expected to be involved in explaining that bullying is not accepted and in changing behaviour. Persistent bullying may lead to wider sanctions, including exclusion from playtimes, activities or even school.

Underlying Problems

There are often underlying reasons why a child chooses to behave negatively towards or bully other children. Where bullying is persistent, the school will work with parents to try and explore and resolve any issues influencing the behaviour of their child.

Anti-Bullying Poem

This poem was written by our group of our children in 2009.
It says everything about bullying and the way it makes
people feel.

I'm the Person

I'm the person you bullied at school

I'm the person you all think is a fool

I'm the person you pushed around

I'm the person who is always on the ground

I'm the person who always feels sad

I'm the person you made feel bad

I'm the person you scared away

I'm the person who is picked on everyday

I'm the person you ridiculed and hated

I'm the person who feels isolated

I'm the person who is always alone

I'm the person with nasty messages on my phone

I'm the person you made feel small

I'm the person who never feels tall

I'm the person you teased because of the colour of my skin

I'm the person you laughed at because I'm not thin

Continued overleaf ...

I'm the person you made fun of because I didn't get full marks

I'm the person who has become scared of the dark

I'm the person you never pick for teams

I'm the person who has bad dreams

I'm the person with bad feelings inside

I'm the person who tries to hide

I'm the person you called names

I'm the person never included in any games

I'm the person with hurt in his eyes

I'm the person whose heart cries

I'm the person you kicked and punched

I'm the person talked about at lunch

I'm the person under attack

I'm the person who doesn't fight back

I'm the person who has feelings too

I'm the person just like you

I'm the person who wants to feel on top

I'm the person who wants it to stop!

We hope you have found this booklet useful.

If you want any further information,
please ask a member of staff or visit our website.