

# BABLAKE SCHOOL



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

NOVEMBER 2010

## **ALL MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL MUST BE AWARE OF THIS POLICY ON BULLYING WHICH WILL BE RIGOROUSLY ENFORCED.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a school we believe that the pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

The long-term effect of persistent bullying can make young people feel unhappy, insecure, threatened, excluded and isolated. It may cause them to have low self-esteem so that they become withdrawn, anxious, reluctant to attend school and less willing to take social, intellectual or vocational risks.

Bullying is when an individual pupil or group of pupils, through repeated, wilful, deliberate, conscious actions cause other pupils to feel hurt, distressed, intimidated and/or fearful.

Bullying can take many forms and each type is not exclusive:-

- Physical** - including physical violence, damage to belongings, threats and extortion.
- Verbal** - in particular name calling, insulting comments (about the individual and/or their family), malicious teasing, offensive remarks, humiliation.
- Emotional** - in particular indirect – spreading malicious rumours, excluding individuals from social groups by deliberately leaving them out or influencing/encouraging others to do so, inappropriate body language, invasion of space.
- Cyberbullying**- inappropriate/offensive phone calls/text messaging/emails/messaging or photographs/video messaging via the internet or mobile phone

In addition **racial, religious, sexual and homophobic bullying** and **bullying related to disability** are unacceptable.

This Anti-Bullying Policy is reinforced by the School Discipline and Behaviour Policy, through the Code of Practice for Computer Use and Internet Security Policy Use (Acceptable Use Policy), by the PSHCE Policy and is reflected in the school ethos. It is also reinforced through tutorial time, questionnaires, the PSHCE Programme, the Peer Support system, assemblies, staff meetings and the Pastoral Care system. The school seeks to promote good citizenship, positive relationships and to make the school community aware of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour is antisocial, is damaging to the individual, is wrong and will not be tolerated at Bablake.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To create a caring, supportive, happy, safe environment where pupils can learn effectively and develop as valued individuals.
- To develop a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and is challenged.
- To encourage pupils who are bullied, those who witness bullying and those who hear about incidents of bullying to speak out and to report them to an adult.
- To investigate incidents of bullying (and alleged bullying) fully and to effect the school disciplinary procedures if necessary.
- To work with parents, victims and the bully/bullies – recognising that in different ways all parties may require support.

## **REPORTING BULLYING**

- The school encourages pupils to ‘Speak Out’ as bullying thrives in a climate of silence. Pupils who are being bullied should report the incident as soon as possible. In the first instance in school pupils should speak to their Form Tutor or any member of staff they feel comfortable with, including the School Nurses, Support Staff, Form Prefects or Peer Supporters will also offer support. Incidents may also be reported via the “Bully Box” at the entrance to the Nurse’s Office.
- Form Prefects and members of the support staff will seek the advice of a member of the teaching staff and refer the incident/information on.

## **Procedure**

- The events reported by the bullied pupil will be recorded by the adult and the bullied pupil should record the details of the incident in writing.
- The member of staff will investigate the incident or they may, depending on the seriousness/nature of the bullying, refer it on to a more senior member of staff.
- The bully should write an account of the incident.
- The member of staff should record all discussions with both/all parties.
- In cases of cyberbullying pupils should keep relevant evidence for any investigation eg. saving text messages, taking screen capture shots, printing out conversations and noting web addresses. These should be given to the member of staff to whom the incident is reported .
- After discussion and when it is clear that bullying has taken place, the appropriate measures/ sanctions in line with the School Disciplinary Procedures and “Acceptable Use Policy” will be actioned. Incidents will be dealt with at different levels depending on the incident.
- We would anticipate that most incidents can be dealt with by the Form Tutor. More serious or repeated incidents will be referred to the Year Head/ Deputy Heads or, if necessary, the Headmaster.
- At the first level parents will be informed at the discretion of the Form Tutor. In cases of persistent bullying the parents/carers of the pupil will always be informed.
- Should a pupil be suspected of involvement in an incident of cyberbullying which is serious in nature and may require in depth investigation the pupil’s mobile phone may be confiscated and, if appropriate, searched.

- Should the content of cyberbullying be illegal the police will be contacted to determine what needs to be kept for evidential purposes.
- Pupils involved in a bullying incident, both the bully and the victim, will be monitored periodically to ensure the bullying has stopped and to prevent a recurrence.

## RECORDS

Records of bullying incidents will be held by the Form Tutor/Year Head for the period in which the pupil is in their form or year group(s). If there have not been any further incidents and, at the discretion of the Year Head, the record will be removed. However, a record of a serious bullying incident will be held on the pupil's personal file until sufficient time has elapsed for a Deputy Head or the Headmaster, in consultation with other staff, to feel confident that the pupil has reformed.

## SUPPORT

- Support is given to the victim by taking their concerns seriously and by investigating and dealing with the incident quickly and, depending on the incident, by enlisting help and support from friends and classmates. The victim will be given strategies to deal with any further incident and it will be reinforced that a member of staff must be told immediately. Staff will be asked to monitor and report any concerns they have immediately. In the case of serious, repeated bullying, parents of the pupil bullying will be informed of the incident, the action being taken and, after discussion, the consequences to the pupil should there be any further incidents. Counselling/support can be arranged if needed or requested.
- Whilst the school considers bullying behaviour to be totally unacceptable it is recognised that sometimes pupils demonstrate this behaviour as a result of their own problems. They will be offered the opportunity to discuss these and, in order that the bully has the chance to change their behaviour, support will be offered through school and outside agencies if appropriate. Parents will be informed and will be asked to assist with this support.

## ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

### For pupils

**Bullying is unacceptable. Unfortunately at times it happens in all schools and also in work places. It happens to children and adults but it will only thrive where there is silence and fear.**

### We have a "Speak Out" Policy.

- If you are bullied remember that there is nothing wrong with you. Do not blame yourself for what has happened. You have taken the correct action by reporting the incident.
- Do not retaliate or, in the case of cyberbullying, return the message or continue with the conversation. Block contacts, change contact details. In all cases save the evidence and report the incident.
- Take action if you see bullying occurring. Watching and doing nothing can suggest support for the bully. 'Speak Out'.

- Do not tolerate bullies in your circle of friends. If anyone is acting badly, tell them – ‘Speak Out’. Do not be fearful of them. Do they need help?
- Although it may be difficult, ‘Speak Out’ – whether you are a victim, an onlooker, or are directly involved in bullying, tell an adult in School, your Form Prefect, a friend who will act on your behalf in telling an adult or put a note in the “Bully Boxes” in school. You could also hand a note into the School Office in an envelope with the member of staff’s name on it whom you wish it to go to.
- ‘Bully Boxes’ are located in the entrance to the School Nurse’s Office and by the Pay-Phone on the landing by room 34.
- If you are bullying and need someone to talk to about the difficulties you are having seek out a member of staff, the school nurse or friend to act on your behalf. ‘Speak Out’ before being found out.

## **ADVICE AND GUIDANCE**

### **For Parents**

#### **General**

- Watch for signs of distress in your children. There could be an unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, equipment that has gone missing, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising.
- Take an active interest in your child's social life. Discuss friendships, how break/lunchtime is spent and the journey to and from school.
- First, tell them that their concerns are taken seriously and reassure them that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Advise them to avoid places where bullying is likely to happen and to tell an adult in school, for example a liked and trusted teacher. Reassure them that they will be given support. Bullies only thrive when they know their actions will go unreported.
- Discuss the incident with your child. Make a note of what they tell you. Keep a written record if the bullying persists. Should cyberbullying occur your child should save text messages, take screen capture shots, print out conversations and note web addresses. These and a written record will provide supportive evidence regarding **who, what, where and when**.
- Contact the Form Tutor/Year Head. Aim to devise strategies that will provide your child with support inside and outside school.
- Do not encourage your child to retaliate. It will only make matters worse. Such behaviour could be contrary to their nature. More positively, encourage your child to build up their friendship group.

- Advise your child not to buy the bully off with ‘presents’, (sweets, lunch, drinks etc) and that they should not give in to demands for money or for their property. If the latter happens they should tell an adult **immediately**.
- If the plan of action devised by the Form Tutor/Year Head does not result in an end to the bullying then contact the school again.

### **CASES OUTSIDE SCHOOL**

Whilst schools are not directly responsible for bullying that occurs off the premises we would endeavour to offer support to a pupil in school if there are difficulties. In serious cases parents may wish to contact a solicitor and ask for a letter to be sent to the bully's parents, informing them of the legal consequences of a recurrence of such behaviour

Cyberbullying is unacceptable inside or outside school. Any incident involving the use of information technology to bully/defame fellow pupils or staff occurring outside school but impacting in school will be investigated, and suitable action will be taken.

Reviewed November 2010