

LOUDWATER COMBINED SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

“Loudwater Combined School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share in this commitment. Please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.”

Aims and Objectives

Objectives

Loudwater Combined School’s Anti-Bullying Policy outlines what we will do to prevent and tackle bullying. This policy has been developed after involvement of the whole school community.

Our anti-bullying policy aims to:

- Promote respect for each other, including engaging with everyone’s perception of bullying
- Provide a secure, stimulating, positive and mutually respectful and inclusive environment for learning
- Clarify for pupils and staff what bullying is and that it is always unacceptable
- Explain to staff, pupils and the whole school community why bullying and harassment occur and their impact on individuals and the school as a whole
- To have in place an anti-bullying support system, that all staff and pupils understand and to apply the system consistently

Our school community:

- Will discuss, monitor and review our anti-bullying policy on an annual basis
- Will support staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately
- Will ensure that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy
- Will report back to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deal promptly with complaints. Parents/ carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy
- Will seek to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilise support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate

Definition of bullying

Agreed by our whole school community:

The Anti-Bullying Alliance definition of bullying used in Healthy Schools is:

“The intentional hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It is usually repetitive or persistent, although some one-off attacks can have a continuing harmful effect on the victim.”

Bullying can include: name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments, kicking, hitting, taking belongings, inappropriate text messaging and electronic messaging (including through websites, Social Networking sites and Messaging Apps), producing offensive graffiti, gossiping, excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- Race, religion or culture
- Special educational needs
- Appearance or health conditions
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist bullying
- Cyber bullying

Loudwater Combined School is aware that it is possible that the bully may be an adult and will impose appropriate sanctions and if necessary follow safeguarding procedures where this is the case.

Perpetrators and Victims

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of one person or persons over another.

This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual,
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – using cyber bullying or using email, social networking sites, texts or other messaging apps etc

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter.

Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them. Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

Pupils who are bullying need to be taught and learn different ways of behaving.

Signs and Symptoms for Parents and Staff

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- wants to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- cries at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do make less effort with school work than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged

- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a text or similar message is received
- lack of eye contact
- becoming short tempered
- change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Preventing and responding to bullying

What we do to prevent bullying

We will:

- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying
- Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through information and displays, through peer support and through the school council
- Train all staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable pupils

Encouragement to tell

We actively encourage anyone who is being bullied, or others who know about it, to feel that they will be listened to, and that action will be swiftly taken which is sensitive to their needs. Disclosure (telling an adult/peer) can be direct and open or indirect and anonymous. Bully/worry boxes are available for indirect/anonymous disclosure. Everyone must realise that not telling someone means that the bullying is likely to continue.

Roles

Staff

We expect staff to:

- Provide children with a framework of behaviour including a class charter which supports the whole school policy
- Emphasise and behave in a respectful and caring manner to pupils and colleagues, to set a good tone and help create a positive atmosphere
- Provide pupils with a good role model
- Raise awareness of bullying through stories, role-play, discussion, peer support, school council, PSCE, RE and our school values.
- Through the Head teacher, keep the Governing Body informed regarding issues concerning behaviour management
- Work with our nominated anti-bullying lead staff member so that the anti-bullying policy can be properly enforced and monitored
- Regularly canvas views on the extent and nature of bullying

- Ensure pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying
- Ensure all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions that may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in schools
- Publicise the details of help lines and websites
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied
- Work with pupils who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have

Parents/Carers

We expect that parents/carers will:

- Understand and engage with everything that is being done to make sure their child enjoys and is safe at school

We will ensure parents/carers:

- Know who to contact if they are worried about bullying including our complaints procedure
- Feel confident that everything is being done to make sure their child/children is/are happy and feel safe at school
- Are informed about and fully involved in all aspects of their child's behaviour

We will work with parents/carers to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.

Governors

We expect that Governors will:

- Support the Head teacher and the staff in the implementation of this policy
- Be fully informed on matters concerning anti-bullying
- Regularly monitor incident reports and actions taken to be aware of the effectiveness of this policy

Tackling bullying

Recording

Incidents clearly identified as bullying must be reported to the nominated member of staff responsible for anti-bullying and all incidents and follow up action will be recorded.

Dealing with an incident

Bullying incidents discovered at Loudwater Combined School will be taken seriously and support will be provided for the target and bully.

We will support all involved by:

- Talking through the incident with the target and bully
- Helping the target and bully to express their feelings (Restorative Justice)
- Talking about which rule(s) has/have been broken
- Discussing strategies for making amends

Sanctions may include:

- Time away from an activity within the classroom
- Missing break or another activity
- Formal letter home from the Head teacher
- Meeting with staff, parent/carer and/or pupil(s)
- Pastoral Support Plan (PSP)
- Suspension or Exclusion (internal/external)

Parents/carers (of both the target and bully) will be informed of what has happened, and the action taken.

A record will be made of these discussions and if necessary independent witnessing of action taken and recording of information can be used to ensure accurate evidence is retained. CPOMS will be used to record incidents of bullying and a log will be kept by the head teacher.

Links with other school policies and practices

This policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and action plans including:

Behaviour for learning and positive relationships Policy

Inclusion Policy

Equalities Policy

Policy monitoring and review

We will formerly review this policy every year as well as if incidents occur that suggest the need for review. The school council will review the anti-bullying policy effectiveness annually. Parents/carers will be aware of the policy as it will be published on our website and copies available from the school office.

Trends and strategies are analysed by the nominated member of staff responsible for anti-bullying for inclusion in the Headteacher's Annual Report to Governing Body on Safeguarding Children and are reported termly to Governors.

Responsibilities

The senior leadership team responsible for this policy are: The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

The Governor with oversight of this policy is: Paul Randall

Reviewed: November 2024