

West Hill Primary School

Policy for Dealing with Bullying

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This policy has 'Safeguarding Children and Child Protection', 'Every Child Matters', 'Excellence and Enjoyment', the school's 'Healthy School', 'Eco School' and 'Artsmark Gold' ethos and the School's Mission Statement and Aims at its heart.

STATEMENT OF SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

At West Hill Primary School, our school community has a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are our pupils. This means that we have a Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy and Procedures in place which we refer to in our prospectus. All staff including our volunteers and supply staff must ensure that they are aware of our procedures. Parents and carers are welcome to read these on request.

Sometimes we may need to share information and work in partnership with other agencies when there are concerns about a child's welfare. We will always ensure that our concerns about our pupils are discussed with their parents/carers first unless we have reason to believe that this is not in the child's best interests.

Our Designated Child Protection Officer is: MRS. SUE NIELD, OUR HEADTEACHER

Definition of Bullying

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. Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats, threatening or aggressive language or body posturing, and extortion, through to physical intimidation, assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening, premeditated incident that casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents. We believe that bullying starts where caring stops.'

The DCSF definition of bullying, as defined in their September 2007 Guidance: 'Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying in schools', is:

'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.'

Staff, parents and children at West Hill Primary School work together to create a happy, caring and safe learning environment. **Bullying, whether verbal, physical or indirect, is not tolerated.** It is everyone's responsibility to try to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

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

Aims

- ◆ To provide a safe, caring environment for the whole school community, especially the children in our care.
- ◆ To instil in children that bullying is unacceptable and that reports of bullying will be taken seriously, recorded and acted upon.
- ◆ To reassure children that they will be listened to and will know that it is all right to tell.
- ◆ To heed parents and keep them informed of actions taken in response to a complaint.
- ◆ A full investigation will follow any report of bullying with detailed records kept of incidents, reports and complaints.
- ◆ To take appropriate action, including exclusion in cases of severe bullying.
- ◆ To monitor incidents of bullying during the school year: Head Teacher to monitor.

Disability Equality

At West Hill Primary School, we are committed to offering an inclusive curriculum to ensure the best possible progress for all of our pupils whatever their needs or abilities.

Pupils have Special Educational Needs if they have a learning difficulty which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. Pupils with a disability have special educational needs if they have any difficulty in accessing education and if they need any special educational provision to be made for them, which is anything that is additional to or different from what is normally available in schools in the area.

At West Hill Primary School, we undertake the duties, including in relation to **this policy**:

- Not to treat disabled pupils less favourably for a reason which relates to their disability
- To take reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils at a substantial disadvantage
- To do our best by all disabled members of our school community in relation to the requirements of this particular policy

Gender Equality

West Hill Primary School fully recognises its duty to comply with equality and diversity legislation, and its Gender Equality Scheme sets out the school's aims in relation to equality and what it will do to ensure that equality is fully embedded in practice. The school fully acknowledges its responsibilities in terms of equality issues in relation to gender, age, race, disability, religion or belief, sexual orientation and gender reassignment, including in relation to **this policy**. West Hill Primary School is firmly committed to equality and diversity, and when carrying out our functions, we shall have due regard to the need: to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment; to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Strategy for Dealing with Bullying

In dealing with bullying, staff at West Hill Primary School follow these fundamental guidelines.

- ◆ Never ignore suspected bullying.
- ◆ Do not make premature assumptions.
- ◆ Listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils with the same version does not mean they are telling the truth.
- ◆ Adopt a problem-solving approach that moves pupils forward from self-justification.
- ◆ Follow up proven cases to check bullying has not returned.
- ◆ Keep detailed records.

Strategies are implemented at West Hill Primary School to reduce bullying. These strategies cover raising awareness about bullying and the Anti-bullying Policy, increased understanding for victims and teaching pupils how to manage relationships in a constructive way.

Staff should apply one or more of the strategies below, depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis should always be one of showing a caring and listening approach.

In response to a complaint of bullying, the discipline procedures of West Hill Primary School should be followed, with staff making a full investigation, keeping detailed records and applying sanctions as necessary.

The procedures should be followed by the Head Teacher, the Deputy Head Teacher or a senior teacher, wherever possible. However, the order in which the investigation takes place will depend on individual circumstances.

1. Discuss the nature of the bullying with the 'victim' at length, recording all the facts. This will require patience and understanding.
2. Identify the bully/bullies and any witnesses.
3. Interview witnesses.
4. Discuss the incident(s) with the alleged bully/ies. Confront them with the allegations and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that this is only an investigation at this stage.
5. If the bully owns up, make it understood that bullying is not acceptable at West Hill Primary School and what effect it has on the education of the victim and the rest of the children in the class/school. Apply sanctions relevant to the type of bullying.
6. If the allegation of bullying is denied, investigate further. If there is sufficient evidence that the bullying occurred, apply relevant sanctions.
7. Hold separate discussions with parents of bully and victim.
8. Sanctions for the bully include:
 - Severe verbal reprimand by the Headteacher
 - Involving parents where appropriate.
 - withdrawal from favoured activities, for example school visit
 - loss of breaktimes for a period of between one day and one week
 - barred from school during lunchtimes for up to one week
 - fixed period of exclusion from school
 - permanent exclusion from the school may be used depending on the seriousness of the offence. The LA Exclusions Policy will be used as guidance in such circumstances.
9. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the victim with a mentor/named person monitoring and observing at break times and lunchtimes, and through discussion, to make sure there is no repetition. The mentor will be decided upon by the Head Teacher.
10. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the bully. This will include a Behaviour Support Programme and opportunities in circle time or groups for the child/ren to discuss relationships, feelings and the effect bullying can have on individuals. A mentor/named person will support the child during this programme. The mentor will be decided upon by the Head Teacher.

West Hill Primary School is an **inclusive** school, we DO:

- Respect all children and their parents and believe that their integrity and self-esteem is paramount
- Remember that the children we are dealing with are just that – children. This means: that, like everyone, they are human, that they can make mistakes like all of us and that they are somebody's son or daughter.
- Keep our Mission Statement, Aims and Behaviour and Discipline Policy at the heart of all our dealings with children
- Remember that children's opinions differ from those of adults. This means that they can be anxious or scared of someone one day and be 'best friends' the next; it means that their perceptions of the definition of bullying often differ from those of their parents, something that parents should also be aware of.

- Show great discernment and distinction between what IS bullying and what is simply what may be described as ‘mucking around’ or ‘horseplay’.
- Punish the behaviour and NOT the child
- Make sure that all children understand the sanctions that will be put in place for bullying behaviour, as well as ‘mucking around’ or ‘horseplay’
- Try to establish a ‘no blame’ culture in which people take responsibility for what they say and do
- Adopt a problem-solving approach which is positive and moves **all** the children forward, including the ‘bully’.
- State clearly what is right and what is wrong
- Discourage parents from discussing bullying incidents and carrying these incidents with them outside of the school, where they develop into playground gossip.
- Investigate each incident thoroughly and monitor children carefully
- Remember that changes in behaviour do not always happen overnight. This means informing the parents of both the victim and the child who has bullied that this may be the case, and giving them their reassurance that the situation will be monitored very closely indeed.
- Schools are busy places. The school cannot guarantee that bullying behaviour will not take place again, but EVERY effort will be made to try to ensure that it does not.

At West Hill Primary School, we DO NOT:

- Ignore any incidents or situations
- Label or brand a child as a ‘bully’
- Whilst keeping records and being very mindful and watchful of previous behaviours, we do not dredge up incidents that happened several months or years ago and use these as constant reminders of a child’s perceived guilt. In other words we do NOT ‘give a dog a bad name’, but endeavour to move forward.
- Bear grudges
- Jump to conclusions, instant or otherwise
- Carry out public humiliation or degrading punishments
- Discuss any incidents of bullying outside the school, other than as necessary with the appropriate authority such as the LA, for serious incidents.

In order to reduce incidents of bullying and recognise bullying behaviour, at West Hill Primary School, all staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils.

At West Hill Primary School, we LISTEN and ACT as appropriate.

The school has an active School Council, representatives from which discuss issues related to bullying, through their discussion of positive playtimes and the promotion of playtime games. Children are regularly interviewed in groups, or in class sessions about their perceptions of behaviour, bullying and staff responses to these within the school. The Headteacher keeps copies of these surveys.

The school has a ‘Buddy System’ whereby children from Class 6 take responsibility for the new children in Reception Class, becoming their ‘buddy’. This is being extended to include a ‘buddy’ system throughout the school whereby playtime buddies help their peers to solve problems that occur both in and out of the classroom. Through our ‘Buddy System’ we have introduced ‘Playground Monitors’. These can be a child’s first contact point, if they feel they cannot tell an adult.

The school follows guidelines suggested in Devon Curriculum Services Physical Education’s publication ‘Active Playtimes’, which is accompanied by activity cards that are available for the children to follow. These activities are designed to promote a healthy lifestyle and encourage teamwork and participation, skills which discourage the concept of bullying.

The Headteacher uses a selection of posters and books as a basis for assemblies on the theme of anti-bullying. Interactive discussion with the children takes place. PSHE lessons are often based on the theme of bullying and anti-social behaviour, providing a problem-solving approach and looking at ways in which bullying can be prevented and combated. The School does not believe in displaying negative posters about bullying, but may display posters, often created by the children themselves to promote the need for positive relationships and care for others. These may include references to bullying and what the children can do to help.

Bullying off the School Premises

West Hill Primary School is not directly responsible for bullying which may occur off the school premises; however, if both the victim and the bully are from the School, action will be taken as if the incident has occurred within the school, and this includes informing parents.

Where possible, the School will support pupils who have been bullied, especially on their way to or from school, by pupils from another school or by other persons.

The following steps should be taken.

- ◆ Talk to the pupil(s) and parents involved from the other school.
- ◆ Talk to the Head Teacher of another school whose pupils are bullying off school premises.
- ◆ Talk to the Police about problems on the local streets.
- ◆ Talk to the local transport company, if bullying is occurring on school buses.
- ◆ Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying situations.

Bullying Directed Towards Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Disability

West Hill Primary School will not tolerate bullying against anyone because of his or her race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The school will take preventative action to reduce the likelihood of bullying incidents of this nature occurring. Stereotypical views are challenged and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability.

Racial Bullying/Harassment

Racial bullying will not be tolerated in West Hill Primary School and will be treated severely. If a child receives verbal abuse, physical threats or attacks, or if a pupil brings racist literature into school, incites others to behave in a racist way or writes racist insults, the strategies in the Policy for Education for Race Relations and Ethnic Diversity will be implemented.

A full investigation will be carried out, recording incidents in a separate incident book and on Devon LA forms. West Hill Primary School has a duty to develop children's understanding of ethnic diversity issues and explore racial tolerance in PSHE and Citizenship lessons, Assemblies and in Religious Education lessons.

The School guarantees confidentiality and support for those being bullied. Racial incidents are reported to the Governing Body and Devon LA as required.

Sexual Bullying

Sexual bullying has an impact on both genders. A sexual assault will lead to the exclusion of the perpetrator from West Hill Primary School. Sexual bullying is characterised by abusive name-calling, comments about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty, inappropriate and uninvited touching, sexual innuendoes and propositions (i.e. sexual harassment), and, in its extreme form, sexual assault or rape. **Sexual bullying will not be tolerated at West Hill Primary School.**

West Hill Primary School's strategies to deal with sexual bullying include:

- ◆ recording incidents in a separate incident book
- ◆ developing understanding of gender relations
- ◆ exploring sexism and sexual bullying in PSHE lessons
- ◆ using single-sex groups to discuss sensitive issues
- ◆ ensuring the school site is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable
- ◆ implementing appropriate discipline procedures as appropriate.

Sexual Orientation

Sexual bullying can also be related to sexual orientation. Children do not have to be homosexual or bi-sexual to experience such bullying.

Strategies to deal with such bullying include:

- ◆ recording incidents in a separate red incident book (kept in the staffroom)
- ◆ awareness by staff that homophobic bullying can occur
- ◆ challenging homophobic language and explore pupils' understanding – they might not understand the impact
- ◆ guaranteeing confidentiality and support for those being bullied
- ◆ implement discipline procedures in accordance with our behaviour and discipline policy, as necessary when the bullying warrants it.

Special Education Needs or Disabilities

Some pupils with special educational needs or disabilities might not be able to articulate experiences as fluently as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific disability.

West Hill Primary School makes sure the behaviour of staff does not trigger bullying unintentionally. They should avoid undue attention towards SEN children compared with others, and should not make comments based on pupils' appearance or perceived character.

Staff try to make classroom activities and lessons sensitive to such children's needs. We teach assertiveness and other social skills and teach victims to say 'No' or to get help. A named mentor/friend is appointed for the pupil to confide in.

If the bullying is serious, West Hill Primary School undertakes a full investigation, including a full discussion with witnesses, recording incidents in the incident book and contacting parents. Discipline procedures are implemented.

High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Teachers should treat this as seriously as any other type of bullying.

Cyberbullying/Internet Bullying

West Hill Primary School has a clear policy for use of the Internet in school and offers additional guidance and support to parents for use of the Internet outside school. There is a clear use of the Internet Code of Conduct, visible throughout the school and children sign an Internet Code Agreement which is re-visited regularly. Government and Local Authority advice is given to parents via the weekly newsletter. This includes recommendations to parents to follow guidelines from CEOP: 'Child Exploitation Online Protection' at www.ceop.gov.uk The Headteacher attends regular Child Protection training updates as the Lead Officer for Child Protection, and is kept updated on cyberbullying trends. Mobile phones are not allowed in school.

Further information

Useful Documents and Resources

CSIE	Index for Inclusion 2000: Developing Learning and Participation in Schools
CRE 2000	Learning for All – Standards for Racial Equality in Schools
DfES	The Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils (Circular 10/98)
DfES/Home Office	Social Inclusion: Pupil Support 10/99
DfES/ Home Office	School Security: Dealing with Troublemakers 1997
Ofsted	Raising the Attainment of Minority Ethnic Pupils 1999
Scottish Council for Education Research	Second SCRE Anti-bullying Pack 1993
The Stationery Office	Bullying – Don't Suffer in Silence (Circular 0064/2000) An Anti-bullying Pack for Schools
The Stationery Office	Discipline in schools: Report of the Committee of Enquiry Chaired by Lord Elton 1989 (Reprinted 1997)
DCSF:	Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying in schools
DCSF:	A Charter for Action

West Hill Primary School Policies on:

- Safeguarding Children and Child Protection
- Positive Behaviour and Discipline
- Exclusions (LA Policy)
- Ethnic Diversity and Race Relations
- Health and Safety
- Positive Handling Policy
- Policy for the Use of the Internet