

# **Bullying Policy**

## **Introduction**

All adults at Brambletye School have a responsibility to help create a secure, safe and happy environment for pupils in their care. Pupils and staff are expected to treat other people as they would like to be treated themselves. This means being kind, generous, thoughtful and sensitive.

Bullying must be dealt with promptly and firmly whenever it is met. It is the responsibility of the whole Brambletye community to try to prevent bullying from happening.

## **Definition: What is bullying?**

Bullying is when a pupil's life is made unhappy – or worse – by the actions or words of another person or a group of persons. Bullying varies according to age and school, but may include any or all of the following on a regular basis:

1. Physical assaults (to persons or property)
2. Verbal abuse (name calling, racist taunts, threats, swearing etc)
3. Exclusion from peer groups
4. Extortion
5. Aggressive or insulting gestures

The above can include: outright physical attacks, theft, vandalism, persistent teasing, swearing, nasty nicknames, personal insults, racial and sexual taunts, malicious gossip.

Bullying can take place regularly or occasionally. It can sometimes occur sporadically over a period of some years. It is always damaging however, and can also be a corrupting influence on other children who witness it happening.

## **The Bully**

Bullies can have a low self-esteem, despite an appearance of confidence. They will generally seek to have their own way and will respond to stressful situations impulsively. Although it is impossible to generalise, bullies often:

1. Display aggression towards other pupils and adults
2. Have a tendency to break rules and engage in anti-social behaviour
3. Have an inability to recognise faults in themselves
4. Have an ability to communicate well and have an answer for everything

5. Display some leadership qualities and wish to dominate others

## **The Bullied**

Pupils can be passive or provocative victims. The bullied are often:

1. New to the school
2. Different in appearance, speech or behaviour
3. Suffering from low self-esteem
4. Amusing to others in their reactions when bullied (loss of control etc)
5. Nervous, anxious or timid

## **Evidence of Bullying**

Of themselves, the following are not evidence of bullying but may suggest it if several occur together or else are recurring:

1. Repeated minor injuries
2. Deterioration in school work or significant changes in behaviour which have no apparent explanation
3. Tantrums
4. An air of detachment
5. Wariness
6. A reluctance to return to school after a break
7. An increasing lack of self confidence: a withdrawal from voluntary activities or few friends
8. An unhealthy attachment to members of staff
9. Frequent complaints of being unwell
10. Eating problems

It is worth noting that adults can be bullies too: humiliation of a pupil by using sarcasm or harassment is serious misuse of the power one holds over a pupil. Such behaviour condones bullying by the pupils themselves.

## **Factors in the rise of bullying.**

1. Lack of parental guidance, warmth or love
2. Lack of adult supervision
3. Harsh physical or emotional treatment by adults
4. A poorly run discipline system (rules, rewards and punishments)
5. Lack of moral education
6. The behaviour of other pupils

**Bullies thrive when:**

1. There is inadequate staff presence
2. There is a change of staff – and hence a change in habits and relationships
3. Boredom is prevalent in free time
4. There is over crowding and no haven
5. Prefects are ill-advised or left to their own devices
6. The gulf between staff and pupils is too great for the sharing of problems
7. There is a lack of trust

## **Anti-Bullying: The Policy**

The staff must wholeheartedly support this policy. While bullying is not common, it does occur and must be controlled.

**Prevention.**

An ordered and disciplined environment is essential; opportunities for bullying will then not occur. Particular attention must be paid to the times when pupils are together in unsupervised groups: before a lesson, in a queue, freetime etc.

Pupils should be encouraged to recognise that bullying is unacceptable. ‘Telling tales’ may be one thing, but pupils should feel able to speak to members of staff should they so desire.

Staff should draw attention to any undesirable developments among the pupils at our daily staff meeting at 10.55am, and all serious incidents should be recorded.

**Response**

The Form Tutor, Housemaster or Housemistress, Sister, Matron or Mrs Cocke should be consulted first and opportunities to discuss matters in private and in confidence should be organised. Staff must try to ascertain the facts, investigate thoroughly and observe, rather than rely upon hearsay. A written record should be kept.

1. Take every incident seriously and make sure allegations are substantiated before taking action
2. Refer the matter to the Deputy Headmaster (ACC), Housemaster, Sister/Matron, or Mrs Cocke as appropriate
3. Speak sensitively to both bully and bullied, adopting a “no blame approach”
4. Attempt to ensure some measure of protection for the bullied
5. The bullied may require advice on how to avoid similar incidents in the future

6. The bully must feel the disapproval of the school and understand that his/her acts must stop
7. Explanation must accompany any punishment. Confront the bully with his/her deeds and ask why he/she felt that he/she had to behave in the way he/she did.
8. A written record will be made of any serious incident by the Deputy Headmaster in a book, kept in his office
9. The Deputy Headmaster will report any bullying incidents to the SMT at 8am the following morning and to all the staff at 10.55am in the Staff Room

### **Action**

1. Any bullying behaviour and threats of bullying must immediately stop. Repetition of an offence will be treated very seriously and a pupil will be punished. The seriousness of the punishment, which may involve suspension, will be proportional to the offence and age of the child
2. Parental involvement will take place where deemed appropriate
3. The Headmaster will be involved where there is any serious occurrence or repetition of bullying by a child or group of children
4. In very serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered

### **Parental Concerns**

Brambletye has long prided itself on the quality of the pastoral care provided for its pupils. However if parents do have any concerns regarding the bullying of their child, they should make immediate contact with either the Head of the Pre-Prep. Department of the Deputy Headmaster, who will carry out a thorough investigation before reporting back to the parents and Headmaster.

### **Rationale**

At Brambletye, all staff are committed to 'Every Child Matters' in that the following five outcomes are key to well-being and in later life:

- Being healthy
- Staying safe
- Enjoying and achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

### **Conclusion**

We should always be on the lookout for bullying and should respond to it at once. We must always stress that it is not wrong to tell an adult about incidents of bullying. Moreover, once an incident has been reported, both the bully and the bullied must be dealt with immediately.

**HDC**

**February 2011**

**Next review: February 2012**