

BOGHALL PRIMARY POLICY ON BULLYING

The Boghall Primary Community have been using this very successful system in dealing with incidents of bullying. We would like to emphasise that bullying is not a daily occurrence at our school. Most of our pupils are not involved in any serious way in such behaviour from one year to the next.

However bullying has become part of life and during recent years has become a subject for the media. We feel it is very important that we have a written policy indicating what we consider bullying to be and how incidents will be dealt with by us which we share with you.

WHAT IS BULLYING ?

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between bullying and the rough and tumble of the playground.

Bullying can sometimes take the form of an isolated incident but more frequently it is behaviour which is repeated on a number of occasions. An individual child or group of children may intimidate another child/children. This can be mental or physical aggression.

WHAT FORM CAN BULLYING TAKE ?

Bullying can be verbal: repeated name calling, demanding possessions of others, harassment, malicious gossip.

Bullying can be non-verbal : physical aggression, ostracising by an individual or group

PREVENTION OF BULLYING.

Every year children are made aware of what bullying is through discussions in class and as a whole school. These lessons can take the form of whole class discussions or as a theme embedded in other curricular areas. Pupils can explore strategies for dealing with bullying and who to ask for help as part of the learning process.

HOW CAN CHILDREN HELP ?

Following discussions with pupils about school life it seems that incidents are most likely to happen on the journey to and from school. If no adult is present the children become more vulnerable. With this in mind we have suggested ways the children can help themselves. These include :

- Walking with friends or in a crowd when concerned that something might happen
- Try to avoid places where incidents tend to occur
- Trying a different route to and from school if possible
- Trying to appear unconcerned or unprovoked by behaviour such as name calling

We have also impressed on our pupils that if bullying behaviour persists they must tell an adult. It is not unusual for a bully to threaten the victim more of the same if they 'tell' – but children in this situation soon learn that the only way to resolve the situation is to involve an adult. Retaliation may provide a quick response but it seldom, if ever, solves the problem.

Occasionally staff have to talk to pupils about behaviour coming to and from school, particularly if an incident is brought into the playground or classroom and disrupts the life of the school. However travelling to and from school is primarily a parental responsibility and, if concerns persist, it may be advisable for parents to ensure an adult presence at these times.

HOW CAN TEACHERS HELP ?

Teachers have an important role to play in trying to prevent incidents of bullying by :

- Speaking to their class about bullying, what it is and what they should do if they feel it has taken place
- Building up class trust to ensure children will come forward when incidents occur

- Incorporating bullying into drama and role-play situations
- Developing appropriate playground games
- Ensuring children are aware of their rights and of the consequence and action which will be taken against bullies

Ensuring that pupils are aware of the role of playground supervisors/support staff.

At Boghall we have always responded to and investigated incidents reported to us, when it seems justified that the school should be involved. When an incident takes place within our playground then it is clearly our responsibility to carry out an investigation.

When an incident takes place outwith the playground but between home and school this is a 'grey' area for us. If the incident has been started by a niggler or something similar at school then it is appropriate for us to deal with it.

However if the incident is based on a difficulty connected with life in the home area it may not be appropriate for the school to investigate.

In addition to talking to pupils about the points mentioned above, our procedure for following up incidents is as follows :

First occasion

Class teacher investigates incident, records details and action taken. (Pupil Welfare folder)

Second occasion (or 1st serious difficulty)

Class teacher again investigates the incident and involves members of the promoted staff.

Third occasion

Promoted staff investigate incident, record details and action taken. Parents are informed – discussion about incident/s and the way forward for the pupils concerned.

Subsequent action may include :

- Behaviour booklets sent to parents on a daily or weekly basis
- For frequent recurrence or a very serious difficulty – formal disciplinary warning
- Request to parent to deliver / collect child to and from school
- Isolating offenders during break times

How can parents help ?

It has been agreed that parents can support our Anti-bullying Policy by :

- Instilling in children that they should not physically or verbally abuse other children
- Informing the school of changes in circumstances which may affect their child's attitude / behaviour
- Encouraging pupils to share any problem with an adult
- Ensuring the wearing of school dress code
- Ensuring high standards of personal hygiene
- Informing staff when serious incidents have taken place en route between home and school

The topic of bullying will be integrated into other school policies where appropriate. It is our intention to regularly work in this area with the children to consolidate prior learning.