

NORMANHURST SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Definition of Bullying

Staff are aware that bullying takes three principal forms, verbal, physical and manipulative.

Verbal – name calling, threats, insults or offensive remarks

Physical – hitting, kicking, deliberate pushing and jostling, taking of property

Indirect – spreading rumours, sending malicious messages, ostracising

Bullying often focuses on anything perceived as being different from the majority. This can undermine our work in promoting equal opportunities and teaching moral principles. Bullying may seize upon aspects of body shape or appearance, class, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or nationality.

Bullying is often recognised as a prolonged 'attack' but it may also be a single unresolved event, which casts a shadow over a child's life. Research has shown that whilst schools do not tolerate bullying, its extent is often greatly underestimated.

2. Aims

Normanhurst School aims:

- To create an atmosphere where all pupils can reach their full potential within a safe and caring environment and therefore bullying and other forms of anti-social behaviour are not tolerated
- To ensure pupils are made aware of the code of conduct, which outlines how pupils are expected to behave towards all other members of the School community. This code of conduct outlines the fact that harassment is not tolerated by anyone
- To address issues relating to bullying and behaviour during assembly times and through the School's policy on PSHE and Citizenship
- To ensure that parents are made fully aware of the School's anti-bullying policy.

3. Strategies for Dealing with Bullying

Relationships can break down and so procedures to deal with bullying need to be in place. The purpose of this procedure is to protect and support the victim, to rehabilitate the perpetrator and to re-establish a secure and happy environment.

Depending upon the perceived seriousness of the situation, issues of bullying will be dealt with by the class/form teacher, Head of House and Assistant Head (Pastoral) in liaison with the Headmistress. The Headmistress/SLT will inform any other member of staff as necessary and keep confidential records of all bullying incidents.

The emphasis for all teachers should be upon listening, believing and helping all concerned. All pupils should know that we regard bullying as a serious offence and that all claims of bullying will be thoroughly investigated.

4. Procedures

Reporting and Recording Arrangements

A pupil who feels they are being bullied must tell a teacher or any other member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. If they do not feel confident enough to speak up by themselves, pupils should be encouraged to enlist the moral support of a friend. Above all, pupils should be encouraged to tell someone straight away.

Teachers should not ignore or disregard a complaint. When a case is referred to them teachers should:

- ask for details and record the information on an anti-bullying incident report sheet

- give the completed form to the Head of House and Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the first instance

The Head of House or Assistant Head (Pastoral) in the first instance (or Head of the Junior School or Headmistress) will then follow these procedures:

1. As soon as possible interview all involved parties. It is essential that records are kept of all interviews. See Anti-bullying incident record sheet.
2. Speak to the victim to establish what exactly has occurred and whether there are any witnesses. These witnesses should then also be interviewed. (It may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in these discussions as the person accused of bullying will need to be told exactly what they have done and the effect it has had.)
3. Interview the person being accused of bullying once the details of the complaint have been established. Again this should be recorded on the anti-bullying incident record sheet.
4. Inform the parents of the victim and the child doing the bullying. Parents will be made fully aware of the School's anti-bullying policy. It will be stressed that if the bullying continues sanctions will be used.
5. Make all members of staff involved with the pupils, including lunch-time supervisors, aware of any incidences of bullying and any strategies such as report or target cards and not sitting by or working with certain pupils.
6. Arrange a follow-up meeting with the pupils a week later to check how things are going. A record of this should also be kept on the relevant form.

5. Involvement of Parents

Parents will be made fully aware of the School's anti-bullying policy. In some cases, parents may be the first to alert a teacher to an incident of bullying and they may be in some distress when they contact the School.

Good practice includes:

- recognising that the parent may be angry or upset
- keeping an open mind – lack of staff awareness does not mean it is not happening
- remaining calm and understanding
- making clear that the School does care and that something will be done, explaining the school policy and seeing that procedures are followed.

6. Sanctions

Sanctions for the bully may include:

- targets for behaviour from the class/form teacher, Head of House, Assistant Head (Pastoral) or Headmistress
- reporting to the Head of House, Assistant Head (Pastoral) or Headmistress on a daily or weekly basis,
- loss of playtimes or internal seclusion at lunchtimes.
- If the behaviour of the bully does not improve this could lead to suspension or ultimately exclusion (see exclusion policy).

As behaviour of the bully improves then sanctions should be removed and the child should be praised for their good behaviour. It is important to remember that their self-esteem may also have been damaged by being found bullying, or low self-esteem may have been the root cause.