

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Reviewed and updated 01 September 2023

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Bullying is not acceptable.

All bullying behaviour must be challenged.

Bullying may be verbal, physical or psychological. In fact, any action which makes a child feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened may be defined as bullying.

The school disapproves of bullying in all its forms and considers it a most serious offence.

Pupils will be made aware that bullying is unacceptable, and they must tell a teacher if it happens to them or a fellow pupil.

All staff, assistants, teachers and the head teacher, take the lead in creating a climate in which pupils feel comfortable in reporting any bullying incident in the expectation that it will be dealt with urgently and firmly.

All staff are required to report incidents of suspected bullying to the DSL, Miss G. Dufficy and the headteacher, Ms F. Ferreira. Appropriate action is then taken. L'Ecole Bilingue being an international school, specific care will be given in identifying bullying around Race, Religion and culture. Homophobic remarks and language need to be identified and dealt with (Even if pupils may not know what the words means). Cyber bullying will also be closely monitored.

BECOMING A PUPIL / “DEVENIR ELEVE”

Anti-bullying education is part of the school curriculum in “Becoming a pupil”.

Pupils are taught to respect and help others by developing their ability to communicate, exchange and socialise with everybody.

“Rules of life at school” (“Règles de vie à l'école”) will be established by the children and their teachers at the beginning of the year and will include “what we are expected and allowed to do”, “what we are forbidden to do” and “what we should do in case...”.

The purpose of this is to explore and discuss the basics rules of life in society by answering young children most frequent asked question.

These “rules of life at school” can be referred to at anytime.

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Being a small school does not mean that bullying can not happen.

Therefore, all staff have to remain aware of any signs that indicate bullying (change of friendship group, lack of friends, “illness” at certain times or certain days, sudden lack of confidence, change in standard of work, change of general behaviour...).

Any suspicion should be reported to the head teacher immediately.

Any incident should be dealt with immediately and be reported in the “incident book” indicating: time, date, people involved, what happened precisely, who the witnesses are and what action was consequently taken.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time and intentionally hurting another pupil or group physically or emotionally, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, is often motivated by prejudice.

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- Repetition: Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent: The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting: Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- Power imbalance: Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to: Pupils with SEND; Pupils who are adopted; Pupils suffering from a health problem; Pupils with caring responsibilities.

Victims may be children who: ○ are new to the school; ○ are different in appearance, speech or background from the majority of other pupils; ○ suffer from low self-esteem; ○ demonstrate actions that may be entertaining to the bully e.g. tantrums, loss of control; ○ are more nervous and anxious; ○ are lonely or have few friends; ○ have difficulty in establishing themselves in the peer group; ○ have other emotional, social, physical, or disadvantage needs specific to one or more groups stated.

However, it is important to note that one-off acts may also be treated as bullying behaviour. Factors that may lead to a one-off act being considered as bullying include the severity and significance of the incident; evidence of pre-meditation; impact of the incident on individuals (physical/emotional); impact of the incidents on wider school community; previous relationships between those involved; and previous incidents involving the individuals. It is also important to note that, while schools are not directly responsible for bullying that occurs off the premises, we know that bullying can occur outside the school gates, on journeys to and from school and online. The bullying may be done by pupils from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent tells us of bullying off the school premises we will:

- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying outside of school.
- Talk to the Headteacher of another school whose pupils are bullying.
- Talk to the police if deemed necessary.

Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered as bullying and can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Types of bullying can include verbal, physical, emotional or online abuse.

Bullying can include:

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic bullying: Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person’s gender ‘variance’ or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily consists of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include,

- Physical (including sexual) assault.
- Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks.
- Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail.
- Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs and/or disability.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem; and destroys their sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Pupils are educated through PSHE, assemblies, and drama to raise awareness, with discussions of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

PROCEDURE

In all cases the DSL, Miss G. Dufficy and the Child Protection Coordinator, Ms V. Ferreira, who is the headteacher, will have to be informed and will deal with the teacher(s) of the children concerned.

Each case will be treated individually and, depending on the circumstances, one or more of the following strategies will be employed:

1. Report the bullying incident in the “incident book”
2. Interviews/discussions with the bully and the victim – sanction (if needed) for bully
3. Inform the parents of both the bully and the victim of the incident by telephone or/and mail
4. Request interview with the parents of the bully or/and the victim (teacher involved) Strategy developed with both sets of parents
5. Regular follow ups to bullying incidents are dealt with or investigated by the teacher of the bully. This will be done by telephone or/and letter to parents and interview with bully and victim
6. If incidents continue: request interviews with the parents of the bully or/and the victim (teacher and headteacher involved)
7. External help may be sought for bully and victim
8. If incidents still continue, exclusion may be considered

Sanctions and strategies can include:

- Apologies
- Removal of privileges/activities
- Detention
- Exclusion

Exclusions are used in exceptional cases only and when the nature of the behaviour is such that the school wishes to signal a strong degree of disapproval.

Such behaviour includes:

- physical violence to staff or pupils
- persistent bullying
- consistently poor behaviour over a sustained period
- persistent disruption of the learning of others

Links with other policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy/Safer Recruitment
- Behaviour and Discipline Policy
- ICT/Online Safety Policy

Ref: *“Protecting Children from Abuse: The Role of the Education Service”. DfEE Circular 10/95*
” Education Act 2002”and ” Education Act 2011 ”
“DfES 0064/2000 Bullying, don't suffer in silence”
“Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools”. DCSF, 2007
“Preventing and tackling bullying”DfE 2017
“Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff”, DFE, 2014
“Keeping children safe in education”, DFE, 2023