

Micklefield's Policy on Anti- Bullying

including annex re: ICT-Based Forms of Abuse
(see also Child Protection, Discipline, Behaviour and PSHE Policies)



“ Bullying is when someone feels afraid, lonely or threatened because they are feeling hurt (physically or mentally), threatened, picked on, excluded or ignored by someone else. It is when someone has power over someone else and maybe influence over their friends as well. It can be verbal (secret whispering, deceit) or physical. It can be treating someone like a shadow and not letting them in, or it can be daring them to do things that they find uncomfortable.

A bully is someone who makes these things happen.”

Quote from Year 5 CI and 5Co - 2008

1 Introduction

1.1 It is a government requirement that all schools have an anti-bullying policy. In 2003, Ofsted published *Bullying: Effective Action*. This was followed by DfES guidance for schools under two headings: *Don't Suffer in Silence* and *Bullying – A Charter for Action*. This policy reflects this guidance.

1.2 Bullying – the nature of the problem

Bullying is action taken by one or more children with the deliberate intention of hurting another child. However, we teach children how to avoid hurtful behaviour, even where there is no bullying intent.

Bullying can be:

- emotional (indirect bullying) - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding from social groups or an activity, or malicious rumours, e-mails or text messages (visual image abuse – real or manipulated images);
- physical harm or its threat - pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence; deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing property;
- racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality;
- verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing and
- ICT- based forms of abuse including Cyber-Bullying (see separate attachment).

2 Aims and objectives of Micklefield with regard to bullying:

- To make clear to children, staff, parents and guardians that bullying is unacceptable.
- To encourage openness in which children, staff and parents act immediately if there is any suspicion of bullying.
- To provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying.
- To educate children in resisting bullying.
- To support those being bullied and a framework within which those bullying others may recognise and reform their behaviour.
- In accordance with the school's ethos to instil in all members of the school community a sense of caring and kindness for one another (Golden Rules).
- To ensure that as a result of staff being respectful towards children at all times, children will internalise and model these human encounters and thus treat each other respectfully.
- To ensure that the adults in the children's world do not endeavour to diminish children so that they lose respect amongst their peer group but rather enhance them, so as to continue to develop their self esteem.
- To promote a transparency in human relationships so that children, by default, are held to account for the feelings they may evoke in others.

2.1 Good practice for staff:

- Be continually watchful and available.
- Promote good behaviour and encourage the care of others.
- Report all cases of bullying to the Headmistress.
- Parents' involvement and cooperation can be sought in the case of persistent offenders after consultation with the Headmistress.

The term 'bullying' is commonly associated with acts of violence but non-physical bullying is experienced by most children at some period during their school career. The most common forms are verbal intimidation and social exclusion.

All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying. These could include:

- verbal taunts;
- children sitting on their own; and
- children being left out of activity groups during lessons.

Depending upon the seriousness of the situation, teachers are encouraged to adopt the following responses:

- talking privately with the offending individual(s);
- attempting to include an excluded child in lessons, perhaps by controlling the groupings; and
- intervening to defuse a blatant act of bullying.

The school takes bullying very seriously and as part of the PSHE syllabus it should be discussed in a variety of different ways.

2.2 Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- changes their usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic);

- begins truanting;
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions go "missing";
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully);
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen);
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what's wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

2.3 Procedures

- Children are encouraged to report bullying incidents to staff.
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff.
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- Simple statements of the details of the incident, and of the way it has been resolved, should be made by the class teacher in writing and this information should be available to teacher colleagues as the child concerned moves up the school.
- The Headmistress should be informed at all times when it is considered necessary for the parents of the children to be involved.

Outcomes

- If possible, the children will be reconciled after the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with. Each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
- In serious cases, exclusion may be considered.

2.4 Intervention Techniques- We use the following methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of school rules;
- being placed on a behaviour contract or Blue Card;
- writing stories or drawing pictures about bullying;
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly;
- making up role-plays;

- having discussions about bullying and why it matters.

2.5 Anti-Bullying Strategies adopted by Micklefield School

- Acknowledge the problem. Bullying happens everywhere in our society, including the staff-room.
- Ask children what they feel constitutes bullying. Discussions about what is and is not bullying can help form the basis for the school's anti-bullying policy (see quote from Year 5).
- Establish support mechanisms to help children who are being bullied. This could be an assigned group of staff or a group of children formed through a peer support scheme.
- Peer support schemes such as buddying, peer listening or peer mediation can create a happier, friendlier environment and offer much needed support to children who have problems.
- Has a whole school approach in which children and adults work together to create an environment where bullying is not tolerated.
- Although Micklefield School is not directly responsible for bullying off its premises, bullying doesn't end at the school gates. We will work with the local community where and if needed.
- Children and young people often have the best approaches to solving problems within their peer groups.
- Micklefield School finds ways to help those who are bullying change their behaviour. Punishing bullies doesn't end bullying. It is important to stress that it is the behaviour that is not liked, rather than the person.
- Bullying often takes place in groups. Children have a choice of watching from the margins, joining in, trying to remain uninvolved or trying to help those being bullied. Acknowledge and reward children who help prevent bullying.
- Encourage children to make friends. Having friends is one of the best defences against bullying, but not everyone has the right social skills to make friends easily. Teaching assertiveness skills and confidence-building to the class may be a way to help children make friends.
- Use time during PSHE classes to talk about bullying/intimidation in general. There is much information on this in the PSHE files.
- There are strategies for introducing new children to Micklefield School.

3 The role of Governors

- 3.1 The Governing Body supports the Headmistress in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.
- 3.2 The governing body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The Governors require the Headmistress to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.
- 3.3 A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the Chair of Governors to look into the matter. The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the governing body notifies the Headmistress, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

4 The role of the Headmistress

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the headmistress to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The headmistress reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.
- 4.2 The headmistress ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Headmistress and Deputy Head draw the attention of children to this in whole school assemblies.
- 4.3 The Headmistress ensures that all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.
- 4.4 The Headmistress sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.
- 4.5 Staff awareness must be raised by training and taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and places where it is most likely to occur eg playground.

5 The role of the teacher and support staff

- 5.1 Micklefield's staff take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.
- 5.2 Teachers keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class. If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will inform the Deputy Head or the Headmistress. Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the Headmistress, the Headmistress will inform the child's parents.
- 5.3 In the School Office, there is an incident book in which staff record all incidents of bullying that occur out of class. Any adult who witnesses an act of bullying should record it in the logbook.
- 5.4 When any bullying has taken place between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. The Headmistress and Deputy Head will also be informed immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim, and sanctions for the offender. Time is spent talking to the child who has done the bullying, explaining to them why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in future. If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying, we inform the Headmistress. We then invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation.
- 5.5 Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories etc., within the formal curriculum, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.
- 5.6 Where bullying is persistent strong actions such as exclusion may be necessary.

6 The role of parents

- 6.1 Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Headmistress. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure.

6.2 Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school. A copy of Micklefield's Golden Rules is sent to each family so that parents can read and acknowledge them.

7 The role of pupils

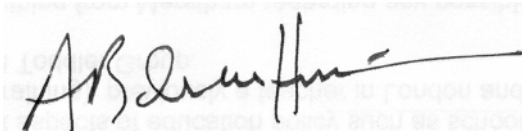
7.1 Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must inform a member of staff whom they feel comfortable with. They may also take a friend with them or write a note.

8 Monitoring and review

8.1 The anti-bullying policy is the governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by discussion with the headmistress.

8.2 This policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier if necessary.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. B. Luff', is written over a faint, mirrored watermark of the signature. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Date: 17th November 2008. Review Date: November 2009.