



PREVENTING BULLYING

Chatten Free School

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| Approved by: | Head of School (LGB aware) |
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Introduction

At Chatten Free School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in reference to our behaviour policy. It will be difficult for many of our pupils to verbally share their experiences and it is therefore vital that staff are aware of how to manage behaviour which might be construed as bullying in nature. We have robust processes outlined in our behaviour policy and supporting documents. We do not tolerate the bullying of any member of our school community. The community consists of pupils, parents/carers, governors and all staff. We actively support the victims of bullying and take appropriate action. This work will be done in a highly individualised manner taking account of the needs of the pupils and other individuals involved. There are robust systems in place for reporting, recording and responding to bullying at Chatten.

Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to ensure that: -

- All stakeholders have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All stakeholders know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All stakeholders know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported. Bullying in any form is not tolerated at our school.

What is bullying?

The definition of bullying we use at Chatten is: "Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that **intentionally** hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally" "Safe to Learn – Department for Children, School and Families (2007)

Bullying can be broadly defined by four types of behaviour:

- Physical bullying: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, any form of violence



- Verbal bullying: Using language in a unkind or offensive way, name calling, persistent teasing name calling, sarcasm, gossiping and spreading rumours
- Psychological bullying: the reduction of a persons self-esteem or confidence through threatening behaviour, taunting or teasing or by social exclusion.
- Cyber bullying: Using the Internet and social networking sites or mobile phone phones, SMS text messaging and chat forums to cause distress and threats. Can also include the inappropriate use of cameras and videos to record and share incidents of bullying or sexual bullying, coercing or blackmail.

Bullying experiences by age

Although our pupils range from 4-19 it should be noted that the majority of them operate at a similar level in terms of age and therefore bullying (or more likely targeting) are likely to look very similar regardless of age. Despite this however it is reasonable to suppose that simply because of age related characteristics bullying from a 4 year old will vary to bullying from a 19 year old. This relates simply to:

1. Size
2. Strength
3. Speed

It is possible that some pupils may be developmentally at a different age to peers although this does not relate to chronological age in any way. Pupils who are more developmentally able may demonstrate bullying which is more:

1. Targeted
2. Verbal
3. Deliberate

Despite the above caveat the majority of what might be viewed as bullying at Chatten is more likely to be a targeted behaviour aimed at a specific sensory stimulus or with a specific goal to access/escape something tangible. Please see our later note on 'targeted behaviour' vs bullying'.

Bullying related to characteristics

All forms of bullying are damaging to the victim and often relate to a characteristic or feature of the victim about which they can do nothing. These include:



- **Racist and religious bullying:** Any hostile or offensive action against an individual or group of people because of their skin colour, cultural or religious background or ethnic origin. Including Roma and traveller communities. People do not have to be of that group to suffer racist and religious bullying. This type of bullying not only impacts on the individual but on their families and on others perceived to be from that group.
- **Disablist bullying:** Any based on a person's physical, emotional (including mental health) intellectual impairment. Children and adults with SEND may also experience different types of bullying including manipulative bullying where they are being controlled or exploited by an individual or group, or where features of a person's disability are used to hurt and humiliate them.
- **Sexual bullying:** Inappropriate comments or sexually abusive language or unwanted or inappropriate physical touch. Sexual bullying also may be described as sexual harassment.
- **Sexist bullying:** based on sexist attitudes that when expressed, demean intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender
- **Homophobic/transphobic bullying:** Hostile or offensive behaviour or action towards lesbians, gay males and bisexual, transgendered or gender neutral people, or those perceived to be so, based on sexual orientation identity . (Transgender is an umbrella term that describes people whose gender identity or sense of gender identity is seen as being different to typical gender norms. It is often underpinned by sexist attitudes)
- **Bullying of children who are looked after, are young carers or who are victimised because of their home or living circumstances.**

A note about bullying at Chatten

It is important to note that the majority of our pupils as defined by our admissions criteria will be pre-verbal and working significantly below the age-related expectations. This means that cyber-bullying, psychological bullying and verbal bullying are extremely unlikely to occur from a peer to peer perspective. However, we have mentioned these as we cannot discount the possibility entirely that they may occur.

Targeted behaviour vs bullying

Many of our pupils will display challenging behaviour of a physical nature, this is understood and forms part of our admissions criteria. We have strong guidelines around supporting challenging behaviour. On occasion pupils may target another



pupil physically however there is an important distinction which must be drawn between bullying and targeted behaviour.

Bullying as defined above includes both a repeated element and an 'intention to cause harm'.

Our pupils may on occasion target another pupil physically in a way which should not be labelled as bullying behaviour examples might include:

- A child is distressed and targets another pupil because of simple proximity.
- A child targets another child because of a history of adult attention for this behaviour.
- A child targets another child because they gain some kind of sensory reinforcement from that pupil when they are attacked perhaps in the form of an audio response.
- A child targets another child because they frequently exhibit a behaviour (for example a sound) which that child finds distressing and the child is aware from previous occasions that a physical assault is likely to stop the behaviour.

In these examples the physical behaviour exhibited by the pupil toward a peer does not have the intention to harm the peer. The intention is toward something 'other' than harm which is accessed or avoided via a physical attack on the peer.

It is important to note this the distinction described does not change how the pupil being hurt experiences the physical attack and this behaviour will still be addressed as detailed in the behaviour policy. The semantic difference here is drawn due to the emotive nature of bullying and being bullied.

Whole School Ethos

At Chatten we have whole school ethos around preventing bullying by encouraging an awareness for staff of the importance of supporting pupils' relationship (social), sexual and health education in a way which is driven by outcomes in the EHCP, tailored to individual needs and apparent in pupils learning programmes and behaviour support plans. This links clearly with our safeguarding policy. Where bullying (or targeted behaviour) does occur, it is addressed immediately through a rational analysis and intervention system described in our behaviour policy. As with all things at Chatten there is a strong focus on the individual and an individual approach.



Bullying prevention

At Chatten we view bullying in the context of a behaviour which can be analysed, understood and supported.

At Chatten we seek to understand the needs of our pupils and to put systems and interventions in place using behaviour support programmes and learning programmes which reduce behaviours which are damaging and increase/encourage pro-social positive behaviours. We do this via fully individualised systems of support tailored to the need of each pupil. By adapting how approach to the individual we are able to prevent the need for behaviour which might be characterised as bullying.

For more details on this please see our behaviour policy.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Every child and young person and adult at Chatten Free School has the right to learn and work in a safe and supportive environment, and to live without fear or anxiety. No one deserves to be victimised by bullying and everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

The Role of Governors

- The governing body supports the Head of School and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) including the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body will not condone any bullying in our school Any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- The governing body monitors incidents of bullying and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The governors require the Head of School 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.
- A parent or carer who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can follow the School Complaints Procedure. 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 Head of School and asks for an investigation into the case. This is then reported back to a representative of the governing body.



The role of the Head of School

- It is the responsibility of the Head of School and the Senior Leadership Team to implement the school anti-bullying policy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, this includes how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Head of School reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.
- The Head of School and the Senior Leadership Team ensures that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.
- The Head of School and the Senior Leadership Team 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.
- The Head of School ensures that all stakeholders are aware of the bullying policy and how the school responds to bullying. This includes ensuring that stakeholders are aware of the difference between bullying and targeted behaviour and how the school responds to these.

The role of the Teacher and Support Staff

- All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously and seek to prevent it from taking place by following procedures outlined within policies and individual programmes.
- If a member of staff witnesses an act of bullying, they are expected to respond immediately and follow our procedures for addressing bullying and/or challenging behaviour.
- As per our behaviour policy we keep a detailed record of behaviour in our school, this includes bullying. This will usually be recorded using the Hi-Rasmus data system. However, where appropriate this may also be recorded on C-Poms (our system for recording and reporting safeguarding concerns).
- Following any behaviour, including bullying, a review (or the implementation) of a behaviour support plan will be conducted to prevent re-occurrence.
- In all cases staff are expected to follow individual BSP's and programmes in relation to supporting and recording behaviour including behaviour which might be construed as bullying.



The role of parents

- 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 Head of School. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school complaints procedure, as detailed on the school website
- Parents have a responsibility to support the school anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school. Parents are asked to sign the Home-School agreement when a child starts school. In addition to the above where a parent is made aware of a programme to reduce a challenging behaviour by their child which might be construed as bullying or targeting behaviour they should work with the school with regards to the implementation of the BSP at home to reduce the likelihood of the behaviour in school.
- Parents need to be aware of the difference between bullying and targeted behaviour and work with the school to support positive behaviour.

The role of pupils

The majority of pupils at Chatten will be unable to express how they are feeling including how they feel about bullying or the behaviours of others.

It is part of the role of the school to help teach pupils to express basic needs including the ability to say 'no' or ask for help when they are in a situation, they find unpleasant.

Links with safeguarding

It is important that we recognise that bullying is not something that only happens in school. Our pupils are extremely vulnerable and may be subject to bullying behaviour outside of school from members of their community or from within the family unit. Clearly bullying outside of the school building constitutes a safeguarding risk. Therefore, this policy links with the safeguarding policy in many respects.

Signs and symptoms

It is difficult for our children to indicate that they are being bullied indeed it is likely that they will be unaware themselves that what they are experiencing is bullying. It is



therefore vital that we as a school are observant of the signs that our pupils may be unhappy and identify where this is due to bullying. Things to look out for and investigate include:

- A marked change in behaviour including a new behaviour, a new behavioural intensity or a behaviour occurring in a new location or at a new time.
- A reluctance to engage in activities which they previously enjoyed
- Flinches or seems distrustful
- Shows an increase in anxiety
- Develops a new difficulty around sleep or food
- Develops a new self-injurious behaviour
- Is absent from school
- Has physical symptoms such as bruises

Of course, these signs could indicate something aside from bullying but bullying should be considered when investigating.

Procedures

At Chatten Free School we view all behaviours as having a function. This includes bullying or targeted behaviour. Therefore, the majority of our procedures into bullying are exactly the same as those identified in our behaviour policy for dealing with dangerous or harmful behaviours.

Pupils are rarely (if ever) left un-supervised and therefore any behaviour (including behaviour targeted at a peer) will be observed and will be addressed using the procedures in our behaviour policy.

If bullying is suspected outside of the school environment, then this would be addressed under the safeguarding policy.

In addition to the above in dealing with the perpetrator of an incident it is also important to note how we support a pupil (and family) after an incident of bullying or targeting behaviour.

1. Remove the child from the environment to somewhere they can be calm.
2. Engage in activities with the child to help them to feel calm and safe.
3. Record the event
4. Inform the pupil's family
5. If possible allow the two pupils to be in the same space together in a supervised safe way to avoid the pupil become aversive and impacting ability to engage.



Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Head of School, Senior Leadership Team and Safeguarding team who report to governors about the effectiveness of the policy. The anti-bullying policy is the governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness annually. Governors analyse information for patterns of people, places or groups. This policy will be reviewed every two years, or earlier if necessary.