

# Cockton Hill Infants' School Anti-bullying Policy



**Headteacher: Tom Cuthbertson**  
**Chair of Governors: Bob Woods**

## Introduction

"Research suggests that bullying not only causes considerable suffering to individual pupils but also has a damaging effect upon school atmosphere .....It is hard to see how a school can win the confidence of its pupils if it fails to deal with behaviour which so seriously damages the quality of their lives."

(Discipline in Schools - report of the Elton Committee)

"Bullying is probably the most underrated problem in our schools today. It involves some 1.5 million children and young people in both state and independent sectors in the U.K. It causes fear and distress in the victim and distracts from school work." (Tattum and Herbert 1990)

The two quotes above give sound reasons why bullying, something that can occur in any school, should and will be actively prohibited at Cockton Hill Infants' School.

We believe that bullying, whether between child and child, adult and child or adult and adult, is socially and morally unacceptable and can have a long-term damaging effect on both victim and bully. We also recognise that bullying concerns many children, parents and school staff and can affect both school attendance and school performance.

## Scope

This statement of policy refers to all children who attend Cockton Hill Infants' School. It should be considered within the context of our whole school policy on Behaviour Management. It should also be included within the Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education, Religious Education and Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning programmes of the school.

## Definition

We recognize that the term "bullying" needs to be defined. Bullying can be defined as the abuse of power by an individual or group. It is the bully's intention to exert power over another in order to cause distress. Bullying can be physical, verbal, sexual or psychological in nature. It may occur frequently or infrequently, regularly or irregularly but it should always be taken seriously, even if it has only occurred on a single occasion. In more serious cases the abuse of power by an adult over a child, or by a child over a child may be viewed as child abuse and bullying should be seen within this context.

## Aims

- To raise the awareness of children, staff, parents and governors of Cockton Hill Infants' School that bullying is viewed seriously and will not be tolerated at this school.
- To take pro-active steps to combat bullying.
- To deal with bullying if and when it occurs.
- To develop and keep under review a whole-school policy and guidelines, in conjunction with other related school policies.
- To make clear to pupils, parents and staff the steps which will be taken when bullying is reported.

## Rationale

Bullying is a very complex phenomenon which evokes a variety of responses:

- if schools claim that bullying doesn't happen but take no steps to find if this is really the case;
- if children see adults as powerless to stop bullying and therefore do not report it;
- while it remains part of the pupil code that "telling" is disloyal;
- when children view bullying as a normal but distressing part of school life that "has to be put up with";
- if children (and parents) view bullying as part of the ritual that takes place, especially when transferring to a higher phase;
- if parents hold the view that schools are ineffective at dealing with bullying.

## Entitlement

All children, without exception, at Cockton Hill Infants' School have the right to enjoy to the fullest possible extent the benefits of the educational provision that is offered. In order to make full use of these benefits the pupils at this school should expect to be educated in an environment which:

- is safe and caring;
- provides challenges but is non-threatening;
- encourages children to feel secure;
- values children's opinions and involves them, where appropriate, in the determining of school policy and rules;
- shows an awareness of children's individual needs and attempts to meet these.

This school believes that if a child claims to have been bullied or is suspected of being bullied he/she is entitled to expect:

- to be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts,
- that appropriate action will be taken to address the child's concerns and an assurance that there will be no recurrence,
- that the action to be taken will be made clear to the child and if necessary to the parents.

This school also believes that if a child is suspected of bullying he/she is entitled to expect:

- to be listened to in an appropriate setting and that every effort will be made to establish the facts;
- to be told what action the school can take;
- to be told what action the school intends to take.

This school further believes that parents are entitled to expect that:

- their child will be educated in an atmosphere which is safe and caring and is not characterised by violence and intimidation,;
- the school will take all reasonable steps to prevent bullying from occurring;
- any bullying incident which is reported will be thoroughly investigated;
- any bullying incident which is found to have taken place will be dealt with in line with the school's guidelines.

## School Staff

All school staff have collective responsibility for ensuring that any reported or actual bullying incidents are investigated thoroughly and dealt with in the appropriate way.

The Headteacher shall be responsible for ensuring that all possible means are followed to stop bullying, in all its forms, in the school.

## Parents

Pupils and parents need to be made aware that bullying will be viewed seriously at Cockton Hill Infants' School. To achieve this, the following information will be sent to the parents of all present pupils and will subsequently be added to the school brochure to be given to the parents of all new pupils entering this school:

### Pupil/Parent Guidelines to Combat Bullying

*We do realise that some bullying does occur in all schools, including ours. It can be a worrying, anxious time for families when children are afraid to attend school as a result of threats, intimidation or violence. However the staff and children of Cockton Hill Infants' School are committed to eliminating this anti-social behaviour and we will do all in our power to achieve this.*

*Please discuss the following with your children and like us, try to encourage them to understand that when they come to this school no-one should bother, pester or harm them. They have the right to be happy at school and if they do encounter bullying they should get help by TELLING (parents, teachers, and friends) instead of keeping worries to themselves.*

*If you suspect that your child is the victim of bullying we would urge you to tell a member of staff, personally or by telephone, so that the matter can be discussed. Following an incident being reported, it will be thoroughly investigated- all parties will be interviewed by a member of the teaching staff and then appropriate action will be taken, following a Restorative Approach This will include informing parents of both victim and bully of the outcome, if this is felt to be necessary. If your child is established as committing bullying behaviour then we will need your support and co-operation in any action taken. The fact that school and home can be seen to be working together is often enough to help children to see the error of their ways. We hope that all parents will be as committed to the eradication of bullying as we at school are.*

## **Governors**

This Policy will be discussed by the Governors and agreed by them to be appropriate for our school. Any amendments will be presented to them in the normal way.

## **Outside Agencies**

When considered necessary outside agencies may be called upon to give advice or practical help.

## **Cyber Bullying**

At Cockton Hill Infants' School we have an E-Safety Policy which aims to keep all children safe at school as well as at home with the use of ICT. Children are taught to treat people the same as they would in the playground and they know who to seek help from if they are uncomfortable or unhappy from what they see or read on the internet.

## **Staff Guidelines to Combat Bullying**

### **1] Prevention**

Obviously, it is better to stop bullying before it occurs so prevention is better than cure. This will also create a feeling of safety within the children. In order to achieve this we can:

Use the curriculum to raise awareness. This could be carried out in:

- school assemblies;
- R.E. lessons;
- P.S. H. C. E. lessons;
- SEAL/emotional intelligence lessons;
- Circle time;
- School Council meetings;
- parent newsletters;
- open days;
- staff meetings.

By discussing bullying we will be giving children, staff and parents opportunities to talk about the issue openly. We aim to:

- develop within the school an atmosphere of trust where children are able to tell and where adults will listen and believe;
- make children aware that bullying is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and that every incident will be acted upon;
- ascertain the times in school where bullying is likely to occur and ensure a high priority of supervision. Times might include - before school begins; as school is closing; break times; during movement between activities.
- locate the places in school where bullying is likely to occur and ensure adequate supervision here. Places could include - the playground (corners, recesses etc.); the cloakroom and toilet areas; any work areas with minimal supervision (e.g. computer corridor); lining up areas.
- encourage children to be aware of their own feelings and the feelings of others through out emotional

intelligence curriculum thus increasing the likelihood of a pupil reporting bullying

- be aware of any vulnerable children these may include - new children in school; children different in background, appearance or speech from others; children suffering from low self-esteem, anxiety or nervousness; emotionally vulnerable children; those who give a reaction when bullied - i.e. loss of control, tantrums, crying etc.

## 2] Action

We would like to think that our efforts to prevent bullying will do just that but of course, whatever we do, some bullying may still occur. However, when an incident is reported to you or you do come across bullying you should:

- stay calm - you may add to the bully's sense of "fun" and give him/her control over the situation by any emotional outburst;
- take the incident or report seriously - however trivial it may seem at first sight;
- take immediate action - if this is at all possible, try not to allow the situation to wait;
- listen carefully to the facts offered by both parties;
- decide whether your action needs to be public or private - being sensitive to the immediate needs of the victim;
- reassure the victim and try not to make him/her feel foolish or inadequate;
- reinforce the policy that they have done the correct thing by TELLING;
- offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim;
- make it clear to the bully that his/her actions are unacceptable;
- encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view;
- explain in clear terms the punishment and the reason behind it;
- give punishment or sanctions against the bully - if this is felt to be necessary – care is needed here as aggressive or punitive action may give the message that if you are in power bullying is acceptable!

## 3] Punishment or Sanction

Staff attention is drawn to the school's policy on Behaviour Management, our school brochure and our school code for incentives and sanctions used in school to both prevent and, where necessary. Deal with unacceptable behaviour, including bullying. Some of these are given below:

- a quiet talk;
- warning from the teacher;
- work on your own;
- stay in for one playtime loss of privileges;
- sent to headteacher;
- inform parents and start behaviour diary.

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