

Dovecote Primary and Nursery School

November 2023

Reviewed by Ruth Guy-Clark

Statement on Bullying

Dovecote Primary School is committed to providing an environment for children that is safe, welcoming and free from bullying. Bullying of any form is unacceptable in our school, whether the offender or victim is a child or an adult. The victim is never responsible for being the target of bullying. Bullying will not be tolerated or excused under any circumstances, whether by pupils, parents or staff.

Everyone involved in the school has a responsibility for the safeguarding and wellbeing of the pupils and, staff, children, parent/carers and Governors will be made aware of the school's stance towards bullying. Such behaviour will not be tolerated or excused under any circumstances.

Bullying can be short term, or continue over years. Bullying can be overt or subtle intimidation. The school defines bullying as **the repeated and wilful harassment of others through emotional, physical, verbal or psychological abuse**. To do this the bully has to have some sort of power over the victim. All bullying is aggression although not all aggression is bullying. Examples of such behaviour and forms of bullying are as follows:

Emotional: Being deliberately unkind, shunning or excluding another person from a group or tormenting them. For example, forcing another person to be 'left out' of a game or activity, passing notes about others or making fun of another person, 'hiding' people's possessions.

Physical: Pushing, scratching, spitting, kicking, hitting, biting, taking or damaging belongings, tripping up, punching or using any other sort of violence against another person. This is different to other aggressive behaviour in that it fits the definition of 'repeated harassment'.

Verbal: Name-calling, put-downs, ridiculing or using words to attack, threaten or insult. For example, spreading rumours or making fun of another person's appearance.

Psychological: Behaviour likely to instil a sense of fear or anxiety in another person.

Racist: Racial taunts, insults, graffiti, gestures. This aspect is covered in more detail in the school's racial equality statement.

Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.

Homophobic: Because of, or focussing on the issue of a person's sexuality.

Religious/cultural: Based on a person's beliefs or traditions.

Social: Based on a person's appearance or health, related to their home circumstances, a disability or their academic ability.

Cyber: All areas of internet such as email and internet chat room misuse. Threats using text messages. Misuse of associated technology such as digital camera and video. Uploading of images without permission Bullying can be as a result of one of the above, or a mixture of one or more.

Recognising Bullying

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school
- 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
- has torn clothes or damaged belongings at the end of a school day
- has possessions go missing
- has unexplained cuts and bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is 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.

Bullies can also be victims, although these are the minority. Both male and female bullies do have something in common, however:

- bullies tend to have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control
- bullies tend to lack empathy; they cannot imagine what their victim feels
- bullies tend to lack guilt; they rationalise that the victim somehow 'deserves' the bullying treatment.

These attitudes have implications for any curricular intervention aimed at the prevention of bullying. For example, co-operative work and non-aggressive behaviour can be praised. Empathy can be increased through role play, or exposure to relevant stories. Language work and social education can pick up the theme of how other people feel. These are steps to combat bullying behaviour.

Preventing Bullying Behaviour

The Head teacher and the staff will make every effort to create a tolerant and caring environment in the school, where bullying behaviour is not acceptable. This is reflected in the school's core values. Staff will discuss the issues surrounding bullying openly, including why bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. We will use the curriculum to convey messages through Jigsaw sessions, and through whole school Jigsaw assemblies. We will also recognise 'Anti Bullying Week' each year and plan focus activities for that week enabling us to work together as a school to teach about bullying and that it is unacceptable.

Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

Despite all proactive efforts to prevent it, bullying behaviour is likely to occur on occasion and the school recognises this fact and will react appropriately. In the event of such incidents, the following principles will govern the school's response:

- All incidents of bullying will be addressed thoroughly and sensitively. All adults will be aware of the need for sensitivity when dealing with pupils for whom English is an additional language, those with additional needs and or disabilities.
- Children will be encouraged to report immediately any incident of bullying that they witness, or if they feel they have been a victim. They should report to a member of staff. They will be reassured that what they say will be taken seriously and handled carefully.
- All members of staff, parents and other adults have a duty to report any incidents of bullying they witness involving children or adults at the school. Members of staff should ensure that all other relevant members of staff are aware.

- If a child or a member of staff tells someone that they are being bullied, they will be given the time to explain what has happened and reassured that they were right to tell.
- The individual who has been the victim of bullying will be helped and supported by the staff team. An individual will be identified whom the pupil feels comfortable talking to. They will be kept under close supervision and staff will check on their welfare regularly. Parents/carers will be informed as soon as possible kept informed of the situation until all parties are happy the issue has been resolved.
- In most cases, bullying behaviour can be addressed according to the strategies set out in the Behaviour Management policy. The bully will be encouraged to discuss their behaviour and think through the consequences of their actions. Where appropriate, they will be encouraged to talk through the incident with the other person concerned in order to restore the relationship. The response to the incident will vary depending on the type of bullying. For example raising pupil awareness of certain issues like homophobic or sexist comments may stop the problem whereas premediated cyber bullying would need a different approach.
- A member of staff will inform the parents/carers of all the children involved in bullying incidents at the earliest possible opportunity. If appropriate, staff will facilitate a meetings with the relevant parents/carers. At all times, staff will handle such incidents with care and sensitivity.
- All confirmed incidents of bullying will be recorded on My Concerns. When a child is bullying a child this constitutes child on child abuse and will be recorded as such. In the light of reported incidents, the Head teacher and other relevant staff will review the school's procedures in respect of bullying. Any analysis, or patterns of behaviour will be shared with all staff. This statement will also be reviewed annually in line with the school development plan and relevant elements of the monitoring and evaluation schedule.