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**South Stoke Primary School
Anti-bullying Policy**

Aims

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school. This policy has used advice found on the Oxfordshire Local Authority website: <http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cmc/content/anti-bullying> and government guidance on bullying (September 2012) found at <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/behaviourpolicies>.

This policy aims to:

- Promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour;
- Ensure all teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is;
- Inform children and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment;
- Show commitment to overcoming bullying by practising zero tolerance;
- Identify and deal with incidents of bullying consistently and effectively.

Definition

Bullying is defined as:

"When a person's or group of people's behaviour, over a period of time, leaves someone feeling one or more of the following:

- physically and/or mentally hurt or worried;
- unsafe and/or frightened;
- unable to do well and achieve;
- "very different", alone, unimportant and/or undervalued;
- unable to see a happy and exciting future for yourself;

it *could* be bullying. When a person, or group of people, has been made aware of the effects of their behaviour on another person and they continue to behave in the same manner, this *is* bullying."

If someone is made to feel like this, or if they think someone they know feels like this, it should be investigated. This should happen straight away as it can take a long time to build up the courage to tell someone. However, lots of things can make people feel bad, sometimes it depends on the situation they are in, and it is not always bullying, so the following two definitions are also useful:

1. Bullying is any behaviour by an individual or group that:

- is meant to hurt - the person or people doing the bullying know what they are doing and mean to do it;
 - happens more than once - there will be a pattern of behaviour, not just a "one-off" incident;
 - involves an imbalance of power - the person being bullied will usually find it very hard to defend themselves.¹
2. "Behaviour by an individual or a group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally."²

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Bullying can be:

- Indirect, emotional or relational - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures) ridicule, humiliation, spreading hurtful or untruthful rumours or nasty stories, excluding someone from social groups, "dirty looks" or gossiping;
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone, using offensive or discriminatory remarks;
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things or threatening to do any of these things;
- Prejudice-related - for example, bullying or harassment that is homophobic, gender-based, sexist, sexual or transphobic, racist or discriminating against religion, Special educational needs, disabilities, health conditions or a person's home circumstances, such as being looked after, or caring for a family member. This includes actions or language that discriminates against people for any of these reasons, or other reasons relating to a person's identity;
- Sexual - inappropriate or unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments or cyber comments of a sexual nature;
- Online/cyber - for example, sending offensive text messages, using pictures or video clips, Instant Messaging, emails, social networking sites or other electronic contact to cause harm, embarrassment or discredit to students or staff of the school.

"Cyber-bullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself."³

Bullying includes the above but is not limited to this. It also includes:

- Any form of behaviour which is the result of a specific strategy to make an individual feel miserable;
- Organising others to do any of the above;
- Excluding an individual in such a way that they are made to feel vulnerable and different in a bad way.

It is important to understand that bullying is not the *odd occasion* of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose (STOP).

Children must be encouraged to report bullying in school to a teacher or staff member.

This policy is designed to ensure that as a school we are alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it.

Off-site bullying

¹ Adapted from Bullying – A Charter for Action, DCSF.

² Adapted from DfE guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying" 2012.

³ Report to the Anti-Bullying Alliance by Goldsmiths School, University of London.

At South Stoke Primary School we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside as well as inside school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises for example in after school activities or through the use of technology such as the internet or mobile phones outside of school hours. The following steps may be taken:

- Talk to the children about how to handle or avoid bullying outside the school premises;
- Discuss coping strategies with parents;
- Talk to the local Community Police Officer about problems outside the school premises.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 89(5) gives headteachers the power:

"to such an extent as is reasonable to regulate the behaviour of pupils when they are off the school site (which is particularly pertinent to regulating cyberbullying)".

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts; no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying can cause stress and can affect a child's health and learning.

Schools and parents have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Prevention

To fulfill our aims, the following strategies are used:

- Constant monitoring of school buildings and grounds to ensure a safe and secure environment is maintained.
- Involvement of all school staff to ensure a consistent approach is in evidence.
- Availability of all staff to listen to pupils' concerns.
- Encouraging pupils and parents to report bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware.
- Raising awareness of bullying through assemblies/PSHCE.
- Using national anti-bullying week as an opportunity to highlight the issues around bullying.
- ICT lessons covering e-safety.
- Adults model appropriate behaviour towards each other to students.
- This policy is available on the school website.
- Each class agrees on its own set of class rules.
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour by pupils such as certificates at assembly and South Stoke Star awards.
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another.
- Staff will constantly reinforce the message to children that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.
- An equality policy is in operation in the school, covering what is meant by racial, homophobic, disablist, classist, gender-based, sexual, transphobic, religious or other identity-based harassment. It states that such harassment will not be tolerated, and specifies how the school will respond to any such incidents.
- All staff including support and administrative staff are trained to deal with issues relating to bullying and violence.

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:

- is frightened of walking to or from school;
- begs to be driven to school;
- changes their usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to school (school-phobic);
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;

- starts stammering;
- attempts or threatens self-harm;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares/bedwetting;
- regularly feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged;
- has possessions go "missing";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- becomes unreasonable when dealing with school issues;
- exhibits inappropriate behaviour towards 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.

Procedures

It is recognised that incidents of bullying occur in all schools. It is essential that all such incidents are taken seriously and dealt with in an appropriate manner. A pupil or parent may report an incident to any member of staff, but the responsibility for ensuring all incidents are consistently dealt with lies jointly with the class teacher and the headteacher. If a member of staff feels that they are being bullied, they should report it to their line manager or the headteacher. Bullying of staff will be dealt with in accordance with Oxfordshire County Council guidelines.

The headteacher will be responsible for embedding anti-bullying awareness in the policies and practices of the school.

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached.
- Staff investigate alleged bullying by consulting the victim(s). Appendix 1 provides a checklist for investigating an incident.
- If it is felt that an incident of bullying has taken place, then it will be taken seriously and investigated. A member of staff wishing to report an incident of bullying should approach the relevant class teacher in the first instance.
- The member of staff and the class teacher should reach agreement as to whether this incident constitutes bullying or should be addressed as an incident of poor behaviour.
- If deemed to be bullying, the class teacher will speak to the pupils involved and proceed accordingly. If the matter can be resolved in school without the need for parental contact then this will be done and monitored by the class teacher and if appropriate the headteacher. It may be decided that parents should be informed immediately and this will be done by the headteacher. A written copy of events will be kept and this will be updated until the situation has been resolved (Appendix 2).
- Parents will always be informed that their child has been subject to bullying. The parents of the perpetrator(s) will also be contacted via telephone or letter and offered a meeting with the headteacher to discuss the incident.
- Sanctions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned in accordance with the school's discipline policy.
- Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.
- The headteacher will report on serious bullying incidents to the Governors.
- If necessary and appropriate, the teacher and Governor who have responsibility for safeguarding in the school will be consulted along with Social Services or police.

Support

Target of the bullying

Support for the target of the bullying is essential both immediately following the incident and during an agreed period of review. Peer support, staff support, parental support and outside agency support may all be essential to ensure that the target of the bullying does not suffer any long-term effects.

After a period of time staff will meet with the target of the bullying to reassess the situation and the relationship between those involved.

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice;
- Reassuring the pupil;
- Offering continuous support;
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PHSE, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour. An annual anti-bullying week is also organised with particular input from the Healthy Schools Group.

Child(ren) who is/are doing the bullying

It is recognised that support must be given to the child or children who is/are doing the bullying. Disciplinary procedures against such a child or children are intended to change or modify behaviour rather than label anyone as a bully. Such procedures may include:

- Positive behaviour strategies;
- Withdrawal of activities;
- Discussion about the effects of bullying;
- Peer mediation;
- Involvement of other agencies and services such as an Educational Psychologist, Community Police Officer or Doctor.

Discriminatory Language

Discriminatory language not only undermines confidence and self-esteem of individuals, but also reflects negative attitudes towards a wider sub-community or group, and in some cases is illegal. A culture where discriminatory language goes unchallenged is likely to be a culture where bullying is more prevalent.

Discriminatory language of any kind is not acceptable and will be challenged, whether verbal, written (including graffiti) or electronic. Education about diversity will be delivered through the curriculum, displays, assemblies and tolerance will be modelled by all staff. In particular we will not accept any derogatory language that is:

- Sexual or sexist;
- Relating to special educational needs, disabilities or health conditions;
- Gender-based;
- Homophobic;
- Transphobic;
- Racist;
- Relating to religion;
- Classist;
- Relating to a person's home circumstances.

Discriminatory language is sometimes used without thinking and in some schools is ignored by teachers and school staff because either they feel it is difficult to know how to respond or they believe the language is used without

any discriminatory intent. In this school we challenge all discriminatory language whenever it is used. When responding to discriminatory language, staff will:

- Tell the pupil that discriminatory language is not acceptable in school. Explain that such language is offensive.
- If pupils continue to use the language, explain in more detail the effect that discrimination and discriminatory language have on people and that like racist language, homophobic language will not be tolerated.
- If a pupil continues, remove the pupil from the classroom and talk to the pupil in more detail about his/her behaviour and why it's offensive.

If it continues, involve senior managers. The pupil should understand the sanctions that will apply if they continue to use discriminatory language. Alongside sanctions we may use a restorative approach to help repair the harm caused by the incident and help young people be aware of the impact of their actions. These sanctions may include:

- Removal from the group (in class);
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
- Acceptable language contract;
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum;
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises;
- Referral to Schools Police Liaison Officer;
- If it continues, invite parents in to discuss the attitude of the pupil. Homophobic bullying, including the use of homophobic language, is unacceptable. We will take time to explain to parents why this policy is important as part of the anti-bullying policy of the school. We will explain that all pupils should be able to feel safe at school and reiterate that they have an obligation to help schools uphold policies.⁴

Staff Responsibilities

All staff will be kept abreast of current thinking with regard to anti-bullying and if required, support will be given to implement this policy. All staff will be made aware of the implications of the school policies to bullying and racism.

Staff will be offered training on tackling bullying throughout the year or through professional development courses.

⁴ Adapted from: Stonewall, *Challenging Homophobic Language*, http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/public/CYPF/anti_bullying/ab_week_2010/homophobia/Challenging_Homophobic_Language.pdf and from Safe to Learn, *Homophobic bullying* (DCSF 2007).

Appendix 1 Checklist for investigating an incident

1. Who was involved - is there or are there apparent victims? If so, who is it/are they?
2. In what way did the victims suffer?
3. How did the incident start? Was it spontaneous or premeditated?
4. What is alleged to have happened, from the perspective of all those involved?
5. When did the incident take place?
6. Where did the incident take place?
7. Who witnessed the incident (pupils, parents, staff and others)?
8. Who reported it to whom and when?
9. Is there any background to this incident?
10. Is there any other reason for considering this to be bullying behaviour?
11. Why does the reporter or investigator of the incident perceive this to have been a bullying incident?
12. To what extent did the incident affect others?
13. What was the response of the victim(s)?
14. What does/do the victim(s) wish to see resulting from the investigation?

A 'first offence' of, for example, name calling or abusive language should be challenged, the nature of the unacceptable behaviour explained, and the school policy on such matters outlined. The pupil should be informed that any further occurrences will be logged against them as a bullying incident.

INCIDENTS OF BULLYING RECORD SHEET

This record sheet will be completed, with a member of staff, by any pupil involved in incidents of bullying. It will be used to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's strategies to combat bullying in school.

Name

Tutor group/class

Brief description of what happened:

Agreed action to be taken:

Signed (Pupil) _____ **Date** _____

Signed (Staff) _____ **Date** _____

Follow up notes, if appropriate: