

# ALFRISTON SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

## **RATIONALE**

It is a basic entitlement of all children at Alfriston School that they receive an education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Education is a compulsory experience and it is therefore the responsibility of all the staff in the school to ensure that it takes place in an atmosphere which is caring and protective. Parents should be entitled to feel confident that when they send their children to school, they will be protected from bullies. This includes bullying incidents which may occur on school transport.

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

- The wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.
- Bullying can be physical and/or verbal in nature.
- It is any illegitimate use of power in order to hurt another.
- Persistent name calling, teasing and taunting are emotional bullying.
- Racial and sexual harassment are all part of bullying behaviour.
- Physical bullying can range from horseplay to vicious assault.
- Play becomes bullying when it spoils other children's activities or when violence or hostility is shown.
- Interfering with other people's possessions can constitute bullying.
- Refusing to speak to someone, shunning or excluding them can be seen as bullying behaviour.

## **AIMS**

To contribute to the creation of a safe and secure school environment within which individuals may develop without fear, intimidation and discrimination.

To contribute to a school environment where each individual is respected and seen to be important.

To prevent bullying by being proactive and raising staff awareness.

## **PREVENTING BULLYING**

In order to prevent bullying we include in our PSHE programme work on relationships and feelings, including work on bullying.

In our work we will not use bullying behaviour to control pupils, but will be assertive in our relationships.

In our everyday activities we will be vigilant in attempting to detect bullying. We will ensure that playground, corridors, toilets and other hidden areas are regularly patrolled.

We will inform parents and pupils that Alfriston will not tolerate bullying.

We will ask pupils and parents to tell us about incidents of bullying and then follow them up.

### **ACTION TO TAKE WHEN DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING**

Take all allegations of bullying seriously and try to gain a clear picture of what has happened from the victim.

Offer the victim immediate support and put the school's procedures into action.

At Alfriston we follow the NO BLAME APPROACH when dealing with incidents of bullying.

### **THE NO-BLAME APPROACH TO TACKLING BULLYING**

All members of staff are encouraged to take on board the thinking behind the no-blame approach:

- Bullying and anti-social behaviour is almost inevitable in a community of young people. It can be countered by teaching more appropriate behaviour:- i.e. if children cannot read, we teach them; if children cannot relate properly to other children, we teach them.
- The best way to do this is to foster empathy with the feelings of others, in particular with the feelings of the bullied child.
- Negative, punitive measures taken against the bully are likely to promote resentment, and to aggravate rather than solve the problem.

At Alfriston the Headteacher or any identified members of staff are nominated to be the "mediating adults" (MA).

### **IN THE EVENT OF A BULLYING INCIDENT**

The MA is informed by either a parent, a pupil, a class teacher, a school support assistant, or any other person involved with the pupil.

The MA has a meeting with the bullied pupil, explains the rudiments of the no-blame approach and the reasons for it, and obtains permission from the pupil to arrange a meeting with the bully, bullies and spectators. The MA makes notes about the bullied pupil's "symptoms", e.g. not wanting to come to school, not sleeping, trying to hide, trying to stay in at playtime, crying, pretending to be ill, etc.

A list of all the spectators and bullies is drawn up, and they are all invited to a meeting (at Alfriston we have found that it can be helpful if the bullied pupil is present at the meeting, but this is different from the original approach).

The meeting takes place, led by the MA.

The first point made, even as the meeting is being set up, is that it is a meeting - not a telling off. The tone is a friendly one:- we have a problem here in school, let's see if we can solve it. It is important to say that the people invited to the meeting are there because they may be able to help, and that nobody is in trouble.

The MA explains that the bullied pupil is unhappy, and describes the feelings etc. mentioned by the bullied pupil at their previous meeting. This needs to be done sensitively, with some empathy.

The next step is that the MA asks for any ideas from the group: how can we stop X from feeling like this?

The pupil's responses can be written down by the MA.

Any side issues are ignored/discouraged.

When the ideas have dried up, the MA summarises in the form of an action plan.

The MA then arranges a date for the next meeting.

If all goes well, the second meeting is usually fairly short: A simple progress chase, positive remarks are encouraged, and X takes the opportunity to say how much better things are for her. The group are thanked for solving a really tricky problem.

If things have not gone well, then the problems need to be analysed, more ideas requested and tried out and a further meeting arranged. It may be that children not in the original group have caused problems, these pupils are invited to the next meeting.