



The Oak Partnership

Anti-bullying Policy (Selworthy School)

We are committed to safeguarding and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all pupils in accordance with safeguarding procedures and guidance for staff outlined in the schools' Health and Safety, Child Protection, Security and Safeguarding policies.

Policy Name

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INTRODUCTION

Selworthy School recognises that learners with Cognition and Learning issues are often more vulnerable within society. This increased susceptibility extends to potential experiences of bullying across all aspects of their lives. **Given the potential for a cumulative impact of negative experiences, it's crucial that staff at Selworthy School are aware of this heightened risk.**

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all students and staff are able to learn /work in an environment where they feel safe, secure and happy.

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation.

DEFINITION

Many people have written a definition of bullying and for the purposes of this document, we will use the following one from the DfE:

There is no legal definition of bullying.

However, it's usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It takes many forms and can include:

- physical assault
- teasing
- making threats
- name calling

Bullying does not just take place in the context of school, it can happen in the community or even online.

GENERAL

Who Bullies?

Bullying often involves a person in authority abusing their authority and bullying those below him/her. An individual may also bully a peer and groups of people may pick on and bully an individual. It is often a person with low self-esteem who bullies in order to gain a sense of self-worth and respect for the wrong reason.

Forms Of Bullying

Bullying can broadly occur in four ways:

- **Physical:** actions such as hitting, kicking or threats of harm.
- **Verbal:** actions such as name calling, threats to other family members.

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- **Racist and discriminatory:** remarks or suggestions made in a derogatory way in relation to race, gender, ability, religion, culture, etc.
- **Homophobic:** remarks or suggestions made in a derogatory way in relation to sexual orientation, sexuality or gender in the context of transgender issues.

Bullying is a behaviour classed as 'Child on Child abuse', as per Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022 statutory guidance.

The Effects Of Bullying

Bullying of learners can take place in a number of areas:

- At school – usually takes the form of being shouted at, physical and verbal threats and physical intimidation and attacks.
- On transport – in LA transport and school minibuses the pecking order of “who sits in the front seat” syndrome can be indicative of subtle bullying.
- During activities in the community – young people can sometimes refuse to participate in activities for fear of being bullied in the same ways as described above or being coerced into activities or situations they do not feel comfortable with, sometimes for the entertainment of others.

Incidents of serious bullying can be classed as Emotional Abuse and can be an incredibly traumatic experience for a young person, causing long term mental health issues and poor self-esteem.

Problems Of Talking About Bullying

There are many reasons why young people will not discuss the fact that they are being bullied. Among them are:

- They are afraid they won't be believed;
- They are afraid that nothing will be done;
- They are afraid of repercussions from perpetrators;
- There are no witnesses and it would be one person's word against another;
- Where there are witnesses, they may be afraid to support the victim;

What Can We Do?

Selworthy School is clear that it will not tolerate learners in their care being bullied in any way. We see bullying as an infringement of a person's human rights.

Responding to Bullying:

When a learner reports bullying or staff observe incidents that may be bullying:

- Find a place where you will not be interrupted;
- Tell the learner you are worried about them/ask them to tell you about the bullying;
- Listen in a non-judgmental way;
- Tell them that no-one should have to experience bullying;
- Tell them that the school will help them stop the bullying;
- Encourage them to agree to the incident being formally logged as an incident of bullying;
- Ensure their safety immediately after the incident and thereafter;
- Report the behaviour to the relevant staff and DSL;

The Difference Between Bullying And Distress/Crisis Behaviour

At Selworthy School, we understand that the needs of our learners can mean they can display dysregulated behaviors and can go into distress and/or crisis. This is when a learner is not in control of their behaviour, as their fight or flight response is activated. Sometimes this distress/crisis behaviour can mean they shout, call names and are aggressive, sometimes towards peers. It is important to us that our staff are able to understand the difference between this behaviour from chosen behaviour.

Staff are trained in Trauma Informed/Responsive practice and are able to understand the difference between behaviour that is controlled (which includes bullying) and which is not. In instances where crisis behaviour may have impacted another, restorative practice to amend the relationship takes place.

Learners are encouraged to be understanding of the needs of others and be respectful of our diverse community within school.

THE CURRICULUM

The Curriculum addresses bullying at all Key Stages in with emphasis on key topics in different Key Stages. There are permanent Anti-Bullying displays around the school and a clear procedure for pupils to report bullying. Anti-Bullying Week is an annual event embedded in the school SMSC curriculum, along with other focus events for specific areas such as 'Safer Internet Day' and 'Children's Mental Health Week'.

Therapeutic input is used to address the underlying causes of bullying and other interventions may be used to address behaviour.

STAFF & LEADERSHIP

Staff

We see our staff as being the main resource we have in ensuring our learner are not bullied. We expect staff to do the following:

- Challenge any learner who are witnessed bullying another person. This is to be done in a non- aggressive and non-confrontational way;
- Report incidents of bullying to the DSL and relevant staff (class lead);
- Ensure they record instances of bullying and the action taken on CPOMS;
- Work with learners in a way that enables/empowers them to complain about being bullied by ensuring they know about the complaints procedure and who they can complain to;
- Work with learners who are bullies to enable/encourage them to alter their behaviour;
- Take time to be with learners who have been the victims of bullying;
- Act as positive role models;
- Work with young people to enable them to report any serious incidents to the police;
- In cases of serious and persistent bullying, leaders, in consultation with Social Workers, the parents and the bully, may decide to alter a learner's provision in order to protect those being bullied;

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Any staff member who is seen to be bullying learners will be reported to the Headteacher and investigated. Bullying will be seen as gross misconduct and a staff member could be dismissed if found guilty at a disciplinary hearing.

Leadership

Leaders at Selworthy School are responsible for ensuring:

- Staff are aware of all the issues that surround bullying and the impact it has on all;
- Staff are trained to be able to respond appropriately to disclosures;
- Incidents of bullying are followed up by relevant staff;
- Monitor incidents of bullying and the action taken;
- The Schools' Police Liaison Officer will be informed of serious incidents of bullying and may choose to meet with perpetrators;

Selworthy School aims to enable learners to lead fulfilling and meaningful lives. This cannot be achieved if they are being bullied on a regular basis and we are committed to ensuring that incidents of bullying are reduced.

UNACCEPTABLE LANGUAGE

Dealing with taunts or verbal abuse; this will depend on the learner and the relationship the member of staff has with them:

- Dismissive response: I am not going to listen to language like that.
- Questioning response: What makes you think that? What do you mean by that?
- Confronting response: Language like that is not acceptable; a lot of people would find that offensive.
- Personal response: I am not happy with what you said; I find that language offensive.
- Organisational response: The school does not tolerate language like that.

CYBER BULLYING

Cyber bullying may be defined as an individual or a group of people using mobile phones, the internet or other technologies to make recipients feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable.

In What Ways Can Cyber Bullying Occur?

Mobile phone

Sending humiliating and abusive text or video messages, as well as photo messages and phone calls over a mobile phone. This includes anonymous text messages over short distances using Bluetooth technology and sharing videos of physical attacks on individuals.

Email

Sending emails that are threatening or upsetting.

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Instant Messenger And Chat Rooms

Sending instant messenger and chat room messages to friends or direct to a victim.

Social Networking Sites

- Setting up profiles on social networking sites to make fun of someone.
- Abusing personal information
- Posting personal photos, emails or blogs where others can see them without the permission of the individual concerned.

Social networking sites make it a lot easier for web users to get hold of personal information and photos of people. It is also possible to get hold of someone else's messaging accounts and chat to people pretending to be the victim.

Interactive gaming

Games consoles allow players to chat online with anyone they find themselves matched within a multi-player game. Sometimes cyber bullies abuse other players and use threats. They can also lock victims out of games, spread false rumours about someone or hack into someone's account.

Sending Viruses

Some people send viruses to another person that can destroy their computers or delete personal information from their hard drive.

Reporting Cyber-Bullying

In cases of bullying, hacking and fake accounts, Selworthy School will work in collaboration with relevant adults to put a stop to the issue.

In cases where sexual abuse and grooming online is suspected, this should be reported to 'Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command' (Report to CEOP).

How Is Cyber Bullying Different?

There are several factors that differentiate cyber bullying from other types of bullying that can make it more difficult both to detect and to prevent:

- Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- No place provides sanctuary from the intrusion of a threatening text message or an abusive e-mail.
- Learners are particularly adept at using new technology, which can seem a closed world to adults. For example, the numerous acronyms used by young people in chat rooms and in text messages may make it difficult for adults to identify and address potential threats.

What Can Selworthy School Staff and Leaders Do?

As with any other type of bullying, staff and Leaders need to focus on creating an ethos in which cyber bullying is recognised to be unacceptable, take steps to prevent its occurrence, support young people who are bullied, and work with young people who are bullies to alter their behaviour.