

Edwinstree Middle School
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School



Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy should be read alongside our Behaviour Policy and the document Preventing and Tackling Bullying DfE July 2017.

Date issued: October 2023
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“Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” Genesis 1:26 – 27 October 2022

Rationale: At Edwinstree we believe passionately in the importance of John 10:10:“I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly.” which is our founding principle for this policy. To live life abundantly we require self and peer respect and understanding and to help all our community to achieve this we are supported by the Church of England Valuing all God’s children 2019 guidance, that we should offer a community where everyone is a person known and loved by God, and supported to know their intrinsic value. In helping us to understand why this is important we use Genesis 1.26-27 “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”. That all individuals have worth and are made in God’s image this helps us to celebrate and value difference rather than hide from it.

As a Church of England school, we aim :

- To create an atmosphere where children, parents and staff feel safe, confident and loved.
- For children, parents and employees to feel able to approach members of staff if they have concerns about bullying involving themselves or others.
- To take all concerns about bullying seriously and investigate the reported incident(s).
- For all children to take responsibility for their own actions.
- To give children confidence to be assertive and be able to say “Don’t do that. I don’t like it”.
- To support children to develop the Christian values of trust and compassion.
- To uphold the belief that we are all made in the image of God and should have an opportunity for abundant life.

What is bullying?

Bullying occurs when a child, or group of children is/are upset by the behaviour of another child or group of children. This behaviour occurs more than once and can take a variety of forms which may include:

- Physical
- Verbal
- And or Emotional

What is cyber bullying.

This is where bullying occurs on line via the internet and involves a child or group of children who are upset by the behaviour of another or others. Cyber bullying occurs when any negative post occurs and one post results in multiple views.

Incidents of bullying can include:

- Name calling
- Teasing
- Malicious gossip
- Intimidation
- Damaging or stealing property
- Extortion
- Coercion into acts they do not wish to do.
- Ostracising
- Violence and assault
- Damaging school work
- Pinching / kicking
- Damaging school / home equipment
- Jostling
- Using technology for any of the above [Cyber-bullying]

We are alert to all forms of bullying including those related to ethnicity, gender, religion and culture, homophobia, special educational needs and disabilities.

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We believe it is not bullying when children have a disagreement which is quickly resolved with (or without) adult intervention. However, if a child feels they are being bullied, this must be listened to, as the perception of bullying can be as distressing as actual bullying.

If the perpetrator of the bullying is an adult, the matter will be dealt with through the Staff Disciplinary procedures. In this instance support will be given to the child.

Possible warning signs

Children may show the following behaviours:

- Scared to walk to and from school
- Become withdrawn and distressed
- Refuse to go to school
- Refuse to say what the problem is
- Concentrate less in class
- Have possessions go missing regularly
- Be reluctant to go out to play
- Have nightmares
- Cling to adults in the playground
- Give unlikely excuses to explain any of the above
- Begin hurting others for no apparent reason
- Have unexplained injuries
- Bed wetting

Prevention of bullying

We encourage a positive approach to the prevention of bullying through cross-curricular activities, Collective Worship, RE and PSHE.

We provide opportunities which encourage children to talk about and explore their feelings both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ and to experience the value of compassion through ‘empathy’ – understanding other people’s feelings. We explore Genesis 1:26 – 27 and what it means to be made in the image of God for ourselves and how we treat others. We use the values of Compassion and value humility to support our antibullying work.

Activities include

- Bible and other stories, class discussions, Collective Worship, History and RE.
- Role play/drama in PSHE
- Promoting and teaching e-safety through PSHE.

We promote an understanding of the importance of true friendship through:

- Co-operative work / play situations in and out of the classroom.
- Compassion links between year groups encouraging a caring attitude.
- Use of story books and poems that talk about and illustrate friendships.
- Understanding of friendship through COWO and the role of Jesus as model of compassion.
- The value of service and leadership within the school to support older student to value and care for their younger counterparts.

Incidents of bullying may be reported by:

- A parent / carer of a child who is being bullied
- A child who is being bullied
- Other children not directly involved in the bullying

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- A member of staff.

Procedures to follow if an incident of suspected bullying is reported:

All claims of bullying are taken seriously and investigated promptly. If a suspected incident of bullying is reported to a member of staff other than the class teacher, the class teacher should be informed. The tutor and Head of Year will carry out the investigation in the first instance.

When talking to children it may be useful to use this definition of bullying – ‘People doing nasty or unkind things to you on purpose, more than once, which is difficult to stop.’ (Safe to Learn DCSF 2007)

The member of staff should speak to the child / children involved. This may be on an individual or group basis depending on the teacher’s / member of staff’s interpretation of the incident. The member of staff involved should try to ascertain the true details by:

- Taking the incident seriously
- Keeping calm – never over-react but act with calmness and fairness, even while showing displeasure with the child’s / children’s behaviour
- Listening to both / all sides of the reported incident
- Reassuring the victim
- Making sure that all parties involved understand what behaviour / action is being disapproved of and why
- Being seen to treat all parties fairly and with a consistent approach.
- The accused bullying while the investigation is taking place, where appropriate will have unsupervised play removed and be placed in the Resolve room, until we have a clear understanding of the situation.

All suspected incidents of bullying should be reported to the Head of Year and recorded on behaviour watch. If the reported incident is judged to be bullying, then a copy of key details relating to the victim(s) and bully(ies) must be logged on behaviour watch and recorded as bullying. This report should include:

- Who was involved
- Where and when the event(s) happened
- What happened
- What action was taken
- How action was followed

Actions agreed for all bullying incidents:

- All bullying is considered as a red card offence.
- Parents and students will be informed why the school considers this bullying and the consequences of further bullying.
- The victim and the perpetrator meet to agree a way forward in line with our behaviour policy and restorative justice process.
- The victim is supported by peers and staff to make sure that they report in further incidents.
- Both victim and bullying will be supported to move forward and change their behaviour patterns this may involve external parties.

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- Please note any further bullying would result in an internal and then external exclusion. The school reserves the right if the bullying does not stop to permanently exclude a child once all measures of support have been put in place for the bullying.

It must be remembered that both the bully(ies) and the victim(s) may need help to prevent the action re-occurring. On most occasions this will be from within the school and home. Where thought useful, mentoring can be offered. On rare occasions, outside agencies may need to be involved. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of Governors, School Attendance Officer or Social Services may become involved.