



## Anti- Bullying Policy

At Wild Bank Primary School we believe that it is a basic entitlement of all children to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. It is the responsibility of all adults working in the school to ensure that children learn in an atmosphere which is caring and protective.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and victims. It also affects those other children who may witness bullying, and less aggressive children can be drawn in by group pressure.

Bullying can have a devastating effect on individuals within school, it can lead to absenteeism and under-achievement and in the worst cases to depression and suicide. For the silent majority who witness bullying or who know that it goes on, the effects can also be traumatic, leading to feelings of worry, fear, guilt and again in some cases absenteeism.

At Wild Bank Primary School, we consider ongoing education of children essential in order to develop skills and strategies to allow them to identify, cope with and, ultimately, prevent bullying.

These are relatively rare occurrences, but can and do happen in school communities. We work hard to create an ethos which protects children from these unpleasant aspects of behaviour and we are committed to dealing with any incidents straight away, in order that children involved in any incidents are made aware immediately that such behaviour is unacceptable.

Our behaviour policy does not condone any form of bullying, whether physical or verbal abuse or persistent teasing. Any parent who suspects that their child may be a victim of any kind of bullying should contact the class teacher as soon as they have a concern.

**It is never a good idea to hope the problem will just go away. It rarely does!**

If you notice any signs that your child may be suddenly reluctant to come to school or is showing symptoms of anxiety, please talk to the class teacher and/or Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher.

**Children and parents need to feel confident that something will be done about the problem.**

Often it is enough to simply confront a child with what they have been doing and explain the effect it has on someone else, whilst issuing a reminder that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Children who persist in aggressive or anti-social behaviour may be excluded from play-times and further advice can be sought to help them to learn to become a more sociable person.

**FIGHTING** is not accepted as a way of solving problems and children are taught that “play-fighting” is not acceptable as this kind of boisterous play can easily turn nasty in a playground situation.

**RACIAL ABUSE** is not tolerated and procedures are in place for reporting any incidents of racial harassment or abuse. Parents will always be notified if their child has either been the victim or the perpetrator of any such behaviour.

**Bullying is least likely to occur in schools where:**

- all staff have an opportunity to discuss goals, values and participate in policy formulation
- all staff are actively concerned about aggressive and violent behaviour
- all staff see themselves as role models for the children in their care
- all staff feel comfortable about sharing information and where that information affects decisions made.

**Definition of Bullying**

*“Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.”*

Bullying thrives in an atmosphere of secrecy; victims and bystanders fear reprisals if they report a bullying incident; without knowledge of the incident, staff cannot intervene to protect the victim, and accordingly, they are not seen by children as an effective source of help to which they can turn.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It can be:

- **PHYSICAL** - A child can be physically punched, kicked hit, spat at etc.
- **VERBAL** - Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling, teasing and taunting. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/social disability, or personality, etc.
- **EXCLUSION** - A child can be bullied by being excluded from discussions/activities/games, with those they believe to be their friends.
- **DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OR THEFT** - Children may have their property damaged, stolen or hidden. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hands over property to them.
- **INTIMIDATION** - Bullying can also include making rude gestures and intimidation.
- **CYBER-BULLYING** – unkind messages/chat through social network sites, emails or texts.

**Why do people bully?**

People bully for a variety of reasons. These include feeling they don't fit in, disliking themselves, peer pressure, wanting to show off, feeling upset or angry or having a fear of being bullied themselves. Most bullies have a lack of empathy, which can be caused by a lack of good role models or be a personality trait that needs fostering in a positive direction. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent bullying.

### **Action taken by School to Prevent Bullying**

- All complaints taken seriously and dealt with quickly and firmly
- High levels of adult support in the playground
- Staff awareness training
- Discussion with children on aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other
- Provision of equipment to occupy children at lunchtime
- Providing a curriculum which stresses the importance of children learning tolerance, learning to take responsibility and caring for others
- Recognising and rewarding non-aggressive behaviour
- Using peer group pressure actively to discourage bullying
- Helping children to develop positive strategies and assertion

The most important factor associated with decreasing bullying is the children's perceptions of the extent to which staff intervene to prevent it.

If a child reports an act of bullying, this is taken seriously and is investigated thoroughly. A reduction in bullying is directly related to an increased willingness of teaching and support staff to intervene in bullying incidents and an increase in confidence of children to report bullying.

### **Action taken when bullying is suspected/reported**

If bullying is suspected we talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:-

Help, support and counselling will be given as is appropriate to both the victims and the bullies.

We support the victims in the following ways:

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experiences.
- informing the victims' parents/carers
- by offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- by arranging for special supervision in the playground
- by taking steps to prevent more bullying.

We also discipline, yet try to help the bullies in the following ways by:

- talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved
- involving the bullies' parents/carers
- continuing to work with the bullies in order to change their behaviour
- requesting help from support services.

Where and when appropriate we will take one or more of the following disciplinary steps, to prevent more bullying.

1. Bullies will be officially warned to stop bullying by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher
2. The bully's parents/carers will be informed verbally and asked to discuss the matter.
3. If bullying continues, then the bully's parents/carers will be formally informed in writing.
4. If bullying continues, then they may be temporarily excluded.

5. If such behaviour does not end, then there may be a recommendation for permanent exclusion.

#### **The parents' role in preventing bullying**

- take an active interest in your child's social life and chat about friends and their activities (including online communications)
- watch for signs of distress in your child
- inform the school immediately you suspect your child is being bullied. Your concerns will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow
- advise your child **not** to fight back. It makes matters worse and your child could be accused of bullying!
- make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying

#### **Children are regularly informed of the school policy at assemblies and during class time, with particular emphasis on the following points:**

- children do not deserve to be bullied, it is WRONG
- to go straight to a member of staff and tell
- that children will not get into trouble if they tell
- to be proud of who they are
- to try not to show that they are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear
- to stay with a group of friends
- to be assertive - say "NO!"
- walk away confidently
- that fighting back makes things worse
- to take action if they know someone is being bullied. Watching and doing nothing is wrong - tell an adult immediately
- not to be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully