

Elm Court School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction

All children have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment and protected from others who may wish to degrade, abuse or harm them.

Differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, ability are absolutely no reasons for bullying.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for the bully and victim alike and positive and constructive strategies will be put into place which will provide opportunities for the growth and development of the bully and victim alike.

All staff at Elm Court School feel that bullying, in whatever form, is totally unacceptable and will strive to ensure that all pupils have an absolute right to be educated in a safe and secure environment free from fear, harassment or degradation. We will not accept that differences of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or ability are reasons for bullying.

We feel that the more effective management of bullying is achieved when it becomes a shared responsibility involving staff, parents/carers and other professionals working with perpetrators and victims of bullying and victimisation.

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

2. Definitions

Any interaction between an individual or group of people which is **perceived** or **intended** to cause hurt, pain, suffering, humiliation or degradation.

Bullying behaviour may be direct or indirect. Direct forms include physical violence, verbal assaults and taunts; the destruction of property; extortion; unwanted sexual contact. Examples of indirect forms of bullying include ignoring somebody; malicious gossip and spreading rumours, abusive or oppressive graffiti.

Elm Court School takes all forms of bullying seriously and is particularly concerned to respond to any incidents which involve racist, sexist, disablist, homophobic or transphobic elements.

In such cases these issues will be specifically addressed with the bully (and their parent/carer where appropriate) in the course of the post-incident management. All incidents of bullying will be recorded in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

3. Scope

Elm Court School is legally responsible only for incidents of bullying which occur in school. It is however concerned about its pupils' conduct and welfare outside school and will act upon any incidents of bullying that occur outside of school, when it becomes aware of such incidents. This includes any reports of online bullying.

4. Prevention

All staff involved in the education and/or supervision of pupils at Elm Court School will be made aware of bullying and the need to apply the school's policy of zero-tolerance consistently and whenever incidents of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff will constantly reinforce the message that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.

In addition, the issue of bullying will be raised with pupils and parents/carers at a number of levels including:

- Whole school level through assemblies or via School Council - when pupils will be informed of the zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying. The issue will be raised as appropriate when the whole school will be reminded of the Anti-Bullying policy and any changes which may be introduced.
- During Tutor Time and PSHE/Citizenship lessons. Not all pupils at Elm Court are able to fully understand if they are being bullied or if they themselves are displaying bullying behaviour. This can be on account of their SEN and therefore it is vitally important that all pupils are taught explicitly about bullying behaviours.
- The individual level when pupils who are felt to be at risk of bullying (or who have been bullied in the past) will be offered additional support and guidance either through targeted re-assurance and support by staff.
- The giving of advice and support to pupils who have bullied others to enable them to decrease the number of incidents involving unacceptable behaviour.
- The recognition that there are particular times when pupils may be bullied: lunch and break times and the beginning and end of the school day. Arrangements will be made to ensure that at such times appropriate levels of supervision are in place to reduce the risk of bullying incidents.
- The recognition that locations exist within the school, namely corridors, playground, toilets, where incidents of bullying are more likely to occur. Again, arrangements will be made to ensure that pupils are either made aware that, if felt appropriate, they will be forbidden access to these areas or that staff duty rotas specifically designate staff to supervise these areas.
- Pupils will be encouraged to communicate with staff about incidents of bullying of which they may be aware. In these circumstances staff will respond to the expression of concern seriously and ensure that the matter is fully investigated. All staff must remember that many of the pupils at Elm Court have communication difficulties and will need additional support.

- Parents/carers who believe their child is the victim of bullying will be encouraged to share these concerns with the school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with school to ensure their children are safe in the future. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.
- Similarly, parents/carers to be encouraged to share with school if they believe their child is bullying others, so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed to decrease and eradicate incidents and the bullying child helped to change their behaviour.

5. Parental Involvement

Elm Court School recognises the important part parents/carers play in supporting the school and promoting change; this is embraced by the Home-School agreement. The school will enlist the active involvement of parents/carers whenever their children are involved in incidents of bullying either as victim or perpetrator.

6. Implementation

Elm Court School is committed to creating a bully-free environment and will ensure that its Anti-Bullying Policy is applied rigorously. All staff involved in the teaching and/or supervision of pupils will be responsible for addressing incidents which fall within the school's definition of bullying and will play a full part in ensuring that the victim receives what support is required; the bully is informed of the consequences of their behaviour; and a record is made of the incident.

All children need to be aware that staff want to be informed of any incidents of bullying and will ensure that action will be taken when bullying is reported. Staff must report all claims of bullying.

7. Post-Incident Responses

Victim

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a pupil has been the victim of bullying, this will be taken seriously, investigated and reported using the school's reporting system.

The school will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to any pupil who reports an incident of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular incident or the pupil(s) involved and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the pupil's safety.

- Positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do.
- Reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully.
- Strategies to prevent further incidents.
- Support from the School Council.
- Sympathy and empathy.
- Counselling/mentoring.
- Befriending.
- Assertiveness training.
- Extra supervision/monitoring.
- Informing/involving parents/carers.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim.
- Restorative justice meeting.
- Arrangements to review progress.

Bully

Elm Court School takes bullying behaviour very seriously and will respond to incidents of a bullying nature in a proportionate manner: the greater the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be appropriate they will be applied consistently and fairly. In addition to the school's existing sanctions as outlined in the Rules, Rewards, Consequences framework, the following action/options will be considered:

- Engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is in breach of the school rules and is unacceptable.
- Parents/carers informed.
- Counselling or instruction in alternative ways of behaving – this may include an individualised intervention programme put in place by the Inclusion Team.
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim.
- Restorative justice meeting.

8. Monitoring and Evaluating

All incidents of bullying will be recorded on the school's reporting system. These will be reviewed and monitored by the Inclusion Team and reported to the Headteacher.

This policy was formally approved by the Governing Body: March 2023

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