



MILLFIELD

MILLFIELD ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

STATEMENT

Millfield is committed to providing its pupils with a caring and homely environment within which individuality can flourish, allowing them, without hindrance, to live their lives to the full in as many spheres as possible.

Everyone has the right to be treated with kindness and respect and to be properly supported when they are not.

Bullying, consequently, of any kind is deemed unacceptable and will always be taken seriously and acted upon.

AIMS

The primary aim is to emphasise the fundamental importance of establishing and maintaining a positive, caring ethos within the school.

Further aims are to establish an atmosphere where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, to raise general awareness so that the whole school community can play its part in recognising bullying and to take action when it occurs by preventing or responding appropriately to it.

OBJECTIVES

To ensure that all pupils, parents, teaching and non-teaching staff and governors can recognise what bullying is, know what the school policy is on bullying and what to do if it occurs.

To conduct occasional staff and governor training to maintain the high profile of the anti-bullying policy and to introduce new initiatives.

To build understanding and discussion of anti-bullying and related topics into the PSHE programme.

To confirm frequently through house and school pastoral teams that pupils will always be supported if bullying is reported.

To ensure that whenever someone knows that bullying is happening, someone is told about it or something is done.

To work with other professional agencies when necessary to keep children safe as described in the Children Act 1989, the SEN and Disability Act 2001, the government green paper "Every Child Matters" 2003 (outcome 2) and the Children Act 2004.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is any deliberate, repeated, unkind, distressing, upsetting, threatening or frightening behaviour by an individual or group towards others.

The victims of bullying feel persecuted and have little or no power to defend themselves.

Bullying can take many forms, emotional, (e.g. exclusion and ridicule) verbal (e.g. teasing and sarcasm) physical (e.g. hitting and interfering with possessions) racist (e.g. mocking cultures or customs) sexual (e.g. unwanted physical contact or abusive comments).

Bullying can be direct, face to face, or conducted at a distance by manipulating others or by 'cyber' bullying.

WHAT BULLYING IS NOT

Bullying is not the occasional argument, loss of friendship, practical joke, name calling or tussle. These episodes will occur in the life of every pupil and are important steps in developing an understanding of themselves and of those around them. Learning to deal with them develops important social skills.

HOW TO PROCEED WHEN BULLYING IS REPORTED

First of all reassure the pupil that they are doing the right thing.

Listen to them asking open questions if necessary but interjecting as little as possible. Ascertain the extent of the anxiety of the pupil and the danger they may be in.

If the anxiety and danger are slight, see the aggressor separately and listen to their account.

As soon as possible get the two sides together and attempt to re-establish cordiality.

If the anxiety and danger are more substantial make written notes of the complaint.

Either seek advice or report the matter using the Head of Pastoral Care, the Head of Year or the School Counsellors.

If the complaint is sufficiently serious then inform the Child Protection Officer or their deputy as soon as possible.

Counselling and Advice

These are central to the treatment of bullying episodes and should be provided throughout the period of concern. They should operate both formally and informally using the pastoral frameworks available. Counselling makes important contributions to many areas of anti-social behaviour.

Investigation

The investigation of bullying is often a tortuous process and takes time. It is important not to jump to conclusions. Warn those involved, and parents, that arriving at a final decision may take days rather than hours.

Cyber bullying

See the relevant subsection of the Child Protection Policy and the entry under General Policies in the Houseparents' Handbook.

Sanctions

Sanctions for bullying are imposed at the school level. They will be imposed after a period of negotiated détente has been attempted and failed or when a complaint is sufficiently serious.

Sanctions will initially utilise gating but in serious cases suspension and exclusion will be applied.

There are rare occasions, even when the bullying has advanced beyond the trivial, when formal sanctions are inappropriate or unhelpful. In all such cases the outcome for the victim will be the deciding factor.

During or after the period of punishment the bully(ies) will see an appropriate senior pastoral figure within the school, often the Head of Year, the Deputy Head or the Head of Pastoral Care, sometimes the Headmaster, so that their response can be monitored. This will often be in collaboration with the Counsellor.

Through all this the victim of bullying must have help and support as they need it. Counselling may help. The whole pastoral team should remain alert even after the episode appears to have passed.