

FamilyCare

Healing pasts • Building futures



Education

Anti-Bullying Policy Access School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Implemented/Reviewed: July 2021

Date of Next Review: July / August 2022



1. Defining bullying at Access School and our approach to addressing it

Despite all the publicity and research into the emotive subject of “bullying” in recent years there is no precise and universal definition of the term. It is generally agreed that bullying (as opposed to conflict) involves repeated orchestrated power over someone weaker either by an individual or by a group through physical intimidation, verbal insults and threats, extortion and exclusion.

Typically, this manifests itself in schools where an individual orchestrates a group or another individual to intimidate and exclude an individual in order to build their own status, self-esteem and sense of power over an extended period of time. They may, of course, intimidate or exclude the other individual themselves.

At Access School it is difficult to differentiate between this planned intimidation and the constant rivalries, incessant insults, deliberate provocation and occasional fights that can characterise the behaviour of many of our young people and is of course a major part of the reason for their placement here. The social dynamics are always changing so that it is unusual for one to dominate for long.

Our more aggressive young people, who might be labelled as “bullies”, tend to “bully” everyone. Their behaviour is learnt. In any social interaction they have to come out on top. They even try to dominate and intimidate those that they like, unaware that the behaviour is unacceptable. They think they are being friendly.

Note: This policy deals specifically with bullying incidents between young people. Incidents between staff and young people should be dealt with using the Access School’s “Safeguarding Policy” or other relevant policy, and incidents within staff should be dealt with using the Family Care Associates Policies and Procedures ‘Anti Bullying Policy’.



2. Our Approach – To Affect Long Term Change

The emphasis of much of our work is to break this cycle of rivalry and conflict, to encourage the young people to want to co-operate and care for each other. In examples of clear-cut bullying the importance of this process being implemented skilfully and effectively is heightened.

We do not believe that punitive reaction to bullying has a long-term effect in reducing bullying and could be argued to reinforce bullying as an approach for life. At best a sanction might relieve the victim for a short period of time, at worse it can increase the anger and resentment towards the victim. If bullying is based on power and intimidation then by imposing sanctions on a bully, they are in effect being overpowered and intimidated (all be it by those in authority and for the right motive).

Similarly, 'Children's Courts' can be exploited, resulting in the accused "bully" suffering from a formalised group isolation and intimidation. In any case when investigating "bullying" incidents it is very difficult to get to the full truth due to young people covering up, blurring the facts or lying to incriminate others.

Much of our staff training involves understanding the nature of unacceptable behaviours and the development of skills to diffuse escalations of behaviour through the medium of 'Team Teach'. We firmly believe that through the systematic application of these skills to all conflicts but especially bullying, we can build constructively from negative experiences.

Our approach is threefold:

To build an ethos of non-confrontation through mediation between the victim and the perpetrators or perpetrator counselling

3. Building an ethos of co-operation

The majority of school anti-bullying policies state that bullying is taken seriously, will not be tolerated and that victims are encouraged to report incidents and that these incidents are dealt with firmly. Whilst these are worthy intentions, which we share, we believe that they can only be applied effectively by spreading the message of understanding and respecting others.

In all our dealings with the young people, staff emphasise the importance of respecting the feelings and emotions of others. If a young person has aggressive tendencies, he/she is made aware of this issue through the IEP and target setting process. There is then an expectation that the young person will consciously work with the support of staff to reducing this problem.

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4. The Process

When an incident occurs the following process should be put into practice.

a) Talking with the victim

The victim must be given time and the opportunity to speak. At Access School they are likely to want to concentrate on the facts and revenge. The member of the staff will allow the victim to off load but will then lead the conversation towards talking about their feelings and never agree with what the victim has said unless the member of staff is absolutely sure of the facts beforehand. Equally, the member of staff will never promise a certain sanction for the perpetrator. The meeting should conclude with the member of staff sympathising with the victim and saying that they will go and see the perpetrator. The member of staff will end the meeting by arranging to see the victim again.



b) Talking with a Perpetrator

The member of staff will then see the perpetrator. This meeting will be particularly effective if some time has elapsed since the incident so that the perpetrator is less defensive. It is important that this conversation does not get exclusively tied down investigating the facts. The conversation needs to move on to trying to find out the reasons behind the needs of the perpetrator to intimidate others. A useful strategy is to talk about the young person's relationships with other young people, staff or other adults and not the victim.

If the conversation proceeds well and moves away from "he deserved it", staff should try to get the child to think about how the victim feels.

The meeting should conclude with an agreement on how the young person should behave in relation to the victim and to others generally.

c) Talking with a group

If the bullying involves a group, staff may be tempted to talk to those involved individually, partly on the 'divide and rule' form of control. However, staff should have the confidence to talk to the group as a whole and again the key is to concentrate not exclusively on the facts but on the feelings that resulted from the bullying.

This meeting, in most cases, should not include the victim unless it is felt that the perpetrators are genuinely feeling remorse and that the anger and or fear of the victim has subsided.

The meeting should conclude with an agreement on how the young people are going to behave toward the victim. They should be encouraged to suggest ideas on how they can make up to the victim. This might start with just a simple but genuine apology.

d) Follow up meeting

It is essential that both the victim and the perpetrator/perpetrators be seen later to see if the issue has died down. If there is a continuation of the problem, then the dialogue needs to be started again. For things to progress, the same principle applies, concentrating on the reasons behind the bullying and not the bullying itself.

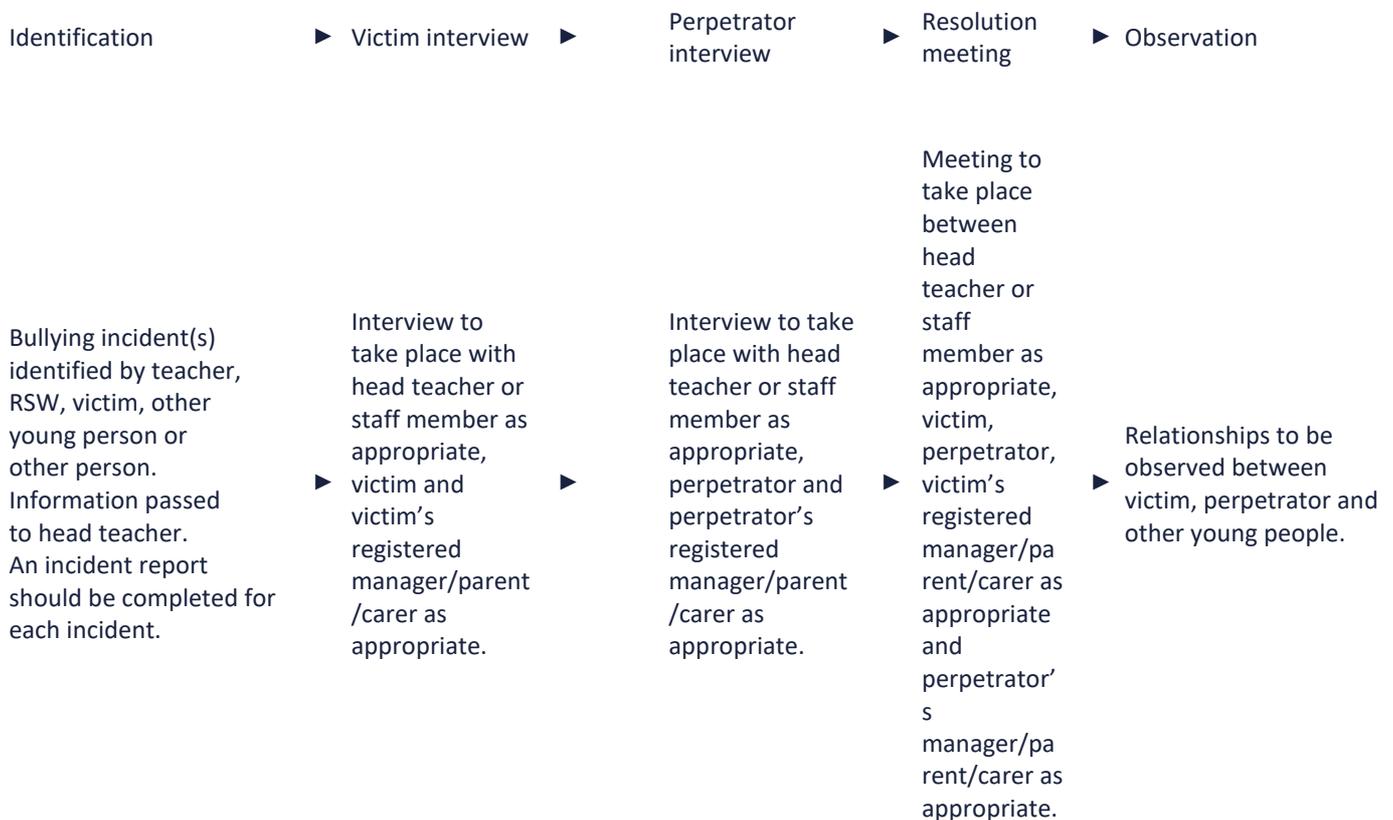
5. Documentation and Reporting

All incidents should be documented on the Behaviour Watch system, including reference to any interviews and follow up action taken. Staff completing the report should also ensure that feedback is given to other staff involved in reporting and identification to ensure that all are aware of progress made and initiatives in place, and so that these other members of staff can add to the report if necessary.

6. Conclusion



Access School - Bullying Protocol – Overview



- The aim of this process is to enable both victim and perpetrator to continue to enjoy the benefits of school without fear of persecution; we do not aim to exclude at the first suggestion of bullying occurring.
- Some investigative work may need to be done between stages, however the time between identification and perpetrator interview should normally be less than five school days.
- Both victim and perpetrator should be encouraged to remain in school during the investigation. This will further enable observation of the problems and aid swift resolution.
- Follow-up interviews maybe necessary if bullying persists.

Bullying - Perpetrator Interview Access school



Identifier:

E.g. teacher, RSW, victim, other YP, other Designation:

Perpetrator(s):

Underline perpetrator to whom this form refers

Victim(s):

Today's date: Registered Manager: This victim

Head Teacher, Perpetrator, Perpetrator's Registered Manager, Parent or Carer

Please be aware; the perpetrator may feel intimidated by this process and may not feel comfortable with all persons present.

Why am I doing or saying this?

Would I want that said or done to me?

Would I do this to my best friend?

Everything I do or say to another person matters.

This person is more frightened or hurt than he or she seems.

What I do or say to someone today will not be forgotten tomorrow.

People will remember me by how I made them feel.

Bullying - Incident Report Sheet Access School

N.B. No official interview should take place at this stage

Date:

Staff Present:

Time:

Location:

What happened (identifier's report)?

Pupil's comment:

Any other party's comment:

Completed by: Date:

Please pass to Head Teacher now

Contact all relevant parties

Victim RM/Parent

Perpetrator RM/Parent

Arrange victim meeting

Time:

Date:

Arrange perpetrator meeting

Time:

Date:

References to Legislation and Quality Standards

Regulation XXX

Standard XXX