



Anti-Bullying Policy Shene School

A copy of this policy is available to all parents and staff

- On the school web site at www.shene.richmond.sch.uk
- Upon application to the School

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools.

It is the responsibility of all staff to respond to and investigate all incidents of bullying to which they are alerted.

What is bullying?

“Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over a period of time that intentionally hurts or harms.”
(Ofsted – HMI 465 published in 2003)

It can have a destructive effect on children’s lives causing physical and/or psychological harm. It can produce feelings of powerlessness, isolation, undermine self-esteem and cause the victim to blame themselves.

Bullying behaviour can fall into one or a combination of categories:

Verbal:

The use of language in a derogatory or offensive manner such as swearing, comments about appearance or family, racist or sexist abuse, sexual innuendo, spreading rumours about the victim.

Social:

Being isolated or rejected by peer group. Specifically not being ‘included’.

Intimidation:

Including interference with personal property, theft, extortion, hostile mobile phone or internet messaging.

Physical:

Unprovoked assault ranging from pushing and prodding to punching and more violent behaviour.

Psychological:

A combination of the above causing a reduction of a person’s self-esteem or confidence. Taunting and teasing may focus on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, appearance, disability, family circumstances or any other features of a child’s life which can be used to undermine them.

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in schools.

Schools' teaching and ancillary staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this School policy.

STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS

Much of the extensive legislation on bullying impacts directly on schools. Listed below are some of the main items.

The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Circular 10/99 School Inclusion: Pupil Support

As noted in the introduction to this booklet, the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 requires that all schools put measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. Governing bodies should review this policy annually. The DfES further developed this in the Circular 10/99 which states that "Headteachers should put in place effective strategies against bullying which are developed and put into effect by everyone on the school, including pupils".

Children Act (1989)

Failure to prevent bullying may be in breach of the provisions of the Children Act, firstly, by failing to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child and secondly, by failing to take action which will protect the child from harm.

The Law of Negligence

If a school has failed in its duty of care to a pupil, by failing to protect her/him from harm, that pupil has a right to bring an action for negligence and claim compensation through the Court. When children have been bullied, damage may include distress, interruption and loss of education and/or physical injury. Those that may be sued might include teachers, non-teachers, governors, the LEA and possibly the children involved in the bullying. In order to reduce any potential claims, schools would need to define, enforce and monitor the impact of anti-bullying policies.

Human Rights Act (1998)

The implications of the provisions of this Act have yet to be fully tested in law. Two articles, however, may have some relevance. Article 3 on the 'Prohibition of Torture' could be used if a school, once notified of an incident, takes little or no action to deal with bullying. Article 3 provides a 'right to an effective education' which may be used if a child is unable to attend school because of bullying.

Race Relations Act (1976) and (2000)

The Race Relations Act makes discrimination on racial grounds unlawful. Racial grounds in terms of the law, includes race, colour, nationality, citizenship and ethnic or national original. The law puts a duty of LEAs and schools to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, promote equality of opportunities and encourage good race relations.

So that all pupils feel safe and able to benefit fully from the opportunities available at Shene School, we will

- work to ensure that everyone understands what bullying behaviour is and its consequences on the individual, through PHSE and Citizenship lessons, assemblies, English and Drama lessons, National Bullying Week and other activities
- make sure all lessons underline expected behaviour
- make this bullying policy available to all parents, pupils and staff on the school web site and/or in hard copy upon application to the school
- provide all new pupils and their parents with helpful booklet guidance on bullying procedures; in particular we will focus on pupils in the early stages of Key stage transition, those moving schools at non-standard times; pupils in the early stages of acquiring English, pupils with a regional accent, asylum seekers and refugees, pupils from Traveller community and pupils who have had difficult experiences in their previous school
- provide a simplified, pupil friendly guide to bullying procedures in the annual pupil planner
- operate a Buddy System of trained senior pupils who will support other pupils with concerns about bullying
- respond immediately to incidents of bullying offering help and support to anyone who feels they are being bullied; an investigation will be conducted
- act on behalf of the victim to prevent future problems and make sure they feel safe e.g. by offering continuous support, restoring self-esteem and confidence, arranging professional counselling, use Restorative Justice procedures if appropriate
- record all incidents of bullying in pupil files
- attach a senior teacher to more difficult cases
- respond punitively to proven incidents of bullying; the following disciplinary steps may be taken - official warnings to cease offending - detention - exclusion from certain areas of the school premises - change of teaching groups - minor fixed term exclusion - major fixed term exclusion - permanent exclusion
- give guidance to bullies on how they can change their behaviour; use internal Social Inclusion staff and external support specialists if required
- ensure staff remain alert to bullying issues and provide refresher training