



Prevention of Bullying Policy

Version Control

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POLICY OBJECTIVES

- To understand and provide without exception, a secure and safe environment, which will enable our children to grow, naturally, both as an individual and in the wider context of social integration and assimilation at all levels. This applies from the individual level right up to the level of our general school culture. *We place central importance on the development of healthy self-esteem, emotional maturity and self-expression* – character qualities which, when well developed, minimise the possibility of bullying or abusive behaviour taking root.
- To communicate to everyone in our Kindergarten community - through our behaviour and attitudes, and explicitly where appropriate - the central importance of creating a school culture in which *civility* and *kindness* towards one another are commonplace and that conflict, however and wherever it manifests, is best openly acknowledged and consciously worked through, and **always** without resort to violence, intimidation or bullying of any kind.
- To ensure that all committee members, teaching and non-teaching staff and parents, and others with an interest in the kindergarten, are aware of the Kindergarten's definition of bullying, and that such behaviour in our Kindergarten is completely unacceptable, and will be responded to immediately and firmly whenever observed or reported.
- To encourage anyone engaging in bullying behaviour to feel able to seek help for their difficulties, and not to fear that they will be labelled, harshly punished, shamed, or humiliated in admitting to their behaviour.
- To assure individuals and parents that they will be supported in any claims related to bullying or abusive behaviour, and know that our school does not tolerate such behaviour under any circumstances.
- To create an ethos where bullying behaviour is simply not an aspect of our Kindergarten culture, and in which our children *freely and unselfconsciously choose* not to engage in bullying behaviour, not because they have internalised didactic instructions that it is 'wrong', but because that sort of behaviour simply does not exist and is *unthinkable* in our Kindergarten's culture.
- To closely monitor, review and research within the context specific to the bullying child and to consider deeply, with care and a desire to help the child overcome any difficulties he or she may have without fear and with freedom for growth.
- To provide strong role models of kind, considerate behaviour, with children freely observing adults and older children showing consideration and respect for others. Children will regularly receive examples in story form of people being mindful of each other's feelings, and images showing that destructive behaviours have negative consequences.

- **Any difficulties, which do arise, which fall into the sphere of bullying or abusive behaviour will be responded to immediately, with firmness, and with the utmost care and sensitivity appropriate to each circumstance**

DEFINITIONS

- 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. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical, so teachers have to make their own judgements about each specific case.
- The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside kindergarten. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

TYPES OF BULLYING INCLUDE:

- **Emotional bullying:** being unfriendly, excluding or persistently ignoring, tormenting, threatening through gesture, ridiculing, or humiliating the other, inciting others to bully.
- **Physical bullying:** pushing, kicking, pinching, hitting, scratching, punching, biting, pulling; interfering with someone else's property or possessions.
- **Racist bullying:** racial taunts, jokes and gestures, graffiti and racist insignia/badges, circulating racist literature, or 'picking-on' behaviour of all kinds – recording all significant incidents of racist abuse.
- **Sexual bullying:** unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments, stalking, homophobic victimisation, transphobic victimisation.
- **Verbal bullying:** persistent name-calling, systematic unwanted teasing or taunting, intimidation, or threatening behaviour.
- **Cyber-bullying:** The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside kindergarten. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

- **Indirect bullying:** spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious e mails or text messages on mobile phones, inciting others to bully.
- **Peer on peer abuse:** persistent bullying (including cyberbullying); physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm. Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse. Up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm.

POSSIBLE SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Tell-tale signs of bullying can often be spotted through, or deduced from, behavioural disturbances in the child. *All adults involved in the Kindergarten need to be aware of these possible indications;* and where there is a well-founded concern, they should investigate further or respond in line with the Kindergarten's Positive Behaviour Policy.
- Children's *free play* will very often be the medium through which a child attempts to 'work through' or heal bullying treatment when they feel unable to talk about it, so teachers and parents should always be alert to the content of free play and its possible re-enactment of bullying or revenge/retribution scenarios.
- *It should be noted that these indications should be treated with discernment, as such symptoms can easily be indicative of problems or difficulties other than bullying.* Whilst an awareness of bullying should always be appropriately investigated or acted upon, it is also important to remember that unfounded allegations or premature presumptions of bullying can also be greatly damaging to those children and parents involved.

SOME GENERAL AND COMMON SIGNS ARE:

- Changes in their usual routine.
- Unwillingness or reluctance to go to school or Kindergarten (sometimes clinically described as 'school phobia').
- Becoming withdrawn, experiencing anxiety or a diminishing level of confidence.
- Beginning to stammer or stutter or show other physical signs of anxiety – e.g. stomach aches, headaches, trembling/shaking.

- Crying themselves to sleep, nightmares, or other sleep disturbances.
- Feeling ill in the morning before Kindergarten.
- Beginning to perform poorly or 'out of character' in tasks or projects, either at Kindergarten or in the home.
- Coming home dishevelled or with torn clothes.
- Having unexplained or unexpected cuts, bruises, scratches or other injuries.
- Having personal possessions 'go missing' without convincing explanation.
- Becoming aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- Is observed bullying, or treating badly, siblings or other children (which could be symptomatic of *being* bullied at Kindergarten).
- Is considering or preoccupied with imaginary revenge or retribution (this could manifest in free play – see above);
- Has disturbed eating behaviour – e.g. stops eating or indulges in comfort eating.
- Seems to be (too) afraid to say what's wrong.
- Wets/soils the bed/underwear;
- Offers improbable excuses/explanations for any of the above.

PROCEDURES

- Our staff take a **low-profile, high vigilance** prevention of bullying approach – that is, teachers and staff do not repeatedly draw attention to the issue of bullying through the curriculum, but all staff do undertake to be *ongoingly vigilant* that bullying behaviour is not occurring in our Kindergarten.
- A Kindergarten's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. *'The best schools develop a more sophisticated approach in which school staff proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.'*
- Staff undertake to be punctual for the start of all session, and preferably and wherever practicable to arrive *at least 45 minutes* before a session is scheduled to begin.
- Children should be gently made aware that any untoward incidents between children can *and should* be reported to any trusted teacher or member of staff.
- Research has shown that most of the bullying behaviour occurs in the playground, so all staff are alerted to this fact. In general, there will be appropriate supervision of pupils during all unstructured free play indoors and outdoors.

- With regards to peer-on-peer abuse our staff have a good understanding on what is considered healthy sexual behaviour (HSB) and what is deemed unhealthy or abusive sexual behaviour. Staff are vigilant and aware when a child displays sexualised behaviour, they are careful not to cause more harm by reacting too harshly or over-reacting to something they observe. Instead they manage the behaviour in a calm and objective way and consider whether the behaviour is healthy or is a cause for safeguarding concern and is a serious case. Staff will refer to the Brook Sexual Behaviours Traffic Light Tool (included in this policy) should they have concern or need clarification.

There are also several more Steiner-specific approaches:

- Where impulsive reactions have led to hurt, we might encourage the child to become more consciously aware of limb engagement.
- We might indicate to the parents/guardians our view that it can be important to minimise child exposure to unnecessary nerve/sense stimulation – e.g. through television, computer games etc.
- As stated earlier, children will regularly receive examples in story form of people being mindful of each other’s feelings, and images showing that it is bad or anti-social to be destructive.
- Relatedly, we would tend to offer *pedagogical stories* to the child, in order to enhance the child’s understanding of their behaviour, not least its results and consequences.
- We might urge parents/guardians to shield their child from *their own* anxieties, and that as a general principle, children should not be unduly exposed to the intense emotional responses of their parents/guardians.

RESPONDING TO AN OBSERVED INCIDENT

- Any observed incident of bullying or possible bullying behaviour will be **stopped immediately**, and any injuries investigated and dealt with immediately and appropriately.
- Concern and support will be offered to the victim, preferably in the presence of the perpetrator. The incident will be investigated further and thoroughly by talking with both parties (the bullied and the perpetrator) at the earliest opportunity, and seeking where appropriate the perceptions of any bystanders - and if deemed appropriate, both children will be talked to together. The children’s class teacher will also be informed.
- The teacher/member of staff concerned will decide, with discernment according to the circumstances, whether it is necessary to record the incident

in the confidential **DISCIPLINARY INCIDENTS BOOK** (date and time, place of incident, names of children involved, description of incident, actions taken; which is kept under lock and key in the Kindergarten office); and will make an assessment as to whether this is a one-off occurrence which requires monitoring or whether to follow a more formal procedure (see below).

- All records kept will be full and accurate and will always include full details of the Kindergarten's response. As a matter of principle, it is always best to involve parents/guardians constructively at an early stage.

RESPONDING TO A SPECIFIC INCIDENT/S REPORTED BY A PARENT

- In the first instance, parents/guardians can approach their child's class teacher. It is essential that staff remain calm and understanding and listen carefully to the allegation(s) made. The staff will fully explain the Kindergarten's policies on Prevention of Bullying and Positive Behaviour and the procedures will be followed.
- The parent/guardian will be asked for information about the alleged bullying behaviour and record it appropriately and fully. The allegations will then be investigated in accordance with the procedures outlined in this policy.
- The consulted member of staff will make a further, follow-up appointment to explain any actions taken, and to find out whether the bullying has stopped.
- Finally, a follow-up with staff will be arranged to ensure that appropriate action has been taken, and the Kindergarten's policy satisfactorily and appropriately implemented.

FORMAL PROCEDURES

If a more formal procedure is decided upon, the following course of action is followed:

- Once recorded in the **Disciplinary Incidents Book**, appropriate action will be considered, agreed, and implemented, via consultations where appropriate with parents, teachers, assistant teachers, and school administrators/SENCOs. Parents/guardians of both the victim and the perpetrator will always be informed at this stage.
- The appropriate Teachers' Meeting will also be informed.
- A time or length of time would be agreed for the situation to be satisfactorily resolved.

- At any time within the course of this plan, a home visit can be arranged for further discussions to take place.

SERIOUS CASE PROCEDURE

- In most cases the child's bullying behaviour be dealt with under our Kindergarten's Behaviour Policy and with the disciplinary action and formal procedure stated in this policy. However, we are aware that in serious cases we need to refer to our safeguarding policy and procedures, and may need to liaise with the police and/or children's social care team for support and advise should the behaviour of a child raise safeguarding concerns.

This might include behaviour that:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put children in the kindergarten at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves peer-on-peer abuse such as sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, up skirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos

Such behaviours can also indicate that the perpetrator is living with abuse and are themselves at risk of harm, as well as, putting other children at risk of harm.

Therefore, our procedure for dealing with this is:

- Record the behaviour or allegation and tell the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead), but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the local authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

VULNERABLE CHILDREN

- It is recognised that there will be some children who may be particularly susceptible to bullying behaviour – e.g. children with special needs, new children joining a class, children of ethnic minority status, or children with other distinguishing or unusual characteristics, and so on. Staff are expected

to be especially vigilant to the possibility of such children being subjected to bullying or oppressive behaviour.

HELP FOR THE CHILD WHO IS BULLYING

- Adequate provision will also be made to help the child who is bullying. First and foremost, it will always be made clear to perpetrators that **bullying behaviour is always totally unacceptable**, no matter how the perpetrator might be feeling themselves. We believe that bullying behaviour is very often, or nearly always, symptomatic of a child who is *themselves* suffering, and whose inner distress is expressed in the bullying, abuse or oppression of others.
- Our approach to dealing with bullying behaviour resides in *cultivating empathy* – or the capacity to feel what someone else is feeling.

In addition, where felt to be appropriate:

- There will be careful monitoring and, if felt necessary, assessment of the perpetrator.
- It will be ensured that the child is given reinforcement of the desired behaviour in a way consistent with Steiner pedagogical principles – e.g. through role-modelling, loving gesture, and repetition.
- Staff will ensure that the child is kept in proximity where deemed to be necessary and appropriate.
- Where appropriate, the perpetrator will be engaged in both devising and delivering reparation for the victim.
- Ongoing and frequent communication will be maintained by the class teacher with the child's parents/guardians, for as long as both feel it to be appropriate.

OUTCOMES

Parents of both the bullied and the perpetrator are kept fully informed of any decisions, or changes with regards to the problem behaviour in question. *In all cases the ultimate goal will always be **full reconciliation** between the children and, where appropriate, the parents.*

Following the successful working through of a bullying procedure:

- A report will be written up by the class teacher, detailing the response to the problem behaviour and the outcome. Parents/guardians of both the bullied and the perpetrator will be offered the opportunity to read the report, and to offer any feedback on its content, except in cases where

confidentiality concerns are paramount. Such reports will be treated with the utmost confidentiality within the school.

- Staff will ongoingly monitor the behaviour of the children concerned until such time as it is felt confident, beyond reasonable doubt, that there will be no recurrence of the behaviour.

APPENDIX ONE

Further sources of information:

[Preventing bullying - GOV.UK](#) - Guidance for schools on preventing and responding to bullying. Published 22 August 2013. Last updated 4 July 2017

Other departmental advice and guidance you may be interested in

- [Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#)
- [Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#)
- [DfE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools Guidance](#)
- [Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools](#)
- [Counselling in schools a blueprint for the future: advice for school leaders and counsellors](#)

All the links above can be found on the GOV.UK website.

This policy is accessible to parents via the Kindergarten's website and via a hard copy stored on the premises.

Behaviours: age 0 to 5 years

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

● Green behaviours

- holding or playing with own genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about other children's genitals
- attempting to touch or curiosity about breasts, bottoms or genitals of adults
- games e.g. mummies and daddies, doctors and nurses
- enjoying nakedness
- interest in body parts and what they do
- curiosity about the differences between boys and girls

● Amber behaviours

- preoccupation with adult sexual behaviour
- pulling other children's pants down/skirts up/trousers down against their will
- talking about sex using adult slang
- preoccupation with touching the genitals of other people
- following others into toilets or changing rooms to look at them or touch them
- talking about sexual activities seen on TV/online

● Red behaviours

- persistently touching the genitals of other children
- persistent attempts to touch the genitals of adults
- simulation of sexual activity in play
- sexual behaviour between young children involving penetration with objects
- forcing other children to engage in sexual play

What is green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

What is amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- unusual for that particular child or young person
- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

What is red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.

Behaviours: age 5 to 9 years

All green, amber and red behaviours require some form of attention and response. It is the level of intervention that will vary.

● Green behaviours

- feeling and touching own genitals
- curiosity about other children's genitals
- curiosity about sex and relationships, e.g. differences between boys and girls, how sex happens, where babies come from, same-sex relationships
- sense of privacy about bodies
- telling stories or asking questions using swear and slang words for parts of the body

● Amber behaviours

- questions about sexual activity which persist or are repeated frequently, despite an answer having been given
- sexual bullying face to face or through texts or online messaging
- engaging in mutual masturbation
- persistent sexual images and ideas in talk, play and art
- use of adult slang language to discuss sex

● Red behaviours

- frequent masturbation in front of others
- sexual behaviour engaging significantly younger or less able children
- forcing other children to take part in sexual activities
- simulation of oral or penetrative sex
- sourcing pornographic material online

What is green behaviour?

Green behaviours reflect safe and healthy sexual development. They are:

- displayed between children or young people of similar age or developmental ability
- reflective of natural curiosity, experimentation, consensual activities and positive choices

What is amber behaviour?

Amber behaviours have the potential to be outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- unusual for that particular child or young person
- of potential concern due to age, or developmental differences
- of potential concern due to activity type, frequency, duration or context in which they occur

What is red behaviour?

Red behaviours are outside of safe and healthy behaviour. They may be:

- excessive, secretive, compulsive, coercive, degrading or threatening
- involving significant age, developmental, or power differences
- of concern due to the activity type, frequency, duration or the context in which they occur

What can you do?

Green behaviours provide opportunities to give positive feedback and additional information.

What can you do?

Amber behaviours signal the need to take notice and gather information to assess the appropriate action.

What can you do?

Red behaviours indicate a need for immediate intervention and action.