

Linton Village College Anti Bullying Policy

Introduction

This document sets out Linton Village College's policy in relation to the issue of bullying. It reflects a belief that bullying is not acceptable under any circumstances (zero tolerance) and that it is best prevented through the development of a College ethos based on mutual respect, fairness and equality. It also acknowledges that bullying behaviour is problematic for the victim and perpetrator alike and it embodies support and management strategies that are pragmatic and non-oppressive.

Principles

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

There is **no justification whatsoever** for bullying behaviour and it should not be tolerated in any form.

Bullying behaviour is a problem for both the bully and the victim and should be addressed in positive and constructive ways which provide opportunities for growth and development for the bully and victim alike.

Effective management of bullying is a shared responsibility and strategies should involve College staff; parents/carers and other professionals involved with children who are the victims or perpetrators of bullying behaviour.

It is important to invest time and resources in the prevention of bullying and staff require advice, training and support to deal confidently with issues.

Information about Linton Village College's policy and procedures is readily available in 'user-friendly' form to staff children and their parents/carers. APPENDIX 1

Aims

To fulfil the College's statutory responsibility to respect the rights of children and to safeguard and promote their welfare.

To clarify the College's responsibility for responding to incidents of bullying and to emphasise to staff, students and their parents/carers the College's zero tolerance attitude towards bullying behaviour.

To eliminate intimidating behaviour and promote a College ethos in which each student is safe and able to realise their full potential.

To address the problem of bullying through the implementation of whole College policy and procedures.

To reassure parents/carers that the College takes their children's welfare seriously and that they are being educated in a safe and secure environment.

Objectives

To develop and implement an anti-bullying policy based on a consistently implemented whole College approach

To raise awareness among staff; parents/carers and students about the issue of bullying and the College's attitude towards it and to create an environment in which bullying is seen as inappropriate and unacceptable.

To be proactive in the prevention of bullying.

To make students, parents/carers and staff aware of what steps to take when an incident of bullying has occurred.

To demonstrate to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and to reassure victims that action will be taken to keep them safe.

To clarify the extent of the problem and ensure that the College allocates a proportionate amount of time and energy to deal with it.

To accurately record all incidents of bullying and to monitor the effectiveness of strategies for dealing with it.

To address with bullies their problematic behaviour in a fair and firm, non-oppressive manner, and to provide them with support to enable them to change their behaviour.

Definition

1. There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:
 - deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
 - repeated often over a period of time
 - difficult for victims to defend themselves against
2. Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:
 - physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings, damage to belongings
 - verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
 - indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours.
 - cyber bullying - sending malicious emails or text messages on mobile phones.
3. Name calling is the most common direct form. This may be because of individual characteristics, but students can be called nasty names because of their ethnic origin, nationality or colour; sexual orientation; or some form of disability.

Scope

This policy applies only to incidents of bullying which take place on College premises. A number of legal court cases have confirmed that any school or College cannot be held responsible for bullying which takes place elsewhere.

However, Linton Village College has an enduring interest in the welfare and conduct of its students and will respond positively to any information it receives about bullying outside the College thus:

- If it emerges that a student is responsible for bullying other children outside College then this matter will be addressed and (if appropriate) the bully's parents informed.

- If a child is found to be the victim of bullying outside Linton Village College then help and support will be offered and advice given on how to avoid further incidents in future. The victim's parents/carers will be informed.
- If information is received that a child is being bullied by a sibling outside College this will initially be discussed with the parents/carers. If concerns persist then the matter will be referred to the Social Services Team.
- If children are being bullied by students of another school the Head of that school will be informed and invited to deal with the matter.

Prevention

All staff involved in the education and/or supervision of children will be made aware of the issue of bullying and the need to apply the Colleges policy of zero-tolerance consistently when episodes of bullying are witnessed or reported. Staff will constantly reinforce the message to children that bullying is unacceptable and will take positive action to prevent and control it.

In addition the issue of bullying will be raised with students at a number of levels including:

- At whole College level – through assemblies when children will be informed of the College's zero-tolerance policy and the actions that will be taken to prevent bullying taking place. This issue will be raised regularly when the whole College will be informed of the progress of the anti-bullying policy and any changes which may be introduced.
- At classroom level – during lessons, mentoring sessions, tutorial groups.
- At individual level – children who are felt to be at risk of bullying (or who have suffered from bullying in the past) will be offered additional support and guidance from a number of agencies.
- Children who have bullied others will be given advice and support and taught strategies to enable them to bring their unacceptable behaviour under control and to prevent further incidents. Prefects and Hear 4 U Pupil Mentors will assist staff in this process. Pupil Mentors are an important part of the College anti-bullying strategy. The students undertake an intensive two day training programme and receive regular support throughout the time they are operating as mentors. They will be supported by members of the student support team and provided with a Handbook. (APPENDIX 2)
- Linton Village College recognises that there are particular times when children may be more vulnerable to bullying – lunch and break times, the beginning and end of the school day and whilst travelling on buses. Arrangements will be made to ensure that at such times there is someone to turn to reduce the risk of bullying incidents. This will be provided by staff, lunchtime supervisors, Hear4U Mentors and Prefects.
- Also, there are locations about the College in which incidents of bullying are more likely to occur and again arrangements will be made to ensure that these are properly supervised or students will be forbidden access to these areas. Hear4U Mentors will assist in this supervision process.
- Children will be encouraged to talk to staff about incidents of bullying which they experience or of which they may be aware. In these circumstances staff will respond consistently and positively, take the expression of concern seriously, ensure that the matter is fully investigated, and report and log (APPENDIX 3) the incident with the appropriate person.
- A central data base will be kept of all bullying incidents to allow for cross referencing. This will be held by the Student support team.
- Parents/carers who believe their children are the victims of bullying should share their concerns with the College at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with the College to keep their children safe in future. All expressions of concern will be taken

seriously and investigated thoroughly. Parents/carers should contact the respective Year Leader (Student support team) in the first instance.

- Similarly if parents/carers believe their child is bullying others, this information should be shared with the College so that the problem can be addressed and a plan agreed to prevent further incidents and the bullying child helped to change their behaviour. Initially, parents/carers should contact their child's Year Leader. (The Student support team).
- A concerns box which will be emptied each day will be placed in the entrance hall.
- Regular anonymous surveys will be carried out.

All of these preventative strategies operate within a College ethos founded on equality, fairness and respect for others in which individual differences are celebrated and seen as a source of enrichment. In order to help children learn and develop appropriate responses to others, all staff at all times will treat each other (and children, parents and carers) with courtesy and respect and will model appropriate and acceptable behaviour.

Parental involvement

The College is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents/carers and believes that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents/carers are able to work together with students when bullying occurs.

The College recognises the important influence which parents/carers have on their children and would wish, using the Home/College Agreement, to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as victim or a perpetrator.

If a child is involved in a single serious incident of bullying or there is evidence that the same child is involved repeatedly in less serious incidents (either as a victim or a perpetrator) the College will inform parents/carers and invite them to become involved in the management of the issue and the prevention of further incidents. Isolated and less serious incidents will be dealt with by College staff and parents/carers informed.

Implementation

The College is committed to creating a bully-free environment and will ensure that its zero-tolerance policy is applied rigorously. All staff involved in the teaching and/or supervision of children will take responsibility for addressing incidents which fall within the College's definition of bullying and ensure that the victim receives what support is required, that the bully is informed of the unacceptability of his/her behaviour and a record is made of the incident.

All children need to be aware that staff wish to be informed of any incidents or concerns and that action will be taken when bullying is reported.

The Student support team will be responsible for implementing and reviewing this policy.

Incident management

Linton Village College will take firm and decisive action to deal with any incident of bullying which is witnessed by or reported to any member of staff. Year Leaders (The student support team) will take the lead in investigating bullying incidents in the first instance.

Post incident responses for the victim

When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a child may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated by the Year Leader (The student support team) in the first instance.

The College will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to children who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular child's individual needs and may include:

- Immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child'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
- Sympathy and empathy
- Counselling
- Befriending
- Assertiveness training
- Extra supervision/monitoring
- Creation of a support group
- Peer mediation/peer mentoring using the Hear 4 U team. (This group also meets each Friday, to offer a Drop-in in the Chilford Room)
- Informing/involving parents
- Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability)
- Arrangements to review progress

The Year Leader of the victim will be responsible for managing post incident responses. He/she will be assisted by the Student Inclusion Manager. (The Student support team)

For the bully

Linton Village College takes bullying behaviour very seriously and will adopt a supportive, pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable bullies to behave in a more acceptable way. The College believes that the positive use of sanctions can be useful in demonstrating to bullies that their behaviour is unacceptable and in promoting change.

The College will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly. The following options will be considered:

- Immediate action to stop an incident of bullying in progress
- Engagement with the bully to reinforce the message that their behaviour is a breach of College rules and is unacceptable
- Loss of lunch/breaktime privileges
- Detention
- Parents/carers informed
- Report card
- Removal from class/group
- Withholding participation in sports or out of College activity (if not an essential part of curriculum)
- Counselling/instruction in alternative ways of behaving

Adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim (provided this is safe for the victim)
Fixed periods of exclusion
Permanent exclusion (in extreme cases which may involve violence)
Rewards/positive reinforcement for children in order to promote change and bring unacceptable behaviour under control

The Year Leader in consultation with the Pupil Inclusion Manager will be responsible for responding to incidents of bullying in a proportionate way. Racist incidents will be recorded in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council Policy and forwarded to the Student Inclusion Manager, who will monitor and report patterns to the Principal on a termly basis.

Monitoring and evaluating

Each incident of bullying falling within the College definition will be recorded by the Year Leader (see Appendix 1). Any incidents with a racist, sexist, disability or homophobic element will be identified.

An annual report will be made to the Governing Body indicating the extent of the problem and any trends which may emerge. This information will be shared with parents/carers and students. Responsibility for this item to lie with Principal of the College.

Senior staff and Governors will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and agree adjustments that may be necessary to address any ongoing concerns. These will be shared with staff, parents/carers and students.

Policy Review

1st Policy: October 1997
Reviewed: November 1999
Reviewed: Autumn 2001
Reviewed: July 2003
Reviewed: September 2004
Reviewed: October 2005
Reviewed: December 2006
Review:

Staff responsible for review: The Student support Team.