Barley Lane School

Friendship, Optimism, Hardwork

Anti-bullying 2021-22

We understand bullying as the deliberate, calculated and or persistent attempt to make another person feel uncomfortable unsafe, and unhappy. It is different from the clumsy, or unintentional or regretted behaviour that leads to such feelings. It is both physical and psychological and it disregards the dignity and safety of others and is often skilled in identifying people's vulnerabilities and triggers; the things that hurt them. We understand too that the perpetrator uses online technologies to perpetuate bullying beyond the school day. Staff must be vigilant in safeguarding children with assistance from parents and families including associated professional support to monitor and protect them from such corrosive and damaging online activity (cont.)

Online and child on child abuse (also referred to as peer on peer abuse) – additional info can be found as part of the CP policy and safeguarding policy in addition to its own standalone policy.

There is an expectation that all staff are:

- Aware that technology is a significant component in many safeguarding and wellbeing issues, and that children are at risk of online abuse (as well as face to face)
- Aware that children can abuse their peers online through:
    - Abusive, harassing, and misogynistic messages
    - Non-consensual sharing of indecent nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, especially around chat groups
    - Sharing of abusive images and pornography, to those who don't want to receive such content

Staff do:

- Recognise the indicators of peer-on-peer abuse, know how to identify it and respond to reports
- Recognise that peer-on-peer abuse may be taking place, even if not reported
- Understand their role in preventing it and responding to it if they believe a child may be at risk
- Understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers. If they don't, it can create an unsafe environment and lead to a culture that normalises abuse
- Abuse can take place inside and outside of school or online

It is the perception of the person experiencing the hurt and unhappiness that takes precedence.

Behaviours that hurt and undermine others cannot be explained as a "joke" or "misunderstanding" and there is a powerful and corrosive inequality in bullying that doesn't exist in genuine mutual banter or friendly rivalry.

It is true that some behaviours are victim-like and if we experience bullying it is helpful to be self-aware and think about our own behaviours and contribution and how to be more assertive and confident but if any member of the community feels uncomfortable, unsafe and unhappy and the person causing such feelings persists and shows no concern or remorse this for us is bullying.

Bullying happens in school at home and in the community and also in the virtual world of social media and on-line gaming and all bullying is powerfully undermined if every day we model and live out our core value of friendship and its implied kindness and compassion and protection and deliver our core responsibility of high quality education and care and the young people in our care should feel safe because:

- Staff are visible and engaged and vigilant so their presence and behaviours are both preventative and encourage respect and friendship respectively (staff are accessible to families too so they have a voice and can quickly flag concerns)

- Staffing and supervision are constantly scrutinised and fine-tuned to prevent difficulties and ensure the benefits proactive prevention rigorous and intelligent supervision brings and we record incidents of bullying diligently so we can see patterns and plan interventions;

- There is the ongoing vigorous promotion and modelling and celebration of fairness, responsibility and friendship as an alternative to conflict and aggression;

- We are alive to emerging risks and we return to the issue regularly in the first few weeks and check in with the young person and then periodically to check it has not re-emerged.

- We are quick to affirm and celebrate positive behaviours and reward them: responding warmly but assertively to low level bullying and seeking to encourage reconciliation and friendship.

- The children and young people have open and trusting relationships with staff who are "present" and engaged and who actively listen and respect their views and perceptions and they therefore freely speak up and we are vigilant and notice and take practical steps to help them;

- We actively seek to build their confidence and resilience and help them with practical strategies to stay safe and develop their sense of control: they can make safe choices for example not engaging on-line with those who disrespect them or in school choosing safe places and people and not putting themselves at risk.

- The perceptions of children, parents and carers are treated seriously and investigation and action are prompt to make and keep the children safe and to secure a reliable and balanced and fair understanding of what has happened.

- Equally experience tells us we must also be both scrupulous and brave enough to call out any manipulation when it is clear a young person is being unbalanced and unfair in alleging bullying because this happens too and there is a kind of bullying of others through "victimhood" one where every difficulty and disagreement however small or speedily resolved is escalated and catastrophized and sometimes parents and carers and professionals contribute to this also.

- We promptly and pragmatically move the person who is at risk away from any immediate risk and or harm for example we take them home in a school vehicle if they are anxious in their taxi and we reassure the child and find a place of safety and calm for them.

- We see the bullying as a both a consequence as well as a cause of unhappiness and work to support and challenge all the children and young people because happy people are more tolerant and kind and forgiving.

- We are mindful everyone is failed if we ignore incidents as our inaction can be interpreted as tacit approval by the person causing the hurt and the victim can be left feeling abandoned and more vulnerable; better for

us to become the focus of any hostility and show solidarity with the person being targeted and indeed deflect that hostility onto us;

- Staff are told not to worry about any escalation in behaviour and risk as a result of calling-out bullying for example racist abuse or physical assaults where the victim and the wider community need to clearly and tangibly hear and see what is right and fair stood up for and protected;

- We will not have a culture of pseudo investigation or hide behind a policy nor will we seek to soften responsibility and accountability when bullying happens it will not be fudged.

- Any consequence or sanction is applied fairly and is proportionate and we seek to be suitably supportive and both punitive and conciliatory: reconciliation and what is "restorative" frames all our interventions.

In our setting and these times of increasing intolerance and a rise in reported hate crimes vigilance is a must around sexism, homophobia and racism, peer on peer abuse of all kinds and particularly Islamophobia but we have also experienced an increase in hurtful comments about weight and body shape that are corrosive and throughout it is about the positive promotion and celebration of our shared humanity, dignity and equality and to recognise these and all forms of bullying can be matters of child protection where escalation to MASH input and intervention may be necessary.

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