Leek High School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Bullying is an insidious social problem. In the school environment, it can affect both students and staff. It is the responsibility of the whole school community to tackle bullying by ensuring the development of a caring and supportive ethos in which any form of bullying will not be tolerated.

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 race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Although not an exhaustive list, common examples of bullying include:

PHYSICAL	-	hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, pinching, tripping someone up, stealing/damaging someone's belongings
VERBAL	-	name-calling, sarcasm, insulting a person's family, threats of physical violence, spreading rumours, constantly putting someone down
EMOTIONAL	-	tormenting, threatening ridicule, humiliation, excluding someone from a group
RACIST	-	insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived ethnic origin or faith, name-calling, taunts, graffiti, racially motivated violence
SEXUAL	-	sexually insulting language/gestures, name calling, graffiti, unwanted physical contact, abusive comments
HOMOPHOBIC	-	insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived sexuality, name-calling, graffiti, homophobic violence
ELECTRONIC	-	bullying by text-message, bullying on the internet (on social media, in chat rooms, on bulletin boards and through instant messaging services), hate websites

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, 2007) defines Cyberbullying as "the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and internet, deliberately to upset someone else".

> *"Cyberbullying is a "method" rather than a "type" of bullying. It includes bullying via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via e-mail; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone….It can be used to bully by reasons of race, religion, sexuality, disability etc."*
> *[Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools" DCSF 2007]*

Cyberbullying might be perpetrated by anyone and may have the following characteristics and features:

- Electronically circulated – audience may be large and reached rapidly;

- Single incidents may be copied and posted / shared;

- Likely to be anonymous;

- May take place on or off the education premises;

- Invades home and personal space at any time;

- Intended to threaten, manipulate or humiliate, defame or impersonate;

- Likely to be deliberate;

- Occasionally unintentional (but no less potentially damaging);

- Malicious.

The Local Authority, or the Governing Body, as employer has duties under the 1974 Health and Safety at Work Act to ensure the health, safety and welfare of all those using their premises. This includes students, all staff and visitors. Headteachers have legal duties to take measure to prevent bullying among students and do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees.

There are several very important reasons for challenging bullying behaviour in our schools:

- The safety and happiness of students and staff. When people are bullied, their lives are made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. Over time, they are likely to lose self-confidence and self-esteem. Some may blame themselves for 'inviting' the bullying behaviour.

- Educational achievement. The unhappiness of bullied students is likely to affect their concentration and learning. Some children will avoid being bullied by not going to school.

- Providing a model for helpful behaviour. If they observe bullying behaviour going unchallenged, other students may learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want. Those students who are being bullied may interpret the school's inaction as condoning unacceptable behaviour. They will feel badly let down by adults in authority.

- Getting a reputation as an effective, caring school. No school can claim with absolute confidence that "there is no bullying here". Every school has some degree of bullying, even if only slight or infrequent. Parents know this. They will be impressed and reassured by a school which demonstrates both through policy and action that it will respond positively and effectively to bullying.

Bullying is a community issue. It affects students, families, non-teaching staff and governors as well as teachers. Families can be powerful allies for schools in trying to resolve bullying situations, and they are often the first to detect that a problem exists.

This policy links with other pastoral policies and the school development plan. The relationships between the Anti-bullying, Behaviour, Equal Opportunities and ICT policies are particularly significant. These underpin a coherent system for facilitating a healthy social and learning environment in and around the schools.

Definition of bullying
Bullying is defined as "conduct intended to cause hurt, either physical or psychological, which is unprovoked and which continues over a long period".

Measures to prevent bullying
- Watching for early signs of distress in students.

- Providing curriculum time to discuss bullying so that students will be encouraged to reject anti-social behaviour.

- Use of RISE time to discuss the school's 'Equal Opportunities' and 'Anti-bullying' policies.

- Use of posters and other forms of publicity to make students aware of the school procedures.

- Encouraging an ethos which supports the victim and which raises awareness of this issue and makes all members of our community a resource in countering bullying.

- Developing confidence in our systems for tackling bullying.

- Devising a whole-federation strategy to combat bullying.

- Auditing the school site and its daily operational routines e.g. lunchtime supervision.

- Provide INSET for teaching and non-teaching staff to make sure all are aware of school procedures.

How bullying will be dealt with

- Staff will carefully investigate reported incidents and record details on PARS[*].

- Victim(s) and the perpetrator(s) will make written statements under staff supervision.

- Victim(s) will be given immediate counselling and offered additional pastoral support.

- Parents/carers of victims will be contacted and informed about the incident and the action taken.

- Parents/carers of perpetrators will be contacted and the consequences of any repetition explained.

- Perpetrators will be given immediate counselling and offered additional pastoral support.

- Parents/carers of students involved can request copies of all correspondence and reports placed in the respective students' files for a period of **six years** after their leaving date.

In addition, where cyberbullying is suspected the schools will use the authority given under the Education and Inspections Act (2006) to take reasonable action to:

- Regulate the conduct of students when they are off-site or not under the control or charge of any member of staff.

- Confiscate items from students, including electronic devices (e.g. mobile phones), when they are being used to cause a disturbance in class or in contravention of the behaviour or anti-bullying policies.

- Request that a student reveals a message or other content on their electronic device to establish if bullying has occurred.

- Search through an electronic device where a student is reasonably suspected of involvement in bullying.

Monitoring and evaluation

- The relevant member of staff should continue to counsel victim(s) and perpetrator(s) for as long as is deemed necessary.

- Parents/carers should be contacted to follow up incidents where necessary.

- Staff should be made aware of the situation and asked to monitor any developments.

Leek High School will not tolerate any form of bullying. The school undertakes to work positively with students, parents and staff to prevent bullying wherever possible, but will take appropriate action on every occasion where bullying does occur, which in serious cases may ultimately result in permanent exclusion.

ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNORS ON:

POLICY REVIEW DATE:

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[*] The school's electronic behaviour and attendance monitoring system.