

SHIREMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL SCHOOLPEER ON PEER ABUSE AND ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



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At Shiremoor Primary school, we believe that all pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring, safe environment without fear of others within the environment. We promote good behaviour and follow our Behaviour and Discipline Policy. It is made clear that peer on peer abuse and/ or bullying are forms of anti-social behaviour. It is wrong and it does not follow the ethos of our school in supporting pupils' social emotional aspects of learning.

As a school, one of our key words is 'respect' and we all have the responsibility to promote this principle. Very young children are learning how to socialise with others and often make mistakes in how they go about this and therefore our policy is designed to support them in making good choices and developing friendship groups. At Shiremoor Primary School, we take the mental health and pastoral support of children seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when reporting incidents. Bullying will not be tolerated. The school will seek ways to counter the effects of bullying that may occur within school or in the local community.

All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what peer on peer abuse and bullying constitute. All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is, and ensure it is followed. All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is and what they should do should concerns arise.

What is Peer on Peer Abuse?

Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and/or harmed by their peers who are the same or a similar age. It can refer to domestic abuse, child sexual exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour, serious youth crime or violence and can be a combination of these things. Explanations of these terms can be found later in the policy. As a school, any of these matters would be thoroughly investigated with an understanding that a perpetrator can also be at risk of harm.

What is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another targeted individual or group either physically or emotionally.

The word 'Bullying' should be used appropriately and not as a blanket term for 'falling out', or for two children who just do not get along and should not play together.

Bullying maybe related to:

- Race and religion
- Cyberbullying
- Sexual, sexist and transphobic bullying
- Homophobic bullying
- Disablist bullying
- Appearance or health condition
- Home circumstances

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of bully over victim. This can be achieved by:

- The size of the individual
- The strength of the individual
- The numbers or group size involved
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying or using email, social media, texts

Parents do need to try to support children at home in developing social and independent skills and developing resilience. School can support with advice around this.

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying and act immediately to resolve any issues. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; they maybe too young or have Special Educational Needs. Staff should be able to identify children who may be vulnerable and who could fall victim to bullying as well as those who may demonstrate bullying behaviour. Provocative Victim – research shows that some children are provocative victims – this means that they actively seek responses from others, often using their own behaviours to insight a reaction from others to either bring attention to themselves or to get others into trouble. When a child behaves in this way, school may support parents in changing this behaviour.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Possible signs of Bullying

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened to walk to or from school
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic), although persistent absentees cannot use bullying as an excuse where no bullying is found. It is never helpful for a child to miss school as they are leaving issues unresolved and potentially make matters worse.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises

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- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating

These signs and behaviours can also indicate other problems, and all possibility for these signs and behaviours should be investigated.

Explanation of some terminology related to peer on peer abuse and warning signs:

CSE- Child sexual exploitation

Many warning signs may be related to older partners, associations with risky adults, entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults. It occurs 'where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity.'

Harmful Sexual Behaviour including sexting

Sexually harmful behaviour may range from inappropriate sexual language, inappropriate role play, to sexually touching another or sexual assault/ abuse. This also includes sending nude pictures, rude pictures or naked selfies.

Gang and Youth Violence

A child can be exploited sexually and/ or physically by a gang. Types of exploitation may include using sex as a weapon between rival gangs or as a form of punishment or to gain status.

Domestic Violence

Teenage relationship abuse is defined as a pattern of actual or threatened acts of physical, sexual and/ or emotional abuse, perpetrated by an adolescent (between the ages of 13 and 18) against a current or former partner. Abuse may include insults, coercion, social sabotage, sexual harassment, threats or acts of physical or sexual abuse.

When Bullying or Peer on Peer abuse is reported:

- All known/reported incidences will be fully investigated and logged by the class teacher in the 1st instance, unless the class teacher passes the report to the Designated Person due to the nature of the report.
- Investigations will include speaking to all parties on at least one occasion and may include the questioning of witnesses.
- Following investigations parents will be verbally informed of outcomes and actions. Follow ups will always be offered to parents.
- In some cases request may be made for the support of an outside agency e.g. the Police or Early Help Assessment Team.
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded and monitored to ensure repeated incidents do not take place and that safeguarding is assured.
- The Headteacher sees daily logs of any investigation.

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- Where a parent feels that the issue has not been appropriately addressed, an appointment should be made with the Headteacher.

Preventing Bullying

At Shiremoor Primary School we use a variety of methods for helping children to prevent bullying through:

- Class Assemblies
- PHSE and Citizenship Lessons
- Show Racism the Red Card
- Anti-bullying Week
- The Shiremoor Voice provides a voice for children

The ethos and working philosophy of Shiremoor Primary School means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

Staff will regularly discuss bullying and, in an age-appropriate way, peer on peer abuse; this will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and will lead to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss bullying.

Staff will reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular discussion, take part in Anti-bullying week, follow the Equality Policy and reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else but they must be respectful of feelings of all.

If a child feels that they are being bullied then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow:

- Tell a friend
- Tell a teacher or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Ring Childline: 0800 1111, and follow the advice given

The Headteacher is to be kept informed of any allegations of bullying and subsequent action. Where allegations cannot be resolved by the class teacher senior management or the Headteacher will take the lead. All incidents should be recorded on CPOMS.

Advice to Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied:

1. Report bullying incidents to the class teacher or Senior Manager.
2. In cases of serious bullying the incidents will be recorded by staff and the Headteacher notified.
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.

4. An Action Plan will be implemented
5. If necessary and appropriate, Police will be consulted
6. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
7. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

DO NOT:

1. Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be the bully or by speaking to their parents.
2. Encourage your child to 'bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve. It must be stressed that the school will act upon all allegations of bullying when communicated to the school. However, we urge parents to communicate any concerns with staff at an early stage to prevent escalation of the problem. These open lines of communication should continue where the problem persists. If pupils or parents do not keep the school regularly informed of the situation then the school will assume that the problem has been fully resolved.

Help Organisations:

- KIDSCAPE www.kidscape.org.uk
- Family Lives www.familylives.org.uk Helpline 0808 800 2222
- Childline www.childline.org.uk Helpline 0800 1111