

Thorpe Lea Primary School



A dedicated community working together, nurturing a safe, happy school where all children can achieve their potential

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The staff and governors of Thorpe Lea Primary School are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils and staff. This will help our pupils to learn in a relaxed and secure environment which is conducive to progressive learning. Our aim is to develop responsible young citizens who value and uphold trust, empathy and respect and can make a positive contribution to society, based on these core values.

Statement of Intent

Thorpe Lea Primary School's staff and governors will strive to nurture a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school, whether from adults or from children. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Objectives of this Policy:

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

The School's Ethos Towards Bullying:

- We establish school rules and positive communication that demonstrate caring behaviour, and ensure that all children understand them.
- Specify clearly those types of behaviour that are considered to be "bullying" and therefore unacceptable.
- Specify clearly what sanctions will follow bullying behaviour.
- Regularly remind children in assembly of the importance of respectful and caring behaviour to be shown to everyone.
- Use the personal, health and social curriculum. This curriculum permeates all aspects of school life and is thoroughly integrated into the more general curriculum wherever possible. Every member of staff has the responsibility to support and foster this curriculum.
- We have structure in place that ensures that issues of bullying are routinely and regularly addressed in the classroom curriculum.
- We draw up pupil support plans/pupil behaviour contracts for those children experiencing interpersonal and peer relationship difficulties.
- We use differentiated personal and social curriculum materials (eg: social skills curriculum and materials from the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning).

What is Bullying?

'Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

Safe to Learn: embedding anti bullying work in schools (2007).

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist or homophobic bullying and when children with disabilities are involved. If the victim might be in danger then intervention is urgently required.

What does bullying look like?

Bullying can include:

- name calling
- taunting
- mocking
- making offensive comments
- physical assault
- taking or damaging belongings
- cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging and e mailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet
- producing offensive graffiti
- gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- excluding people from groups.

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

Why are children and young people bullied?

Specific types of bullying include:

- bullying related to race, religion or culture
- bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
- bullying related to appearance or health
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- sexist or sexual bullying

The School's Responsibility

Bullying must not be tolerated. Thorpe Lea Primary School accepts that it is our responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. This starts with our staff; setting a model example to children is of paramount importance. In our staff handbook we describe a clear code of conduct where all staff are expected to model respect and trust to all school stakeholders and to use the clearly defined reporting structure.

Pupil Communications

With pupils we discuss the various forms of bullying in society and in school and make it clear that bullying in any shape or form is totally unacceptable. We encourage openness and transparency; pupil communication, discussion and listening are reinforced in whole school Celebration assemblies, phase group assemblies, PHSE lessons and in our close relationships. However the thread of bullying is also one that we integrate across the curriculum wherever possible to reinforce the message and to allow pupils to see that speaking up is the best policy in all cases.

We have put in place a clear line of communication to ensure that pupils feel enabled and comfortable to speak to any member of staff about their concerns. In assemblies we promote sharing of concerns, a value of diversity and teamwork as important parts of school life and culture. Pupils are expected to respect and uphold these values and are encouraged to speak up by reporting to staff any incidents of bullying that they may witness at any time.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying; everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving and we have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

At Thorpe Lea Primary School all staff recognise that bullying can affect a child's mental state, physical behaviour and academic progress. Staff are encouraged to stay vigilant to any such signs and to respond to them sensitively and rapidly.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to/from school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to make slow or little progress in their learning
- has clothes that are torn or books that are damaged
- has "missing" possessions
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- complains of being hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

How the school deals with bullying incidents:

The school has established Peer Mediators who will meet with children who wish to discuss any concerns that they may have about friendship issues, their emotional wellbeing or a feeling of being bullied.

Peer Mediators meet to discuss these issues further with the Anti-Bullying Coordinator who offers further advice and intervenes with incidents when and where necessary.

An Anti-Bullying Committee is in place to help gather the views and opinions of different groups from the school community. This committee meets every half term to discuss how the school is delivering its anti-bullying message and what information can be provided to children and parents. To ensure a wide spread of involvement on this committee, the committee shall consist of the following:

- The Anti-Bullying Coordinator
- A member of teaching staff

- A member of support staff
- A member of the governing body
- At least one parent representative (max 3)
- At least 4 pupils of the school (max 6)

When dealing with bullying incidents or the reporting of bullying incidents, Thorpe Lea Primary is committed to providing and ensuring:

- A secure environment should be provided in which incidents can be reported confidently
- The pupil who has been bullied should be made to feel safe
- All pupils should be shown that bullying is taken seriously
- Teachers should respond calmly and consistently to incidents of bullying
- The school should protect and support all parties while the issues are resolved
- The person who has done the bullying, and those who may have colluded, should be encouraged/guided to behave in a more appropriate way
- Interventions should be monitored and followed-up appropriately at the individual, group or whole school level.

Staff should:

- **be available** - Break the code of secrecy. Make it known that you are ready to listen and provide immediate support
- **listen to the child** - Ask the bullied child who was involved and how she or he is feeling
- **record** - Ensure the incident is recorded and that reports are collated
- **respond** - Ensure that your response is non-aggressive and provides models of positive behaviour. Identify any pupils with long-term needs who require a development programme.
- **follow up** - Review progress and evaluate policies and intervention.

Working with parents

It is essential to involve parents where bullying has taken place. The most effective emphasis in meetings with parents is on joint problem solving. The aim of such a meeting is to minimise the likelihood of further bullying regardless of whether one is talking about the child who has bullied or the one who has been bullied.

Careful planning is necessary to retain the joint problem-solving focus in the face of such an emotive subject.

Staff at Thorpe Lea will ensure that:

- parents are clear about the joint problem solving focus
- they have been given enough notice
- the meeting is informal but uninterrupted
- all relevant information is available
- parents have an opportunity to have their say and express their feelings about the situation
- minutes of the meeting to be recorded
- the meeting is purposeful and ends on a positive note

Procedures

1. Bullying incidents are reported to the class teacher(s) of all the children involved.
2. In all cases, incidents are reported to the Anti-Bullying Coordinator who informs all members of staff, including LSAs and Lunchtime Supervisors
3. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be investigated
4. In all cases, parents of all the children involved should be informed and a discussion will take place.
5. In all serious cases of bullying, a meeting may be required with all who are involved.
6. Attempts will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

Following a bullying report

Teachers need to take particular care that in following up a complaint of bullying they do not expose the bullied child to the risk of even more bullying.

They should take all reasonable measures to ensure that the bullied child is supported and protected. Interventions which appear to be particularly sensitive to the needs of all children are those in which more general problem solving strategies are modelled. Where a bullied child is suffering prolonged or intense anxiety or distress, referral to outside agencies should be considered.

We will:

- provide an opportunity for discussions with the child who has been bullied
- avoid embarrassing and shaming the bullied child by focusing on a particular incident when the child is present
- use "supportive" children to ensure that the bullied child is befriended and protected, eg. In going to and from school
- consider the appropriateness of referring the bullied child for specialist help, having consulted and secured the agreement of parents. Outside agencies which may provide this expertise include the Educational Psychology Service, the Education Welfare Service, child and family guidance, etc.

Parental Support

We discuss our strategies for dealing with suspected cases of bullying in our termly Welcome Meetings for parents, and more frequently on a one to one basis as required. We encourage parents to come forward and share concerns they may have.

Some Help Organisations which parents may use are listed below:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)	020 7354 8321
Children's Legal Centre	0845 345 4345
KIDSCAPE Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4)	0845 1 205 204
Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222
Youth Access	020 8772 9900
Bullying Online	www.bullying.co.uk

Visit the Kidscape website www.kidscape.org.uk for further support , links and advice.

For a copy of Kidscape's free booklets "*Stop Bullying*", "*Preventing Bullying*" and "*You Can Beat Bullying*", send a large (A4) self-addressed envelope (marked "Bully Pack") with 6 first class stamps to: Kidscape, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London.

Complaints

Should parents feel that an incident has not been dealt with appropriately, they should arrange to speak or meet with the Anti Bullying Coordinator and Headteacher. Following this meeting, if they feel that the incident has still not been resolved satisfactorily, they should follow the guidance set out in the schools Complaints Policy, which can be found on the schools website.