



Anti-Bullying

RSNE 9.4

Document Revision Control:

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Approval Date	June 2014
Authorised by:	Zak McIlhargey
Next review Date	August 2026
Amendments	Aug 2018/Sept 2018/November 2020 August 2021/Sept 22/ Aug 23/Aug 24/ Sept 25
Next review date	Septmebr 2026
Reviewed for Covid-19 impact	July 2020
Has this policy been impacted by Covid	Yes

Introduction

Anti-Bullying

Spark of Genius North East supports a strict “No Bullying” policy towards young people and employees. Spark of Genius North East seeks to create an ethos where bullying is challenged at source and a culture is promoted whereupon bullying will not be tolerated towards any individual.

School staff should take every step to make sure that individual children and young people are not subject to discrimination, marginalisation or bullying from their peers by virtue of their gender, religion, ethnicity, cultural and linguistic background, sexual identity, mental health, disability or for any other reason.

The registered person and staff create an atmosphere where bullying is known to be unacceptable, the policy on countering bullying is known to children and staff and is effective in practice.

Every person has a right not to be bullied, Spark of Genius North East and King Edwin School will seek to provide a safe environment where young people feel comfortable enough to report bullying and are confident that staff will do all in their power to prevent it. Bullying will not be tolerated by young people towards each other, by young people towards staff, staff towards young people and staff towards each other.

What is bullying?

Some definitions of bullying are:

‘We consider that bullying is a form of aggression where one person abuses the power that she/he has over another person. The victim of this aggression is unable to defend him or herself and therefore is made to feel intimidated by the perpetrator.’

‘Bullying is anything a person does deliberately, to cause someone else to feel pain and/or unhappiness.’

Are there different types of bullying?

Spark of Genius North East recognise that there are four main types of bullying:

- 1) **Verbal/Written** – for example, criticising a person purposefully to upset or hurt a person through name calling, text messages, racism and verbal threats
- 2) **Physical** – for example, intention to physically hurt a person by hitting, kicking etc
- 3) **Indirect** – For example, Spreading rumours, exclusion from conversations or activities, isolation and nasty looks.
- 4) **Cyber Bullying-** for example text messages/emails/social media intent on causing distress to others.

Examples of 'bullying' Might Include:

- A young person picking on another young person
- Taking control of power from another person
- Picking out a person's weak spots
- Intimidating others
- Making a person do something that they do not want to do
- Belittling a person, drawing attention to a person's looks
- Making a person do something to be a part of the 'in' gang
- Leaving a person out
- Name calling
- Making 'put down' references to a person's culture or background,
- A form of aggression and an abuse of power.
- Sending text messages/emails that are intent on causing distress to others.

When does this happen?

Bullying can happen when a new person comes into the school. Some children can intimidate and bully others to be accepted. Some young people can bully others to make themselves feel better about difficult circumstances that may be going on in their own lives.

Who gets bullied?

Everyone or anyone who may be different in any way! For example:

- A different race from the majority
- Sexual orientation
- Different background
- A person with learning difficulties
- A younger or older person
- A person who is overweight or underweight
- A different accent
- A different colour skin or hair
- Someone with prominent or different looks and features
- Someone who wears glasses, someone who isn't good at something e.g. spelling, riding a bike, mixing with others etc.
- It is not only young people who are bullied in school, staff are also subjected to bullying. Therefore anyone who lives or works in a school could be a potential bullying target.

Why might someone bully?

There are many different reasons why people bully others. These might include:

- Because they are unhappy
- Because they are jealous
- Because they have been bullied themselves
- Because they are scared of being bullies themselves
- Because they want some attention
- Because they are being abused
- Because they want to feel superior to others

Recognising the signs of bullying

Staff and Young People need to be vigilant in recognising the signs of bullying which may include:

- Becoming withdrawn
- Self-Harm
- Belongings go missing/damaged clothing
- Become distressed/crying
- Having nightmares or changes in sleep patterns
- Becoming involved or there is an increase in criminal activity
- Unexplained marks or bruises
- A change in usual patterns of behaviour
- A change in eating patterns
- Asking for money
- Refusing to say what's wrong
- Hearing from other that someone is being bullied
- Wanting to remain with an adult/s
- Running away from the home
- Giving excuses to explain any of the above

Preventing Bullying

Responses to bullying will aim at prevention as well as control. Staff will not only take action to deal with incidents of bullying that arise but should seek to bring about conditions in which bullying is less likely to arise in the future. This goal is most likely to be achieved if staff are always clear with everyone that no form of bullying is tolerated in School within Spark of Genius.

Bullying will be talked about openly and made a subject for discussion within school because, like other forms of abuse, bullying thrives on secrecy.

How should a bully be dealt with and what will be done when bullying occurs?

Disapproval of bullying behaviour will be communicated to the bully and within the school at all times. Records of any incidents thought to be bullying will be kept. Discussions with the bully and the victim will be held separately when things have calmed down. The victim will receive emotional support and also help with strategies to prevent this happening again. Information leading up to the situation and after the situation has occurred will be available to view in the form of a be-brief type document so that the incident is accurately recorded. Parents/carers of both parties will be informed and a meeting set up to look at prevention.

A bully will not be rewarded, i.e. taken out of the situation to the cinema etc. An appropriate consequence will be set in place to enforce that bullying is unacceptable in King Edwin School.

Specific Action

- Listen carefully and record all incidents and discussions of them
- Get the bullied person and the bully/bullies to record events in writing
- Send copies of all reports to parents/carers of the people involved and keep copies of these in the respective individuals files for a specified time
- If needed physically separate those involved
- Remove the victim/bully from the situation
- Comfort the victim and reassure him/her that staff can and will help

- Talk to the person/s doing the bullying about the victims perception and how it differs from that of their own
- Involve parents if the bullying continues
- Monitor the situation
- Counsel the victim and the bully
- Avoid bullying the bully but express disapproval in a calm rational way
- Help the victim with assertiveness skills and provide activities to build self esteem
- Encourage the victim to ignore teasing at the time but to seek help if necessary
- Break the cycle of bullying by giving victims and/or bullies constructive things to do at significant times
- Advise all individuals who witness any form of bullying to report it
- Inform all individuals involved in bullying incidents that appropriate action will be taken
- Removal of privileges and communication devices used for the bullying of others. This may include consequences in relation to use of the internet and the removal of mobile phones for a period of time to assist in preventing further acts of bullying.
- Risk assessments are written and regularly reviewed in relation to the times, places and circumstances in which the risk of bullying is greatest. The risk assessments must where possible reduce or counteract the risk of bullying.
- In persistent cases of bullying a planning meeting will be arranged with relevant individuals in the bully/victims lives, where strategies will be explored to prevent further bullying. Minutes will be taken and a record of discussion and actions agreed will be recorded on both the bully and the victim's files.

General Action

- Teach individuals negotiation skills and conflict resolution.
- All staff will try to create relationships with young people based on openness, honesty and trust so that young people will feel confident in telling staff that they or other people are being bullied.
- Encourage all children and young people to bring bullying behaviour out into the open
- Break up bullying groups.
- Be around to stop/defuse bullying situations if you feel they are about to begin.
- Ensure that all Children and Young People are aware of the anti-bullying policy.
- Encourage the view that reporting incidents of bullying is taking responsible action instead of 'grassing someone up' or 'telling tales'.
- All staff will receive training in the awareness of, and effective strategies to counter bullying.

If you suspect that bullying has occurred then it must be investigated until a satisfactory outcome has been found

When staff feel that a young person is being bullied, or the young person or others bring this to their attention, this must then be brought to the attention of the whole staff team. The young person believed to be bullying will be informed that this situation is being monitored through CPOMS and regular updates. If the bullying continues the young person's social worker, if relevant, and parents will be involved, and a meeting will be arranged to prevent this from continuing. It is important to be aware that both the bully and the victim will need support and guidance as bullies are often following a pattern of behaviour where they have been victims themselves and have been subject to bullying by others in the past. One of the ways to prevent bullying is by staff helping young people understand their rights and the responsibilities that they have towards others, and others have towards them. Whenever a young person or staff witness any form of bullying this will be recorded on an incident form and young people's views should be ascertained along with the manager's comments. Copies of this report should be

given to young people involved, parents and Social Workers if relevant.

Some Useful Numbers and Web Sites

Child Line 0800 1111 www.childline.org.

Bullying UK 0808 800 2222 www.bullying.co.uk

Kidscape 08451 205204 www.kidscape.org.uk

Beat Bullying www.beatbullying.org

End