Anti-Bullying Policy

Date created: January 2021 reviewed and modified April 2021, reviewed February 2022, no amendments. Reviewed Aug 23.
Reviewed Aug 24 with minor amendments
Claire Hughes

We are committed to reviewing our policy and practise annually.

At Woodland Nurture we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our policies on relational approach to behaviour; equal opportunities and safe guarding.

This policy was formed with reference to https://www.ncab.org.au/bullying-advice/bullying-for-parents/types-of-bullying/ and https://www.meganmeierfoundation.org/bullying/#utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=GOMC%20-%20Resource%20center&utm_content=Resources

Aims
- To ensure that the learners under our care can play and learn in a safe environment and that they, and all the adults present at the setting are kept safe at all times.
- To develop a community of caring, respectful, confident, self-aware, valued individuals working together to learn and have fun whilst keeping our code. **Care for yourself. Care for Others. Care for the Environment**
- If bullying does occur, all participants should be able to recognise it, know what to do about it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, severely and effectively.

Definitions:
Bullying can happen in person or online, via various digital platforms and devices and it can be obvious (overt) or hidden (covert). Bullying behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time (for example, through sharing of digital records).
Bullying of any form or for any reason can have immediate, medium and long-term effects on those involved, including bystanders.
Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals, whether in person or online, are not defined as bullying.

What bullying is **not**:
- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

These actions can cause great distress. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and they are not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

Think: **STOP: Several Times On Purpose.**

Types of Bullying:

There are many different types of bullying that can be experienced by children and adults alike, some are obvious to spot while others can be more subtle:

Physical bullying
Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property. Physical bullying causes both short term and long term damage.

Verbal bullying
Verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse. While verbal bullying can start off harmless, it can escalate to levels which start affecting the individual target.

Social bullying
Social bullying, sometimes referred to as covert bullying, is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and / or cause humiliation. Social bullying can include:
- lying and spreading rumours
- negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking unkindly
- encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyber bullying
The Cyber Bullying Research Centre defines cyber bullying as: Intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, phones, and other electronic devices.
Cyber bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies including hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms.
Cyber bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying.
Cyber bullying can include:
- abusive or hurtful texts, emails or posts, images or videos
- deliberately excluding others online
- nasty gossip or rumours
- imitating others online or using their log-in.

How to spot signs of bullying

Within the setting, adults are ever vigilant in observing behaviours, tuning in to conversations and checking in on individuals throughout the sessions.

We also have a duty of care to check that children are not being bullied outside of the sessions and can use this checklist to help spot signs and symptoms:

Physical Symptoms:
Unexplained bruises, scratches, and cuts
Trouble sleeping or frequent nightmares
Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick, or faking illness
Changes in eating habits, like skipping meals or binge eating
Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry

Behavioral and Psychological Symptoms:
Loss of interest in school and extracurricular activities
Feelings of helplessness, anxiety, or decreased self-esteem
Seems sad, moody, or depressed
Self-destructive behaviors (eg: cutting)
Suicidal thoughts or ideas

Social Symptoms:
Frequent complaints of illness to avoid attending school
Sudden decrease in academic performance (declining grades or loss of interest)
Fear of going to school, riding the bus, walking to school, or taking part in organized activities with other peers
Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social situations

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. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Procedures and Strategies to teach our anti-bullying message:

Anti-bullying fits into our code and is continuously reinforced within our sessions. We have a positive, happy, stress-free environment with a relational and trauma informed approach, where we see and treat everybody as equals and constantly emphasize this attitude of acceptance throughout our sessions through modelling and through our choice of words and behaviour.

All staff, volunteers and students are aware of how to spot signs of bullying and how to identify bullying. New staff and volunteers and parents/carers are familiarised with our code and behaviour and anti-bullying policy.

As a staff we function as a team with joint responsibility for the learners in our care. We maintain a high adult:child ratio so that we can be watchful and vigilant whilst the children play and learn. We openly discuss incidents and act collectively and consistently.

We recognise that affirmation of positive behaviour will encourage that child to repeat the behaviour as well as giving other children something to aim for. All participants are actively encouraged to notice and comment on examples of positive behaviour which is praised at the time of occurrence and/or at circle times.

Children need to learn how to negotiate, collaborate and how to get on with a wide range of people. We acknowledge this and use our knowledge of the individual children and observation of situations to determine if and when we deem it necessary to intervene.

In shared circle times we discuss as a group the importance of anti-bullying.

We share with them our message that we do not tolerate bullying of any kind.

We share with the group the definition of bullying including **STOP Several Times On Purpose**.

We ensure that the children know that they can come to us if they are feeling a situation is getting out of their control, if they need support with their negotiations within their play and if they feel themselves to be victims of bullying or witness bullying of any form.

On occasions such as Anti-bullying month (October) or at other appropriate times we will do some specific work (including drama, mindfulness, crafting, posters, social media) on anti-bullying to add emphasis to our continuous coverage.

Handling Bullying.

We teach the children techniques taken from **KidPower: Face Bullying with Confidence** to give them some skills and techniques for handling bullying. (see Appendix) https://www.kidpower.org/library/article/prevent-bullying/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI6rj9-9Lw7QIVGoBQBh1BXwXJEAAYAiAAEgL5UfD_BwE

Any participant - adult or child – are actively encouraged to speak out if they witness or experience bullying. We emphasise the fact that this will not been seen as "telling tales".

If we get a report from a parent regarding bullying we will take it very seriously and investigate it fully.

Any incidences of suspected bullying are reported as soon as possible to Claire Hughes who organise an investigation.

All participants involved will be questioned to determine what has occurred, with everyone involved being given an opportunity to put across their side of the incident. We recognise that it may take some time for some participants to calm down from a heightened incident so the situation may take some time to resolve, in which case we will reassure all participants that we are dealing with the situation and taking it seriously.

If unresolved, or deemed necessary, parents will be informed either at the end of a session or by telephone and if necessary a meeting will be held with the aim of reconciliation where possible.

Support will be given to the person who was the victim of bullying to ensure there is no long term damage or trauma.

Support will be given to the person committing the bullying to ascertain the reasons behind their behaviour and to help them change the behaviour.

We strongly believe that a person is not a" bully" and that bullying behaviour can be changed with the right support.

If the bullying behaviour does persist despite our efforts and support, at a very last resort, we will ask the person to cease attending our sessions.

Recording and Reporting Incidents

All incidents will be recorded in our log book, including the date and the names of the perpetrators and victims, the nature of the incident, and action taken in response.

Performance indicators for preventing and dealing with bullying incidents

In reviewing the effectiveness of this policy staff will consider:

- the feelings of victims (and their parents) on the satisfaction of the support received and the resolution of incidents
- the continued good progress and high self esteem of those who have been offended
- the continued good progress and high self esteem of those who have caused offence
- whether the action taken successfully prevented repeat incidents
- the willingness of participants (and parents) to draw their concerns to the attention of staff
- the consistency of response and confidence of all staff in following the policy
- underlying causes for any rise in numbers of incidents, whether these were preventable and if further action or change in policy and practice is now necessary.

Where review indicates that change is needed, policy and practice will be amended as part of the action plan.