

# Anti-Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents Policy



<b>Policy Tracker – Responsibility for monitoring this policy:</b>				
Mrs Sarah Jane Sprouting (Reviewed every 2 years or in response to changes in legislation)				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Reviewed By:</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Date Approved by the Governing Board</b>	<b>Date Shared with Staff</b>
Sept 2019	Sarah Jane Sprouting	Assistant Headteacher / SENCO	Nov 2019	Sept 2019
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## **Introduction**

Young people tell us that bullying is a significant concern to them, but accurate data on bullying and prejudice related incidents in schools is hard to find. National and regional findings have suggested that:

- 54% of young people say they have been bullied
- 80% of young people with SEND are bullied at some point
- 65% of lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual young people experience homophobic bullying

Everyone succeeds more in an environment where they feel respected and safe.

This policy aims to:

- define bullying and prejudice related incidents
- make sure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying and prejudice related incidents.
- describe what we can do to support students, challenge unacceptable behaviour, build a culture of respect and establish effective reporting and monitoring systems.

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

Summerhill School is keen to differentiate between conflict, mutual harassment and bullying. In schools there are often disputes and arguments between young people who resort to verbal abuse and sometimes fight to resolve differences of opinion. Where mutual harassment is established, both parties must accept responsibility for their actions. However, **bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group whether physically or emotionally.** Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves.

In dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour, consideration will be given to the following:

- Bullies often are or have been victims themselves or have observed bullying behaviour from others
- Bullying incidents are often aggravated by the involvement of a wider group

Staff who deal with bullying incidents will recognise that these issues are likely to have to be addressed if a real solution is to be achieved.

Summerhill School is committed to:

- Taking consistent action on all incidents of bullying behaviour
- Heightening the awareness of all students, parents and staff about what is regarded as bullying behaviour
- Creating an atmosphere in which all students, parents and staff feel able to report incidents of bullying with confidence
- Making clear to all students, parents and staff the procedures employed in the school for dealing with bullying incidents
- Identifying factors within the school community which might allow incidents of bullying to take place and endeavouring to eradicate them
- Where necessary involving the parents of all the students involved in bullying incidents
- Maintaining a record of all reported incidents of alleged bullying, conflict and mutual harassment
- Evaluating the success of measures employed to deal with bullying

## **Legal Duties and Expectations**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour could be a criminal offence; for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination and harassment. The Act also places duties on schools to be pro-active about addressing inequalities. The Public Sector General Duty (Section 149) states: a public authority must give due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct
- Advance equality of opportunity - remove or minimise disadvantage, meet people's needs, take account of disabilities and encourage participation in public life
- Foster good relations between people – tackle prejudice and promote understanding

These duties apply to eight protected characteristics:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment (gender identity)
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion and belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation

The legal duties to eliminate harassment and foster good relations make it clear that schools must address bullying and prejudice related incidents based on a protected characteristic, such as racism or homophobic bullying. The expectation in law is not only for schools and establishments to respond when an incident occurs but to also take steps to try and prevent those incidents from occurring or escalating.

## **Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying may or may not be because of a protected characteristic.

Prejudice related incidents are one-off incidents relating to a protected characteristic, which may or may not be directed at an individual. They may or may not be carried out with the intention to harm or cause offence.

Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents can take many forms including:

- Verbal – Name calling and ridicule such as racist or homophobic remarks.
- Visual – Graffiti, gestures, wearing racist insignia or showing pictures.
- Incitement – Spreading rumours or encouraging others to participate.
- Cyber – Using technology such as text messages, Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram or email.
- Segregation – Excluding, isolating, ignoring or avoiding an individual from the activities or social acceptance of their peer group.
- Physical – Hitting, pushing, unwanted touching, kicking or threatening with a weapon.
- Property – Theft or damage to personal property.

All of these have an emotional impact on an individual and the effects of verbal incidents should not be underestimated. The old English proverb “sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me” is far from the truth for young people, and can be particularly false for those who are already conscious of being in a minority.

## **Why do Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents Occur?**

Bullying and Prejudice related incidents may arise because an individual is seen to be different. Children may be seen as different because of their:

- Ethnicity, origin, skin colour, nationality or culture including Travellers and Gypsies (racism)
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation (homophobia)
- Sex or gender identity
- Disability or Special Educational Need

It may be they are perceived to have a particular characteristic or they are associated with someone with that characteristic.

Research indicates that there are groups of young people who are bullied disproportionately. These include disabled students and those who have Special Educational Needs, and children who are, or are perceived to be, homosexual (lesbian or gay). Some children are singled out because they are overweight,

affluent, deprived, in care or young carers, or for a variety of other reasons. Sometimes the aggressor cannot explain the reasons; they just see their target as different. The motivation may be because of:

- Irrational fear
- Ignorance
- Wanting to achieve a sense of power
- Envy
- Conformity

Behaviours are often learnt; understanding the motivation is important because it may reveal concerns for the safety of the aggressor or other needs they have.

Prejudice related incidents can include verbal assaults, offensive jokes or language, mockery and ridicule. They may be based on social stereotypes and may or may not be directed at individuals.

Young people may use words without an understanding of their meaning but the impact on the target can still be harmful. A young person may not understand the meaning of a word and use it as a form of insult because they have heard it being used in that way by others, but another young person of equivalent age may be very familiar with the meaning because of their background.

Stereotypes are powerful and pervade our society. Not all stereotypes cause harm but many reinforce prejudices that can result in attitudes and behaviours that lead to bullying and other forms of physical or psychological harm.

Insults can surface fleetingly in lessons or during social time: comments such as "you are just a girl" addressed to either gender, "that's gay" or "you mong". Such comments can be seen as part of growing up, and may seem unremarkable or irrelevant, but if left untackled they contribute to an unacceptable culture in our school in which bullying is more likely to occur. This needs to be challenged and prevented as far as possible by creating a culture of respect, tolerance and empathy.

In a national study carried out by Ofsted, many pupils said that they were aware that such language was unacceptable but it was seen as 'banter'. Staff who also viewed it as banter did not challenge it, or feel they have the confidence or skills to challenge it.

Young people who overhear such comments may feel unsettled, or may learn to repress a feeling they have of being different, to keep hidden if they wish to remain safe; especially if they know the comments go unchallenged. It may result in self-loathing; others hate them because they are different and so they hate themselves because of their difference. This sense of self-loathing can be extremely harmful, leading to depression and suicide.

## Types of Prejudice Related Incidents

<p><b>Racism</b></p>	<p>Racism arises where a person is targeted because of their skin colour, ethnicity, culture, national origin or nationality. Travellers and Gypsies are included in the definition of race. Racism can arise without an intended target or victim, e.g. making offensive remarks about a particular group, even if the particular group are unaware. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (1999) defines a racist incident as <b>“any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person”</b>. The effect of racism differs with each individual. The impact on their lives is dependent on many factors including the level of security and support they have. Racism can affect confidence and self-esteem including the sense of belonging, acceptance and the need to feel loved and wanted. These are human needs which, if not met, can leave a person with a sense of loneliness and detachment. Without feelings of pride, love and belonging, minority ethnic children will suffer emotionally, which will impact upon their lives in numerous ways, including educational attainment and behaviour within the classroom.</p>
<p><b>Religion and Belief</b></p>	<p>Religion and belief includes major faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism as well as a lack of belief. Sometimes religious based incidents are reported as racist; for example incidents directed at Muslims or Sikhs of Asian origin, because the child is perceived as different not only by their religious clothing but also their skin colour or family heritage. As with racism, religious based bullying and incidents can have similar impacts on a victim's sense of identity and belonging.</p>
<p><b>Homophobia</b></p>	<p>Homophobia is motivated by a prejudice towards people whose sexual orientation is, or perceived to be, lesbian, gay or bisexual. In 2017, Stonewall researched the experiences of gay young people in Britain and found nearly half of LGB pupils (45%) are bullied for being LGB in Britain's schools. Even if LGB pupils are not directly experiencing bullying, we need to ensure that Summerhill is not a place where homophobic language and comments are used. Nationally almost half of LGB pupils hear homophobic slurs 'frequently' or 'often' at school. Less than a quarter (23%) of young LGB people have been told that homophobic bullying is wrong in their schools. In schools that have said homophobic bullying is wrong, LGB young people are 60% less likely to have been bullied.</p>
<p><b>Gender Identity</b></p>	<p>Students can experience bullying when they identify as transgender because of Gender Dysphoria (where their biological sex does not match the gender they identify as ) or they do not conform to the gender role that society prescribes to them for whatever reasons. Some young people are born Intersex – with ambiguous or dual sex. Although many schools think that they have no transgender (or intersex) students to support, that is statistically unlikely. In a school the size of Summerhill there are likely to be 10 students (1%) who will experience transgenderism throughout their lives. There are likely to be others who have a transgender parent or close relative. A supportive environment which allows for early diagnosis and ability to transition is vital for the mental and physical wellbeing of individuals with Gender Dysphoria.</p>

<p><b>Sexism and Sexual Bullying</b></p>	<p>Sexism and sexual bullying affects both boys and girls. Boys may be targets as well as girls, and both sexes may be targets of others who share the same sex. Sexism and sexual bullying may be characterised by name-calling, comments and overt looks about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. It therefore goes beyond normal and acceptable 'fancying' or attraction to a level that makes an individual feel harassed (intimidated, offended or degraded). In addition, unwelcome touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used.</p> <p>Sexism and sexual bullying may progress to incidents of domestic/partner violence and abuse, sexual exploitation and assault, including rape.</p> <p>Girls and boys are affected by media-promoted gender stereotypes, many harmful to the understanding of intrapersonal behaviours and personal development, restricting their freedom to be who they want to be. Girls and boys who do not, or cannot measure up to stereotypes may be bullied; eg boys may be under intense pressure to conform to masculine 'alpha male' traits or fear being bullied for being "sissy" or "gay". It is important that both male and female staff at Summerhill act as good role models; for example male staff responding to girls' complaints sensitively.</p>
<p><b>Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</b></p>	<p>There is a growing amount of research literature on bullying among children with disabilities and Special Educational Needs. This research indicates that these children may be at particular risk of being bullied by their peers. As with all other forms of bullying and prejudice, this can have a detrimental effect on self-esteem and lead to other problems.</p>



## **What We Can Do About Bullying and Prejudice Related Incidents?**

A successfully inclusive culture with learning environments that value diversity and fosters respect and good relationships can reduce the level of bullying and prejudice related incidents, and if they do occur (because they can, even in schools and establishments operating good practice), can settle the situation more readily. In order to successfully address bullying and prejudice incidents Summerhill must have a strong ethos of respect and good behaviour amongst all students, staff, governors and visitors.

The key steps for Summerhill will be:

- Promote
- Challenge
- Support
- Report

### **Promote**

The aim for Summerhill is to promote awareness of issues in response to current cultural developments to ensure expectations are met. Global Learning is a focussed lesson to identify PSHE and issues on bullying, homophobia, prejudice and the range of problems surrounding bullying in all of its forms. Regular speakers and project-focussed topics within Global Learning ensure all aspects are covered throughout Summerhill.

Our philosophy is simple, "**Success through Caring**".

**Success** is naturally sometimes measured through exam results but success for Summerhill is also about receiving children and supporting them to develop as individuals to leave us as fully-rounded young adults with skills and experiences that will help them to succeed in every area of their future lives.

**Caring** can be soft and gentle, when members of our community need support. Caring can also be about being "bothered". We believe that real "Success through Caring" comes as a result of focusing on 4 key attributes with all members of our community:

- Courage** – doing what is right; being truthful; trying new experiences
- Ambition** – having high aspirations and expectations of oneself and others; testing the boundaries between possible and impossible
- Respect** – being considerate to oneself, others and the environment; working together in teams
- Effort** – investing time and energy to achieve success; demonstrating resilience when success seems a bit more elusive

In addition to the work that takes place in Global Learning, we confirm the rights of individuals throughout the school via clear expectations surrounding bullying and

prejudice related incidents. This is promoted verbally (e.g. in assemblies and lessons), through displays and publications.

## **Challenge**

To succeed we need to:

- Challenge unacceptable behaviour, including standards of acceptable behaviour and a culture of trust and respect.
- Support the victim and sometimes the aggressor
- Report what has happened and monitor those reports.

The aim for Summerhill is not just to react appropriately to incidents as they happen, but to be proactive and try to make sure that more incidents don't happen in the future. Our goal is to make Summerhill a place for learning where prejudice and bullying of any kind will be challenged.

### **How to Challenge**

Challenging expressions of prejudice can require a degree of skill and knowledge, particularly if the statements come from someone with deeply entrenched views or values. Here are some useful responses that can be used to help people explore their prejudices:

- You know we don't accept that in this school. Why did you say that?
- What did you say?
- Do you know what that means?
- Do you know that .... people find that hurtful because ...?
- Why did you say/do that?
- How do you know that?
- What evidence do you have that ..... people are like that?
- What are you afraid of? Is that really going to happen?
- Is that really evidence? I think that is a negative social stereotype. Do you know what a stereotype is?
- Before you judge someone, you should get to know them.
- Why do you think that might be wrong/hurtful?
- How would you feel if the same was said of .... ?
- I suggest you find out more about .... Before making judgements, come to me at .... And I will give you some resources.
- You can hold those views if you want, but that does not give you the right to express them openly, because they are hurtful. (Use only if the person will not change their belief)

## **Support**

An anti-bullying ambassador's programme is being implemented to support students and staff in the process of challenging bullying behaviour. Students are identified that have the capability, personality and qualities to be ambassadors to mentor students with surrounding issues. As part of the Diana Award the students undergo relevant training to ensure they have the capacity to handle the mentoring of their peers in the appropriate way. Within the training, students will learn how and when to refer recurring issues to an adult.

## **Report**

The aim of the reporting procedure is to ensure that students are supported and issues are investigated promptly.

- Events will be logged using a Summerhill Reporting Form to ensure recurring problems are linked and acted upon.
- Once an issue has been investigated a course of action will be planned for both the victim and the aggressor to restore the correct behaviour or self-confidence.
- If necessary, a member of staff from the House Office will ensure the aggressors have some restorative reflection time and partake in anti-bullying work.
- If there is a recurring pattern, or if the incident is deemed to be substantial bullying, then it may result in internal or external exclusion. As a school we do not tolerate bullying or prejudice related in any capacity and an extensive record of any form of bullying may result in permanent exclusion.
- Incidents of bullying or prejudice related incidents will be added to the school log and incidents of racism will be recorded and sent to Dudley LA.

