



HIPPINGS METHODIST PRIMARY SCHOOL



Anti Bullying Policy

'As a family we do our best with God in our hearts'
I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me: Philippians 4 verse 13

Our loving school endeavours to provide the best possible all-round education in a Christian setting. We will be a family that does our best with God in our hearts understanding that we are all His children. We aim for all within our school to develop spiritually, morally, academically and culturally.

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Hippings Methodist Primary School does not tolerate bullying in any form. Bullying is an issue that affects all schools, but is not something that any pupil should have to tolerate.

What is Bullying?

There are many definitions, but the following seems meaningful to us. We believe Bullying usually involves:-

- a conscious desire to hurt, threaten, frighten, dominate or humiliate
- a range of types of action - physical, verbal, emotional, social
- a repeated, premeditated action over a period time
- a victim who is weaker than the bully or bullies and finds it difficult to resist
- a painful and distressing outcome for the victim

Bullying can be

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| • Physical threats | Pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, and any other forms of violence or threats |
| • Verbal | Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing |
| • Emotional | Excluding, tormenting, ridicule, humiliation |
| • Racist | Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures |
| • Sexual | Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments |
| • Cyber | over the internet, through social media, mobile phones and gaming consoles |

Bullying can result in

- Unhappiness, fear and depression
- Low self esteem
- Shyness
- Poor academic achievement
- Isolation
- Threatened or attempted suicide

School Statement on Bullying

The school does not permit any behaviour which is intimidating, or causes hurt or upset to others but, in so far as bullying presents a more difficult and specific problem, it is useful to set out the following simplified statement of intent which is contained in the school brochure.

The school will not tolerate, and will take action against, behaviour which is considered to be bullying. We define bullying as conscious and repeated action which hurts, threatens, frightens or humiliates others by physical, verbal or emotional means. We need to be especially aware of Cyber –bullying. Children and parents are encouraged to support the school in the prevention of bullying and courses of action to deal with specific incidents.

The school will

- encourage general good behaviour and respect for others through its care and guidance policies
- make children and parents aware of what constitutes bullying and what to do about it
- take steps to monitor the level of bullying in the school and revise school policy as required
- investigate specific incidents and work with parents and children to take appropriate action in school and outside if appropriate.
- provide help and support to those affected by bullying
- provide training for staff to raise awareness and develop expertise in dealing with bullying
- remove factors in the environment and organisation of the school which may encourage bullying

Possible Signs Of Bullying

A child's behaviour may indicate that he or she is being bullied. If a child shows some of the following signs, bullying may be responsible and you might ask if someone is bullying or threatening them.

Children may:

- Be frightened of walking to or from school
- Change their usual route
- Not want to go on the school bus
- Beg parents to take them to school
- Be unwilling to go to school
- Feel ill in the mornings
- Begin truanting
- Begin doing poorly in their school work
- Come home with clothes or books damaged
- Come home starving (bully has taken dinner money or lunch)
- Become withdrawn, start stammering, lack confidence
- Become distressed and anxious
- Stop eating normally
- Attempt or threaten suicide
- Cry themselves to sleep; have nightmares
- Have their possessions 'go missing'
- Ask for money or begin stealing money
- Continually 'lose' their pocket money
- Refuse to say what's wrong
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches or cuts
- Begin to bully other children or siblings
- Become aggressive and unreasonable
- Give improbable excuses to explain any of the above

Action the School Can Take

- a) Be watchful for signs of bullying, especially in areas of the school that have restricted visibility to staff or are sometimes lightly supervised - toilets, cloakrooms, doorways and hidden areas. Become suspicious when groups or individuals show unexplained defensive behaviour.
- b) Encourage open and trusting relationships with children so that they are not afraid to speak about their problems. Be available to listen and talk.
- c) Make sure that children know what bullying is and what they can do about it. Also make sure that the children know what is **not** bullying and take steps to minimise false alarms and unjustified complaints. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between genuine complaints and what is sometimes termed 'tale telling', especially among younger children. Telling 'tales' may be a manipulative act or even itself a means of bullying and it is not easy in busy situations to react correctly every time. It is wise to consider the personality of the child making the complaint, look for any pattern of events and delay action until things are calm. The investigation of bullying incidents takes time and should be done carefully for the benefit of all involved. Therefore, it is important that normal behaviour is distinguished by low levels of conflict and accusation.
- d) Take the problem seriously and investigate the incident by interviewing all parties and witnesses separately. Involve other staff and parents if necessary. However, be aware of the danger of coming to a quick conclusion for the incident may not be what it seems. for example it might be
 - the last in a series of incidents which may or may not be bullying. Children sometimes get involved in a circle of escalation and retaliation and may not know how to calm down and defuse a series of events that has been active for some time.
 - a conflict between children of equal 'strength' - physical or personal - which is not always to be considered bullying
 - a temporary disagreement or 'fall out' between friends
 - an attempt by a bullied victim to fight back.
 - the result of a rough game getting out of control

- a 'provocative' victim (see guidance sources)

None of these situations should be ignored and each needs its own solution. It is good to refer back to the definition of bullying to see how many elements are present but be aware that there is wide variety of bullies and bullying situations.

- d) If, after investigation and with reference to the school's definition and guidelines, staff feel that the incident constitutes bullying then an appropriate course of action should be taken. Action should be consistent with those detailed in the school's Behaviour Policy. It is important to consider the longer term needs of both victim and the bully and the DCFS and Kidscape materials have detailed suggestions for this. The victim and their parents need to see some action in the short term, but this must be fair, considered and only instituted when the facts have been established. It is also important that the school community sees that the incident has been dealt with justly and effectively

Short term measures involve

- an apology from bully/ies to victim
- sanctions against bully/ies
- insist on return of items "borrowed" or stolen
- withdrawal of bullies from high-risk areas (e.g. with parental consent they arrive and go home under supervision or at different times from the other children)

Longer term measures include

- holding lessons / class discussions / assemblies about bullying
- providing a safe haven during school hours
- providing support and counselling
- helping the bully to change his/her behaviour
- holding a follow-up meeting with the victim's family to report progress
- informing all members of staff about incident and action taken
- keeping a written record of incidents interviews and action taken