

NEW FOREST SCHOOL

New Forest School Anti-Bullying Policy

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Introduction

New Forest School is acutely aware of the need to ensure that all students are not subjected to bullying. It is highly likely that many of them will have experienced past abuse, bullying and trauma both in their school and home lives and it is imperative that these experiences are not repeated.

New Forest School's Bullying Policy has been created utilising the Guidance Safe to Learn Publication 2007 and Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2011.

Statistics inform us that approximately 70% of children and young people are subjected to bullying Nationwide. Young people have the right to feel safe and cared for without fear of being bullied by their peers and adults. New Forest School takes a very serious view of bullying and works in close partnership with parents and carers to achieve a 'zero tolerance' attitude towards it.

1. Policy Rationale & Scope

The purpose of this policy is:

- To raise the awareness of all staff to the harmful potential of bullying behaviour.
- To keep children safe from bullying.
- To provide information and guidance to staff so consistent responses to undesirable behaviours can be established.

2. Key Objectives of the Anti-Bullying Policy

- Inform staff of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Outline expected responses to perpetrators.
- Detail how incidents must be recorded and who to inform.
- How to ensure the 'victim' can feel safe.

3. Definitions

Bullying is defined as 'deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves' as there is often a power imbalance. The impact on the victim is damaging and can have emotionally devastating effects on their mental health, behaviours, self-esteem and general well-being. From an education aspect, this can also lead to reduced concentration and significant obstacle to learning.

Bullying of others can take many forms and staff are reminded to be extra vigilant regarding access to mobile devices or internet use as well as the day to day interactions they have with others.

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. These incidents should be addressed using New Forest Schools, Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

No students are permitted to have mobile phones at school, unless sanctioned by a teacher for use as part of a learning experience.

The four main types of bullying are:

- Physical bullying (which includes hitting, kicking, unwanted physical contact and theft of their possessions).
- Emotional bullying including verbal (name calling, racist comments, threats or intimidation, enticing others to harass, extortion or putting undue pressure on them etc.)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, or excluding someone from their groups).
- Cyber bullying electronic communication devices such as phones, email, social networking sites, web based games.

4. Reducing Risk of Bullying

Bullying can only be prevented by staff and students working together to prevent its occurrence. There has to be established open lines of communication with staff to allow students to have the courage to tell others when they believe they are being bullied. Supportive relationships with students need to be facilitated by staff to enable them to feel safe in the knowledge that they will be taken seriously and that action will occur to stop any further incidents.

- Staff must always be alert to any signs of suspected bullying whether covert or overt. They are instructed to deal quickly and sensitively with any claims of bullying or suspected bullying from the student in school.
- A clear account of the incident and how it was dealt with will need to be recorded by staff and information passed on to the student's tutor.
- A copy will be passed to their parent, case manager, carer, social worker and Headteacher.

5. Keeping The Victim Safe

- Staff will need to ensure that adequate support and supervision is provided to safeguard the student from further bullying.
- The student will need to be assisted to look at identifying new strategies which they can implement to maintain their own safety and explore ways that further incidents can be prevented or eliminated. They will need to be reassured throughout the process.
- Staff will need to identify the level of impact on the student, by clarifying how it has affected them, the length of time they have endured it etc.
- Conducting a supported repair and rebuild session with the bully may also be beneficial to the student if appropriate and should be considered.

6. Dealing With The Bully

- Staff must inform the bully to cease their actions immediately. The message that bullying in any form is not acceptable needs to be given promptly.
- It will be appropriate to interview the perpetrator(s) to discuss what happened, identify how they came to be involved, the degree of planning and provocation and identifying strategies for future prevention of the bullying behaviours.
- Sanctions may need to be put in place should the negative behaviours continue as well as undertaking victim awareness work.
- It is often the case that the bullying has previously been the victim of bullying themselves. Their attention to how bullying made them feel at the time can be useful in allowing them to gain empathy for their victim. However if this is not the case, it may be simply that the bully is jealous, unhappy themselves or their 'reward' or gain in demonstrating their power over others, venting anger or gaining excitement at the fear they have induced in others.
- Identifying the motivation for the bullying behaviour is important in finding an effective strategy for prevention.
- It may be useful to conduct a repair and rebuild session between the victim and the perpetrator, if the impact on the victim of doing so is appropriately risk assessed. Support and guidance will always be gained from the Therapy Team.
- Ensure adequate support and supervision is provided to reduce or eliminate further bullying behaviours.

Students are encouraged to talk to staff if they feel under pressure from others, including staff members. If they feel unable to do this, they can seek support from the independent person, advocate, social worker, or other outside agencies, then the Whistle Blowing Policy or Grievance Procedure should be utilised.

7. Linked Documents

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
Internet Policy
Whistle Blowing Policy
Behaviour Policy