

Procedure for	Countering Bullying		
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Associated Regulation/Standards	NMS Children's Homes	Number	Standard 3
Unit	Progress School	Signature (Author)	Lisa Sharrock
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Impact of autism Statement

The students at Progress School have a diagnosis of autism and this affects the way they experience the world around them. The majority of students also have a severe learning disability and all students display challenging behaviours. This impacts significantly on the students' understanding of others' thoughts, feelings and intentions and as such the can increase the risk of bullying and being bullied. The staffing ratios at Progress School are very high and, as a result, incidents of bullying in the school environment are highly unlikely.

1.Philosophy

Every child is unique – in characteristics, interests, abilities and needs; and every child has the ability to enjoy his or her rights without discrimination of any kind. (Thomas Hammarbert, 1997)

Progress School believes that everyone has the right to feel safe and happy whilst at school, and it is the responsibility of the school, working in collaboration with families, to strive to ensure that this happens.

In writing this policy, Progress School has taken into account the Department for Children, Schools and Families documents:

- Bullying – don't suffer in silence (DfES, September 2002)
- Bullying involving Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities: Safe to Learn – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in Schools (DCSF September 2008)
- Safe from Bullying in Children's Homes – (DCSF Nov. 2009)
- Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment (DfES, October 2012)
- Preventing & Tackling Bullying (DfES, February 2013)

NB: as a school we acknowledge a document issued by the Department for Education, Preventing and Tackling Bullying. It suggests that it will replace the Safe to learn guidelines. It is currently attached to the back of this procedure

Safe to Learn defines bullying as:

Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

- Bullying can involve verbal taunts, name-calling, physical injury, damage to property, rumour spreading, shunning or ridicule.
- It can be manipulative, making the disabled pupil do something they should not, or deliberately engineering their discomfort or isolation.
- It can be done through mobile phones, websites and email (cyber bullying)."

and adds:

"Some children with SEN and disabilities may not recognise that they are being bullied or that their own behaviour may be seen by someone else as bullying".

2. Principles

At Progress School, we recognise that some of our pupils may:

- find it more difficult to resist bullies;
- be more isolated, not have many friends;
- not understand that what is happening is bullying;
- have difficulties telling people about bullying.

DCSF Safe to Learn (September 2008)

Our whole-school policy provides short and long-term strategies, which are supported by the school organisation and curriculum. Advice and guidance is provided for all pupils, parents and school staff. Particular help will be offered to everyone involved in a situation of bullying and to the pupil or pupils' parents.

The Senior leadership team is responsible for devising whole-school strategies to combat bullying. Despite all our efforts to ensure that bullying is infrequent in our school, it must be assumed that it could take place and these measures are in place to prevent and reduce its possible occurrence.

3. Practice

"Learners with a range of needs including learning disability, sensory impairment and Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) will require specific communication tools and staff will need to check their understanding. Many children with autism, for example, are assumed to understand much more than they do".

DCSF Safe to Learn (September 2008)

The list below highlights what to consider to make sure all pupils feel confident they can report bullying and be heard.

- Is there a quiet place in school to go to and talk?
- Does the staff member understand the child's communication needs?
- Can the child understand the staff member?
- Are their personal communication tools available to them?
- Have they had time to calm down and fully tell what they want to?
- Does the child need a supporter?
- Are staff visible and available to all pupils out of the classroom?

Progress School follows the DCSF guidance which states that prevention is equally as important as the way in which you respond to incidences of bullying and we are committed to a whole school approach to:

- Listen carefully, take bullying seriously and deal with it quickly by implementing agreed consistent responses.
- Create a culture and environment within Progress School in which bullying is universally regarded as unacceptable.
- Ensure a framework exists for staff and pupils, which will support and provide them with an effective and workable approach to dealing with issues of bullying.

- Create a positive, caring ethos in the school in which pupils are accepted as valued individuals regardless of age, gender, status and ability.
- To demonstrate a respect for others by seeking to influence them from a basis of good personal relationships and the use of personal skills rather than by the use of power and use of threats of punishment.

The school approach promotes an ethos of respect for peers; it actively fosters empathy between the pupils and, through the emphasis on the group dynamic, positive relationships are forged between the pupils.

All staff create a caring, co-operative ethos through both personal and social education, and using cross-curricular themes. Social behaviour is taught by drawing on incidents as they occur in the daily life of the school; social skills are taught in a conscious and systematic way as part of the proactive support offered to develop social skills in our students with autism.

A procedure is laid down which is followed should bullying occur, and this procedure has been made explicit to all staff, and pupils if appropriate. Each case will be followed up to ensure that the victim is given as much support as possible and to prevent a reoccurrence of the behaviour from the perpetrator. Parents of both will be informed of the action being taken and the reasons given by the senior leadership team.

4. Procedures

"A 'one size fits all approach' is unhelpful when supporting children with a range of SEN and disabilities who experience bullying". (DCSF Safe to Learn September 2008).

Our approach towards preventing and responding to bullying in our school begins by creating an ethos that does not tolerate the oppression of one person by another and values the individual.

The following points are an important part of a whole-school policy, which involves all pupils and staff in its anti-bullying campaign. These points can form the basis of class or tutorial group discussions if appropriate.

- The responsibility for the prevention of bullying rests with **everyone**

Guidelines for all staff:

- Watch for early signs of distress in pupils: - deterioration of work, spurious illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, reluctance to attend school or activities. Whilst this behaviour may be symptomatic of other problems, it may be early signs of bullying.
- Observe social relationships in school, playground, dining room, house and other situations.
- Listen carefully and record all incidents which you think are symptomatic of negative relationships.
- When someone is being bullied or is in distress, take action. Watching and doing nothing can imply support for the bullying.
- Do not tolerate bullies in the same social group. Use the group dynamic to provide role models and to encourage appropriate social relationships and behaviour.

- Give positive attention to those who do not bully others. Bullies are more likely to stop if they do not receive any attention or perceived 'reward' for their actions.
- Use the general Progress School and individual positive strategies for rewarding non-violent ie, pro-social behaviour.
- Care must be taken to provide good supervision in all situations – in class, in the playground, at the homes and in all social situations where bullying can occur.
- A book is kept which records not only a bullying incident, but the follow up and how staff dealt with it.
- Reinforce that one must not bully the bully. This gives credibility to the behaviour.
- Ensure all pupils have an assigned person to whom they may talk in confidence – this may be their teacher or keyworker. Pupils need to know that something will be done, and that the matter will be handled discreetly and with sensitivity.
- All non-education staff are involved in the discussion and implementation of the anti-bullying programme including senior staff, medical staff, therapy team and domestic staff.

Senior Staff

- Examine the school's physical environment and general organisation. While ensuring the right for independence and dignity of the pupils, make sure that the playground, corridors, toilets and other hidden corners are appropriately monitored by staff and ensure appropriate supervision of pupils throughout the school and residential day.

5. Reporting

Pupils

- Pupils who are able to should talk to their class teacher or any member of staff who they feel comfortable to approach.
- Pupils with speech difficulty should be offered alternative means of communicating
- Pupils who are non-verbal and with learning disability are particularly vulnerable as they may not realise they are being bullied.

Staff

- Deal with the problem immediately. Speed is essential in dealing with incidences of bullying.
- Report any incident of bullying at once to a senior leader.

6. Recording

If appropriate for the specific pupils involved, the following steps are followed in recording incidents of bullying. This also conveys to all concerned how seriously the school regards bullying behaviour.

- The bullied pupil records at once the events in writing, or by drawing or by the selection of pictures or symbols, depending on the pupil's most effective method of communication.

- The pupils involved are encouraged to talk through the incident separately with their teacher/teaching assistant, if appropriate.
- The teacher and/or a senior staff member should record their discussions with both parties.
- The parents/carers of the pupils involved are sent or given copies of all reports, and the reports are placed in the respective pupils' confidential files for a specified period of time – currently agreed to be for 12 months.
- The parents/carers of the pupils are asked to respond to the reports in writing, within 5 working days.
- The Principal will interview all pupils concerned and give warnings to each pupil as appropriate. This is reinforced by a letter to the pupils' parents telling them what has happened, but not identifying the target.

7. Evaluation

Evaluation of this policy will be conducted on an annual basis, by examination of the bullying records held within the school, in order to determine its effectiveness in dealing with any incidents of bullying.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies:

- Positive Behaviour Support
- Equal Opportunities
- Special Educational Needs
- Comments and Complaints Procedure for Pupils
- Principles of Care