



1. INTRODUCTION

Eagle House School (Mitcham) is an independent day school, which provides an appropriate education for primary-aged pupils who hold a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education, Health & Care plan for an autism spectrum disorder and associated social and communication difficulties. This will include children and young people with moderate or severe learning difficulties.

This policy sets out Eagle House School's procedures for dealing with bullying and pays regard to *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (DfE 2014). *Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff* (DfE 2014); *Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools* (DfE 2014); *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (DfE 2016).

Further guidance can also be found on the anti-bullying alliance website: <http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/resources/safe-to-learn/> This policy should also be read in conjunction with the Eagle House School (Mitcham) Behaviour Policy.

The school is committed to providing a safe environment for pupils and is compliant with national and local guidance and compatible with the school's Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children Policy and Procedures.

The nature of their disability means that children and young people with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) may not have sufficient understanding or awareness that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying. Similarly, children and young people with ASDs who are the recipients of such behaviours may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to such behaviours or to tell adults. This means that all staff at Eagle House School (Mitcham) have a duty to not only be aware of such behaviours and of any pupil involved, but also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours.

Eagle House School (Mitcham) has a set of clear, inclusive values that are understood and lived by all members of the school community:

- the Behaviour Policy is explicit about the way in which pupils should treat each other and the messages are consistently reiterated and reinforced
- staff consistently model positive behaviour in their interactions with each other, with parents and carers, and with pupils
- pupils and staff understand the importance of using inclusive and non-derogatory language
- pupils are helped to understand the difference between banter and interactions that can threaten or hurt
- all staff receive appropriate and regularly updated training to give them the knowledge, skills and confidence to teach pupils about diversity and the effects of bullying
- staff consistently and firmly challenge inappropriate interactions, including prejudice-based and aggressive language

Eagle House School (Mitcham) can draw upon skilled and knowledgeable professionals, including psychologists and behaviour support specialists, to help devise strategies to manage and reduce bullying behaviours and their effects.

We see bullying as part of the continuum of behaviour, which is addressed through our rewards and consequences approach. We take it very seriously and take action in response to individual incidents of bullying and to any patterns or trends that indicate more widespread issues.

2. DEFINING BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

Bullying can be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally*

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

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. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying may include name-calling; racist and sexist behaviour; taunting; mocking; making threats; making people feel 'small'; making hurtful remarks and personal comments; kicking, hitting, pushing etc; taking belongings; dares – making someone do something they do not want to; whispering about others; laughing at a hurt or upset person; preventing someone getting help; ignoring people and leaving them out; mocking differences; damaging work or belongings; hiding belongings; pressurising others to join in inappropriate behaviour; inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours and any other behaviour that makes someone feel unhappy.

Although sometimes occurring between two individuals in isolation, it quite often takes place in the presence of others.

3. BEHAVIOURS OF CHILDREN WITH ASDs AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

The pupils attending Eagle House School (Mitcham) have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder. Some pupils have a limited ability to comprehend that they may be engaging in activities which have the characteristics of bullying behaviour. Other pupils will have the understanding and awareness of what constitutes bullying. Most pupils will have difficulties in understanding the emotions of others and seeing situations from another person's perspective.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities may not be able to articulate their experiences. Due to these difficulties, staff need to be vigilant and alert to any behaviours which may be causing distress to pupils. A pupil who is the victim of bullying may show fear or anxiety

when s/he sees the pupil who targets them. This information must be shared amongst all members of the class team, and also shared with other members of staff as soon as possible, particularly with those on duty during playtimes and lunchtime.

It is important to separate out those behaviours which clearly fulfill the definition of bullying above, from those of peer targeting, which may happen with little understanding of the impact on another child. For example, some children may target another pupil because they get a particular reaction out of them e.g. make a certain noise, or because they can't tolerate something they do. This would not fulfill our definition of bullying, since it is not a deliberate act to hurt another child.

4. RECORDING BULLYING

Staff should record all incidents of bullying on Behaviour Watch. These are analysed systematically by the psychology/behaviour support team to identify any patterns, and the Head of Education and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) are regularly updated. Serious incidents of peer targeting should also be recorded on Behaviour Watch, either under physical aggression towards pupil or discriminatory verbal aggression towards pupil, depending on the nature of the behaviour. Lower level behaviours of peer targeting need to be either recorded on ABC charts if this is new behaviour, or recorded using tally charts, analysed by the psychology/behaviour support team.

The strategies employed to overcome a pupil's potential or actual bullying behaviour are recorded in a Behaviour Support Plan, which is overseen by the psychology/behaviour support team. This will involve consultation with the Head of Education, class teams and Curriculum Access Team as well as the pupil's parents or carers and pupil, if appropriate. The Behaviour Support Plan is shared with the pupil's parents or carers, and must also be copied to the pupil's school file. Strategies need to be carried out over a specific time span and their effectiveness reviewed. It is important that strategies are shared with parents and carers of the pupils involved so that there is a consistency of approach at school and at home.

5. STRATEGIES FOR MANAGING BULLYING BEHAVIOURS IN CHILDREN WITH AN ASD

Staff need to be skilful in observing the outcomes of the behaviours described above. For example, some pupils with ASDs may seek adult attention. For them, to use a behaviour directed against another pupil may be their way of achieving this attention. Pupils with ASDs are likely to be unaware that certain behaviours are socially unacceptable.

Communicating the reason for disapproval of the behaviour can be achieved by saying or signing, for example "Kicking hurts" or "Hitting makes me sad!" For higher functioning pupils, other strategies may include the use of social stories to explain why the behavior is unacceptable and what they could do instead and the use of comic strip conversations to explain how their actions are making other people feel. The school may also decide to assign a one-to-one adult to monitor the pupil who is displaying bullying behavior at playtimes.

A large part of the work with pupils is to teach them about respecting each other, and to celebrate diversity. For more able pupils, we often approach bullying using restorative practices, which are no blame approaches recommended by the DfE. (*The Use and Effectiveness of Anti-Bullying Strategies in Schools*).

It is also important to help the pupil with an ASD who is the target of bullying behaviour, particularly as he or she may have difficulty communicating about their experiences. The pupil should be able to communicate in his or her preferred mode, for example PODD, Makaton signing, augmentative communication, writing or speech, to an adult skilled in this preferred

communication mode. For example, social skills training may help him or her to become more assertive, to show less anxiety, and say or sign, “No!” or “Stop!”. There must also be a designated adult key worker to whom the pupil can go to communicate about anxieties or fears, particularly if these concern bullying behaviours. The pupil needs to understand that he will always be “safe” if he does this. This key worker will normally be a member of the pupil’s class team. The key worker is responsible for sharing information with other members of the class team. The contact details of national helplines such as Childline and the NSPCC are also made available for pupils. We also ask other pupils to be vigilant and report any bullying that they observe, so that this conveys to all that it is a whole community responsibility to keep each other safe from bullying.

6. BULLYING AND THE EAGLE HOUSE SCHOOL (MITCHAM) CURRICULUM

In all work with pupils, staff emphasise the importance of developing social skills, including respect for the feelings of others. Where pupils have difficulties interacting appropriately with their peers or with adults, then staff aim to help them develop an awareness of why particular behaviours are valued socially and what is inappropriate. The Eagle House School (Mitcham) curriculum builds on this through activities which include PSHE and Citizenship, Circle Time, PE, Snack Time, Language and Communication sessions, and group work to develop an ethos of co-operation and respect for everyone.

Staff are important role models for pupils. The behaviour of adults towards each other and towards pupils is a potentially highly effective tool for preventing and for decreasing bullying behaviours in pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

7. TRAINING

All staff receive training in Positive Behaviour Support at induction, as well as Team Teach training. Training about bullying occurs annually as part of the schools safeguarding updates and the school as a whole marks anti-bullying week each year. Further training is provided for class teams as required.

8. POLICY REVIEW

It is the responsibility of the Head of Education supported by the other members of the school’s Senior Leadership Team to monitor this policy. It should be reviewed annually or when new legislation is published. The Head of Education reports on Eagle House School (Mitcham) matters to the Executive Headteacher and in turn to the CEO/Directors.

9. RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTATION

- ❖ Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children
- ❖ Behaviour Policy
- ❖ Equality Policy
- ❖ SEN and Disabilities Policy
- ❖ Appropriate use of ICT Policy

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