

The Serendipity School



every child deserves a chance

*The past is something that's gone forever
The future is something we will work on together*

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



October 2017

distribution
UNRESTRICTED

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Scope

This document describes The Serendipity Centre Ltd's (TSCL) policy on bullying in The Serendipity School. The policy draws on the DfE guidance *Preventing and tackling bullying* [RD1], which should be read alongside this policy, and adds further elements that are specific to the school.

Introduction

At The Serendipity School, it must be recognised that due to the difficulties and traumas experienced by many of our students, that there is perhaps a greater potential for bullying than in other environments. We recognise that many of our students experience difficulties in learning appropriate responses to a wide range of personal, social, emotional and educational pressures, and many adopt feelings of vulnerability, rejection and hostility which can often manifest themselves as bullying behaviour.

TSCL is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment where each student is considered important, and they can develop physically, socially, emotionally, intellectually and morally to their fullest extent, thus maximising their learning. This policy is written with the whole school community in mind and covers staff, students, parents/carers. Members of the school workforce suffering from bullying, or concerned about bullying, are to be advised that they can contact their trade union, professional association or the Employee Assistance Programme for support and advice.

TSCL prides itself on its caring family atmosphere. All students within TSCL are entitled to a degree of safety and protection and therefore bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. Furthermore, The Serendipity School will also take note of bullying perpetrated in the community which spills over into the school and will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying.

Reference Documents

- [RD1] Preventing and tackling bullying - advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies DfE July (2017)
- [RD2] General Principles
Serendipity
- [RD3] Cause for Concern Form
Serendipity
- [RD4] Worry / Complaint Form
Serendipity
- [RD5] Complaints Policy
Serendipity

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation or Acronym	Description
AD	Applicable Document
DfE	Department for Education
DH	Deputy Head
HT	Head Teacher
LA	Local Authority
PSHCE	Personal, social, health and citizenship education
RD	Reference Document

Aims

The aims of TSCL's Anti-Bullying Policy are to

- reinforce the values of TSCL ethos [RD2] of respect and to help ensure that it permeates throughout the whole service.
- teach the students to understand what bullying is and the possible impact it can have on themselves and others.
- set consistent boundaries for acceptable behaviour.
- encourage all students to take responsibility for their own actions and understand the consequences.
- ensure that all staff have an understanding of what bullying is and the procedures TSCL has for dealing with incidents of bullying.
- support staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately.
- prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- ensure that information about bullying will be presented in a form that makes it possible for all to access e.g. symbols to support those with specific learning needs.
- ensure that students are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that students feel safe to learn; and that students abide by the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- report back to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deal promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- ensure that members of the school workforce suffering from bullying or concerned about bullying are to be advised that they can contact their trade union or professional association for support and advice.
- discuss, monitor and review our Anti-Bullying Policy on a regular basis.

Definition of bullying

As defined by the DfE (2017),

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, 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, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences'.

Some of the different types of bullying recognised by The Serendipity School include, but are not limited to:

- Emotional (being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, tormenting such as hiding belongings)
- Physical (pushing, hitting, shoving or any form of physical violence)
- Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours)
- Sexual and sexist (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or those which are sexist)
- Cyber (all forms of abuse involving the internet, social websites, chat rooms, mobile phones, email, text messages, photographs etc)
- Exclusion (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in)
- Interference with possessions ("borrowing", hiding, stealing and destroying property belonging to someone else)
- Racial (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived racial differences)
- Religious (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived religious differences)
- Cultural (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived cultural differences)
- On the basis of special educational needs and/ or disability (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived differences in terms of their special educational needs and/ or disability)
- Homophobic/transphobic (emotional, physical, verbal, sexual, cyber, exclusion, interference with possessions which is done in the name of the victim's perceived differences in sexuality)

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

It is recognised that in the case of cyber bullying, the victim and bully may not be on the school premises at the time when the incidents occur. However, the school recognises its responsibility to address the problem where possible and will take action to prevent incidents

of this nature, which may include consultation with the IT support. Where there is a question of a law having been broken, consultation of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 should be made, on a case by case basis.

Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, discriminatory or threatening behaviour, particularly when it relates to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act (race, religion, colour, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, disability, age, pregnancy and sexual orientation).

Signs of bullying

All staff, students, parents / carers should be aware of the negative effects that bullying can have on individuals and should work towards ensuring that students can work in an environment without fear. Students will be encouraged to report incidents of bullying. However, there is always the possibility that some students may feel nervous or indeed further intimidated at the prospect of seeking help, therefore staff should be particularly sensitive when they become aware that a student may have been or is being bullied.

Bullying can cause serious psychological damage and even result in suicide. A student who is being bullied may display some of the following signs:

- avoids coming to school, or avoids attending specific lessons or going into specific areas of the school
- changes to their usual routine with no apparent reason
- becomes more withdrawn or anxious than previously
- begins stammering
- threatens to run away or runs away
- threatens suicide
- begins to perform poorly at school
- frequently has missing or damaged possessions
- is always asking for extra money or never has money
- has unexplained injuries
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- begins to bully others
- stops eating or attending meals
- is afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
- becomes nervous when a message is received
- is reluctant to discuss reasons for any of the above.

Strategies for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying

We will:

- work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying. Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including their resilience. Our PSHCE themes provide many of these opportunities. Other opportunities will be developed through the curriculum, tutor time, assemblies, and Student Voice meetings, school visitors e.g. the police, Barnado's, by raising awareness in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

- monitor and look out for any signs of bullying by observing possible changes in behaviour.
- monitor work patterns, absence, truancy and lack of concentration as further possible signs of bullying.
- consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through the Student Voice.
- train all staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying and actively create “safe spaces” for vulnerable students.
- regularly remind all students that if they see bullying or are being bullied that they need to seek help from either another student or a member of staff.

Involvement of students

We will:

- regularly canvas student’s views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- ensure students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- ensure all students that if they are involved in bullying consequences will apply.
- involve students in anti-bullying campaigns in schools.
- publicise the details of help lines and websites.
- offer support to students who have been bullied.
- work with students who have been bullying in order to address the problems they may have.
- actively encourage bystanders to tell a member of staff and/ or get help if they observe bullying and to give support to the person being bullied.

Liaison with parents / carers

We will:

- ensure that parents / carers know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- ensure parents / carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.
- ensure parents / carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.

- work with parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school premises that give rise to bullying.

Guidelines for Implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The school will take the following steps when dealing with incidents:

- if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- a clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Head Teacher
- ensure the victim is safe
- provide a secure warm environment for discussion
- obtain empathetic support from the participants including the bully
- staff will empower onlookers/colluders
- make sure that staff do not apportion blame to the bully in discussion
- make sure that nobody thinks that being a bully works by giving the attention they seek for their negative actions
- make sure that staff use every opportunity to praise everyone involved when positive circumstances occur
- all concerned will be interviewed and a record of the incident will be recorded
- information will be shared with staff at debriefing and briefing meetings and MDT and/or safeguarding meetings and actions agreed to be followed up
- parents/carers will be informed of any incidents
- ensure that all staff agree the approach which will be reflected in the student's anti bullying plan
- encourage parents/carers to talk to a member of staff about any bullying concerns they have
- offer lunchtime activities to reduce numbers on the playground and to engage students in positive behaviour.

Students

Students who have been bullied can report bullying by:

- talking to a member of staff without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- completing a worry/complaint form

- use strategies they have been taught e.g. to get the help of adult.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff
- reassuring the student
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Students who have bullied will be supported by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the student became involved
- establishing the wrong doing and the need to change
- informing parents/carers to help change the attitude of the student.

The consequences used will take into consideration the frequency, severity and nature of the bullying as well as any individual's special educational need and disability as to what is seen appropriate. All good and appropriate behaviour will be celebrated formally in assemblies, Student Voice meetings and in class to further promote the school ethos of respect.

All incidents are shared with the LA and all parents/carers of those involved will be notified.

This procedure is shown graphically below in Fig. 1.

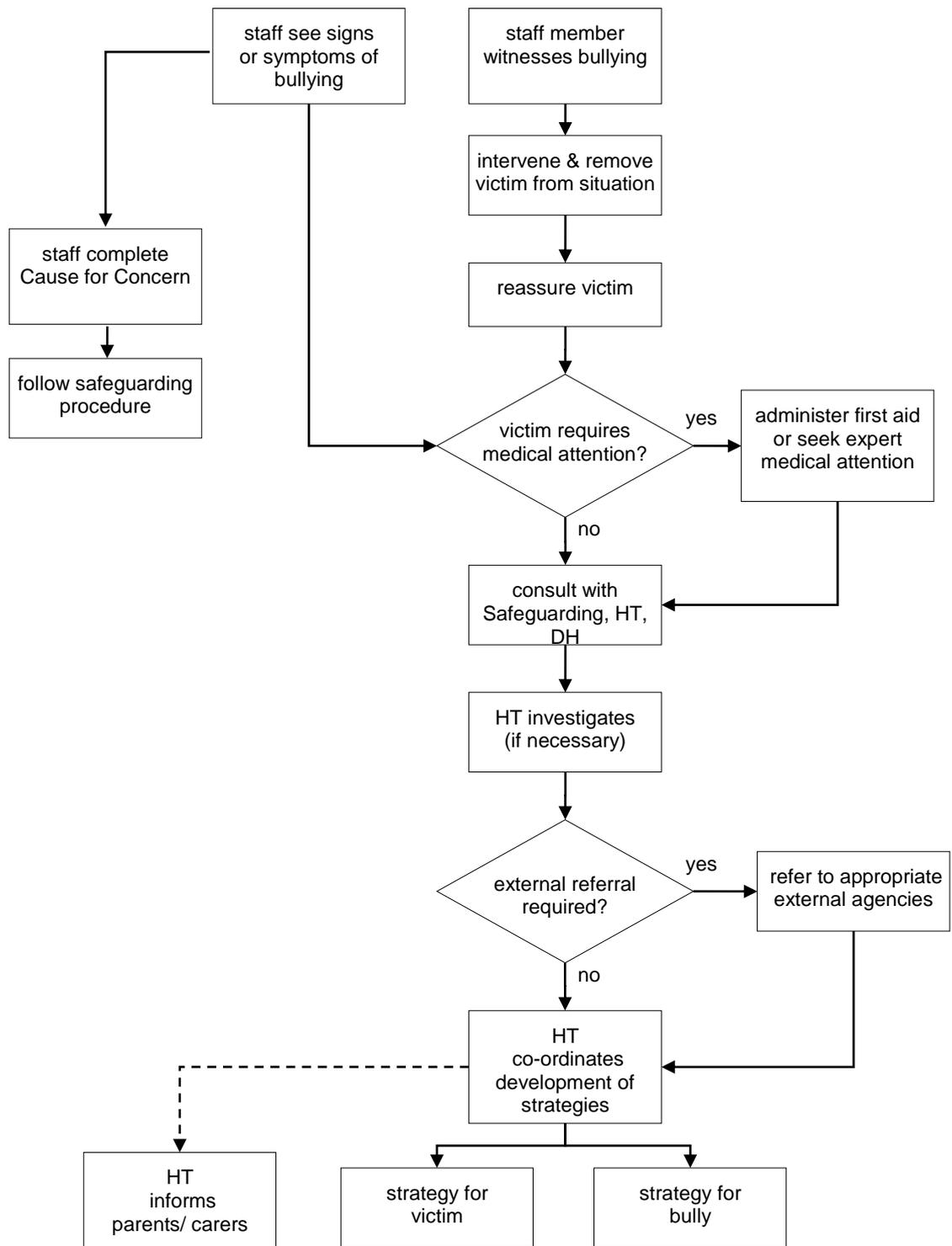


Fig. 1 Procedure for dealing with bullying incidents

Reporting and Recording

When bullying is discovered it is important for staff to use Serendipity's *Cause for Concern Form* [RD2] so that a complete record is made and the action taken can be recorded and traced.

The Head Teacher will periodically report to staff on the number and type of incidents and their outcomes. The Senior Leadership Team will consider the handling of incidents of bullying regularly, and will discuss issues with staff as necessary.

Signed: 
Head Teacher

Date: October 2017