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Playful

Learning

Attachment based

Child focused

Environment

Context and Rationale

At Abigail's Place we place the safety and wellbeing of all of our pupils at the heart of everything we do. As a trauma and attachment aware school we recognise, value and promote the fact that all children and adults have the right to go about their daily lives without fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed, to have an education, to be protected from violence, abuse and neglect and not be discriminated against on any grounds.

As a school we do not underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, academic and social development right through into adulthood. Therefore, we believe pupils and families should have the confidence that they will be listened to and that any bullying that is reported will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school; this means that anyone who is aware of any type of bullying taking place is expected to tell a member of staff immediately.

The children and young people at Abigail's Place have a wide range of complex needs. As a school community we understand that bullying in this context can have additional subtleties and raise issues that are in themselves complicated to resolve. Not all learners at Abigail's Place will recognise bullying behaviour if they experience it or may be unable to express their aversion to it, and also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours. Equally not all students would recognise that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying.

Bullying and Trauma

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), states:

Children or teens who have been exposed to trauma and violence may be more likely to:

- Bully others
- Be more distressed by bullying or appear desensitized to bullying
- Be the targets of bullying themselves

Children who have experienced trauma are more likely to be bullied and to engage in bullying behaviour. In some cases, children who experience trauma may develop social or interpersonal difficulties, making them more likely to become targets of bullying. Studies of Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs, have found that children who report more ACEs are also more likely to exhibit bullying behaviour (Sacks, et al., 2014).

Bullying and Labels

As a Trauma Informed School, we recognise that the power of language can have unintended consequences. The National Child Trauma Stress Clinic recommends, instead of referring to "bullies" and "victims," more appropriate language includes "the child who bullied another student" (rather than "the bully") or "the student who was bullied" (rather than "the victim").

Simply labelling a student as a "bully" or "victim" can perpetuate:

- a lack of hope or belief that there can be a change in behaviour for someone who bullies or a change in the social-emotional impact that results from being bullied.
- labels that serve to define a young person's role in the school community and society.

- a focus only on the individual without considering the external context in which the bullying occurred, such as in a school with a negative school climate or a home with domestic violence that can influence, perpetuate, and even shape behaviours between peers, students, and the adults.

It is therefore vital that we view all bullying through a trauma informed lens.

Aims

- The Executive Lead , Quality Assurance Board, teaching and non- teaching staff and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- To view bullying through a trauma informed lens and use the appropriate language.
- To provide a happy and secure school environment for all students and staff.
- To ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.
- To promote consistency of approach and create an environment in which all types of bullying are considered unacceptable.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To provide support for all involved in the incidents of bullying.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

What do we mean by Bullying?

The Department for Children, Schools and Families publication *Safe to Learn – Bullying of Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Embedding Anti-Bullying work in School*. (2008) describe bullying as ***‘Behaviour by an individual or a group usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally’***. Bullying behaviour which may occur in school usually has common features including:

- It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour.
- It is repeated, often over a period of time.
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.
- It is often aimed at certain groups because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation.

It is well researched that bullying causes long term damage to both the person on the receiving end, and those who bully. The four main types of bullying behaviour:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings.
- Verbal: name-calling, insulting, racist or discriminatory remarks attributed to gender or sexual orientation.
- Indirect: spreading nasty stories or rumours; excluding from groups, being ignored, intimidation or threatening behaviour.

- Cyber bullying: using IT particularly the internet and mobile phones, to deliberately upset someone.

Special Educational Needs and Bullying

As the DfE anti-bullying guidance notes, **‘children with special educational needs and disabilities may not be able to articulate their experiences.’** Therefore, Abigail’s Place uses the following strategies to support the children/young people to understand what is meant by the definitions above and how to resolve any bullying situation.

Learners who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy, nervous, feigning sickness, refusing to come to school, clinging to adults, refusing to remain in class. It is important that all school staff are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against any form of bullying in line with the roles and responsibilities listed below.

It is also possible that one child may develop an obsession with another child or display challenging/undesirable behaviours towards others through high anxiety levels. These may manifest in potentially harmful behaviours such as kicking, biting, pinching, hitting or throwing objects.

Staff have a duty to be vigilant to these behaviours and the fear/anxiety that the ‘target’ child may have. Incidents of bullying with or without intent are recorded on SOLAR (the school’s assessment, behaviour and safeguarding tool). Any incidents of bullying will be reported immediately to the Education Lead. It is important that this information must be shared amongst all members of the class team and other members of staff as soon as possible.

How can we prevent bullying?

As stated in the DfE guidance Tackling and Preventing Bullying, **‘a school’s response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied.’** At Abigail’s Place we put the following things in place to ensure that we are **preventing** and tackling bullying.

- Ensure all staff are trained to identify the signs of bullying through CPD and ensure this is included in staff induction.
- Ensure all staff have a knowledge of the child’s background and how this may impact upon their behaviours.
- Actively promote systematic opportunities to develop pupils’ social and emotional skills, including their emotional resilience through the school’s PSHE system, Thera play and Motional activities.
- Celebrate differences through the PSHE and the school curriculum.
- Ensure staff are role models for the children. The behaviour of adults towards each other and towards the children is a potentially highly effective tool for preventing and for decreasing bullying behaviours.
- Use the school’s relational model of Protect, Regulate, Relate, Reflect to establish a sense of safety.
- Ensure that pupils know where, who and how to report bullying concerns, with child friendly resources and social stories where appropriate.
- Publicise the details of helplines and websites.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied.
- Work with pupils that have been bullying in order to address issues they may have.
- Ensure that pupils are aware of the range of consequences of those engaging in bullying.

- All staff share responsibility for acting immediately if they suspect bullying or are approached by a pupil with a bullying concern.
- The Education Lead will ensure that all records are held securely and kept up to date including any liaison necessary with outside agencies e.g. the police if necessary.

Roles and Responsibilities

Executive Lead

The Executive Lead will undertake a formal annual review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date shown below, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Education Lead

- To ensure that the whole school is promoting equality and inclusion.
- To support anti- bullying strategies.
- To oversee the implementation of the Anti – Bullying policy.
- To ensure staff have up to date CPD on bullying.
- To monitor, refine and audit the policy.

All Staff

Ensure that all incidents of bullying are reported to SLT and recorded on SOLAR.

To be vigilant and constantly monitor the pupils for bullying – related behaviour and follow the procedure when evidence points towards bullying taking place.

To model high standards of behaviour and have high expectations from all the students.

To maintain a positive attitude towards all pupils.

Pupil Voice

Where appropriate pupils will be involved in exploring bullying and its impact through PSHE. This can involve a variety of educational opportunities, such as discussion and role- play.

The pupils can express their feelings and thoughts through: student council, annual reviews, Education Health Care Plans, everyday communication with staff. School staff should be vigilant for signs that a learner may be subject to bullying behaviour.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher or a member of the therapeutic team.
- Reassuring the pupil
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence
- Using the school's model of Protect, Relate, Regulate, **Reflect.**
- If appropriate, restorative justice facilitated by staff.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened.
- Using the school's model of Protect, Relate, Regulate, **Reflect**.
- Informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- If appropriate, restorative justice facilitated by staff.

