BULLYING

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1. DEFINITION

Bullying may mean different things to different children, dependent on whether they see themselves as '*the victims of bullying*' or '*the bullies*'. However, the way children feel about bullying and about how other people's behaviours affect them, means that regardless of how others see those 'behaviours' – to the victim it will still be 'bullying'.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

The DfE helpfully defines bullying as "*a behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally*".

Bullying can include a range of behaviours or actions by individuals or groups that are repeated over time and that are intended to cause either physical or emotional harm to another individual or group. There are many different types of bullying and many ways in which bullying can happen. It can be motivated by prejudice against a particular type of person or just because a child or young person is different in some way from the wider group. When dealing with bullying, in North East Lincolnshire our first priority is to stop any violence and make sure children are safe. What we need to remember though, is that whether or not bullying involves physical contact or violence, the emotional impact of bullying can be just as bad for children and can cause serious harm.

It is absolutely essential that all types of bullying are given sufficient attention and should always be treated seriously and sensitively. If a child or young person feels or says he or she is being bullied, this should never be minimised or ignored. Each case of bullying is different and one solution will not fit all. Whilst there are different types of bullying and different words used to define bullying, it comes down to the same thing: a deliberate behaviour on the part of one or more people, designed to make someone suffer either physically or emotionally and cause that person harm. (Please see the **NEL Keeping Children Safe Anti Bullying and E-Safety Strategy**).

CYBER BULLYING AND E-SAFETY

Computers, gaming consoles and smart phones have given children and young people access to the internet, instant messaging, social networks and a myriad of ways of communicating with one another that a generation ago, were almost non-existent.

Whilst E-technology can be a great thing in lots of ways, it also means that there are now far more ways in which children and young people can be bullied. This is known as 'cyber-bullying' and can happen quickly and often when a child is alone and isolated. This instant access to social media via the internet also brings a whole host of connected issues around keeping safe on line, or 'E-Safety'.

Because of the availability and accessibility of technology, cyber-bullying, or bullying through the use of technology can happen at any time of day or night and because it is not done 'in person' then the potential is for

any child to be bullied at any time by any individual and for it to go unreported and unnoticed. The emotional impact on children can be devastating and so not only do children need the means to recognise and report bullying, but all professionals, parents and carers need the means to recognise, support and protect children and act on cyber bullying.

North East Lincolnshire has adopted CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection) materials and ethos when dealing with and advising on E-Safety. The Young People's Support Service (YPSS) and Early Intervention and Prevention services currently have a number of staff trained as CEOP Ambassadors and use the '*Do You Think You Know*' toolkit to work with schools and partners on E-Safety.

2. RISKS

THE CHILD VICTIM

Any child can be bullied, but bullying often happens if children are seen as different in some way or are already vulnerable. Children who live away from home are often particularly vulnerable to bullying by their peers and being away from home means they may also lack access to a safe or trusted adult that they could confide in easily.

Harm to children and young people as a result of bullying should not be underestimated. It can cause distress, emotional harm and can lead to low self–esteem and depression. This could result in withdrawal from every day activities and in some cases self-harm and in extreme cases, suicide. Children and Young People often do not want to tell anyone they are being bullied. Sometimes they are worried about what might happen as a result of telling someone, or they feel that no one would believe them. Sometimes Children and Young People might feel that they are in some way to blame for the situation they are in and they may feel that they should be able to sort it out themselves.

Parents, carers and agencies need to be alert to any changes in a child or young person's behaviour such as refusing to attend school, refusing or appearing reluctant to go to particular place or engage in a particular activity. Victims of bullying may become unusually anxious in public places and crowds and may become withdrawn and isolated.

THE CHILD BULLY

Children who bully others have often been bullied themselves and may have suffered considerable disruption in their own lives. The bullying behaviour may occur because the child is unhappy, jealous or lacking in confidence. Children who are isolated may take on a bullying role to achieve a sense of belonging or to avoid being a victim themselves.

When working with children who bully, practitioners should recognise that those children are likely to have significant needs themselves.

3. INDICATORS

As Children and Young People are sometimes unlikely to tell someone if they are being bullied, it is important to look out for any changes in behaviour or presentation. Any change in behaviour that indicates fear or anxiety may be an indicator of bullying. Children may also want to avoid events, activities and even places they had previously enjoyed. Changes in attitude towards schools or organised activities are particularly significant.

Behaviour in children such as:

- Being frightened of walking to and from school rather than using school transport and changing their usual route;
- Feeling ill in the mornings;

- Beginning truanting;
- Beginning to perform poorly in their school work;
- Coming home regularly with clothes or books destroyed;
- Becoming withdrawn, starting to stammer, lacking confidence, being distressed and anxious and stopping eating;
- Self-harming;
- Attempting or threatening suicide;
- Crying themselves to sleep, having nightmares;
- Having their possessions go missing;
- Asking for money or starting to steal (to pay the bully) or continually 'losing' their pocket money;
- Refusing to talk about what's wrong;
- Having unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches;
- Beginning to bully other children/siblings;
- Becoming aggressive and unreasonable;
- Becoming anxious or obsessive about computer or mobile phone use.

Should all be taken seriously and the behaviour discussed between parents/carers and schools.

4. PROTECTION AND ACTION TO BE TAKEN

Every school and academy must have an anti-bullying strategy as part of its behaviour policy. It is recommended that all settings where children and young people receive additional services or are living away from home, should have an anti-bullying strategy in place and have procedures on how to refer to Children's Social Care if safeguarding children concerns are identified. See Referrals Procedure and Assessment Procedure**.**

Schools/academies should have strategies, arrangements and procedures in place so that:

- Support is made available to children for whom English is not their first language to communicate needs and concerns;
- Children know that they are able to approach any member of staff within the organisation with personal concerns;
- All staff are aware of how to recognise and respond to bullying.

Bullying should never be minimised, and negative attitudes towards bullying should be always be challenged. Such attitudes might include the misplaced perception or belief about bullying that:

- It's only a bit of harmless fun;
- It's all part of growing up;
- Children just have to put up with it;
- Adults getting involved make it worse;
- Children should learn to stand up for themselves.

Clear messages must be given that bullying is not acceptable and children must be reassured that significant adults involved in their lives are dealing with bullying seriously. Some acts of bullying, such as physical assault and harassment, could be a criminal offence.

A climate of openness should be established and encouraged in which children are not afraid to tell people what is happening, have the confidence to address issues and incidents of bullying and know that they will be taken seriously.

Consideration should always be given to the existence of any underlying issues in relation to race, gender and sexual orientation. This should be addressed and challenged accordingly.

Where a child is thought to be exposed to bullying, action should be taken to assess the child's needs and where appropriate provide support services.

If the bullying involves a physical assault, as well as seeking medical attention where necessary, consideration should also be given to whether there are any child protection issues to consider. Consideration should also be given as to whether a referral to the Police should be made in instances where a criminal offence may have been committed.

Where appropriate, parents should be informed and updated on a regular basis. They should also, when applicable, be involved in supporting programmes devised to challenge bullying behaviour. This may require involvement of not only the victim's parents but also the parents of the bully.

5. ISSUES

Practitioners may often be in the position of having to deal with the perpetrators as well as the victims of bullying. Bullying behaviour may in itself be indicative of previous abuse or exposure to violence.

Where bullying exists in the context of gang behaviour, there should be an institutional, as well as an individual, response to this.

Both victims and perpetrators of bullying can benefit from assertiveness training where this is available.

6. FURTHER INFORMATION (LINKS)

NE LINCS SCB ANTI-BULLYING AND E-SAFETY STRATEGY

SPECIALIST ORGANISATIONS:

- **The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)**: Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues;
- **Kidscape**: Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it. They also offer specialist training and support for school staff, and assertiveness training for young people;
- **The Diana Award**: Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting school anti-bullying ambassadors;
- **The BIG Award**: The Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) offer a national scheme and award for schools to tackle bullying effectively.

CYBER BULLYING:

- **ChildNet International**: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves;
- **Think U Know**: Resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers;
- **Digizen**: Provide online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people.
- **Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0**: The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has produced universal guidelines for providers on keeping children safe online;
- **Preventing and Tackling Bullying - Advice for Head teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies (Department for Education, 2014)**;
- **Cyberbullying: Advice for Head teachers and School Staff (Department for Education, 2015)**;

- **Advice for Parents and Carers on Cyberbullying (Department for Education, 2015)**.

LGBT:

- **EACH**: A training agency for employers and organisations seeking to tackle discrimination on the grounds of gender and sexual orientation;
- **Schools Out**: Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to schools on LGBT equality in education;
- **Stonewall**: An LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in schools, a dedicated youth site, resources for schools, and specialist training for teachers.

SEND:

- **Mencap**: Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people;
- **Changing Faces**: Provide online resources and training to schools on bullying because of physical difference;
- **Cyberbullying and Children and Young People with SEN and Disabilities**: Advice provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance on developing effective anti-bullying practice.

RACISM:

- **Show Racism the Red Card**: Provide resources and workshops for schools to educate young people, often using the high profile of football, about racism;
- **Kick it Out**: Uses the appeal of football to educate young people about racism and provide education packs for schools;
- **Anne Frank Trust**: Runs a schools project to teach young people about Anne Frank and the Holocaust, the consequences of unchecked prejudice and discrimination, and cultural diversity.

Please note that internal servers may block access to some of these sites. Schools wishing to access these materials may need to adjust their settings.