

ASSESS EDUCATION

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



Anti-bullying Policy

Mission Statement

“Assess aims to provide a happy, safe and secure teaching and learning environment in which the needs of pupils and staff are met with support and understanding”

The above section from our service “Mission Statement” provides the rationale for our approach to bullying in whatever forms it takes. The statement enshrines and promotes a range of values and rights, which guide our work in this area. Some of these rights and values are set out below -

AIMS / VALUES

- We want to create a climate within the centre where mutual respect is the norm and bullying behaviour very unusual.
- We are positive at all times and are anxious to be wherever possible preventative.
- We adopt a zero tolerance to all forms of bullying
- Respecting the dignity of the individual student, whether the victim or perpetrator, will guide our response when incidences of bullying have occurred. We will make a distinction between the behaviours of the student and the student themselves.
- Preventing bullying is a responsibility shared by everyone in the service community.

Rights / Legal Framework

Assess policy and practice in this area shall take cognisance of the legislative and human rights context, which determines our procedures and responses. The rights of the child which are enshrined in the **European Convention on Human Rights** (Human Rights Act 1998) and in the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child** provide a legislative framework and guidance for our policy and its practical operation. The Education Order (NI) 1998 and Education and Libraries Order (NI) sets out obligations on educational institutions including the promotion of self discipline, the necessity of consulting with parents and pupils and the prevention of all forms of bullying. A range of statutory and non-statutory guidance materials will guide policies and practices in this area: Some of these are listed below:

- Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Good Behaviour (2001)
- DE circular 2003/13
- Pastoral Care in Schools – Child Protection (1999)
- “Bullying - don’t suffer in silence” DFES (2002)

Assess is a small alternative education centre based in Wavertree with the capacity to house 36 students. The students are drawn from a wide range of social backgrounds.

Responsibilities

Ms Robinson, director, has overall responsibility for pastoral care in the service. Ms G Robinson is the designated Child Protection Officer with all staff having completed Level 1 Child Protection course.

All members of the service community have an obligation to be aware of and to implement the agreed anti bullying policy and procedures and to create an ethos that engenders good relationships at all levels.

Aims and Objectives of our Anti-bullying Policy

- We believe that all pupils have the right to learn in an environment, which is free from intimidation and fear.
- Accordingly, we will work to create an environment within which positive relationships will be fostered and violent behaviour of any sort will be unacceptable.
- Within such an environment, bullying behaviour will not be tolerated.
- Should bullying occur, the needs of victims of bullying will be paramount, and the service will take all reasonable measures to ensure that the situation is resolved and will not re-occur.
- The service will seek to involve and inform parents in all areas of its anti-bullying work.

Links with other School Policies

The anti-bullying policy forms part of the service overall Pastoral Care policy. It links with the Child Protection Policy in which the service outlines the steps it will take to protect children from harm and develop their personal safety strategies. It links with the Discipline Policy in which the service outlines the types of behaviour which are considered appropriate and inappropriate, together with the sanctions which will be used as part of the disciplinary process. An integral part of the approach of Assess to the promotion of an anti-bullying culture is to be found in PSHE lessons. This provides strategies, which can be used in the classroom to promote positive values and a forum where students can discuss their hopes and fears.

Agreed Definition of Bullying Behaviour

“Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for the victim to defend him – or herself”.

Assess make a firm distinction between “Bullying” as so defined and other albeit unacceptable behaviours.

Examples of Bullying Behaviour include

Physical: kicking, nipping, pushing, hitting, punching, biting and tripping

Verbal: name-calling, teasing, spreading rumours

Emotional: excluding from groups, threatening, and ignoring

Preventive Strategies

Staff at Assess believe that the implementation of preventive measures will help to reduce the incidence of bullying behaviour. We will take the following steps:

Ethos and Pastoral Care

We will seek to be a "listening service", in which pupils are encouraged to express their feelings, fears and concerns. This is facilitated through measures such as PSHE, registration periods and team building exercises.

We promote and reward positive behaviour through measures such as awards and certificates. We embark on community programmes to help students integrate and recognise the importance of caring for and helping others with the intention of reinforcing positive values.

Bullying is discussed at various times in the regular circle time discussions. The views of students are regularly sought through focus groups.

Curriculum

Circle time discussions, team building sessions and mentoring help children to respect their own dignity and the dignity of others. Teachers encourage students to develop a range of skills including assertiveness. Students are also taught various response strategies including avoidance / speak to friends etc.

Break-time provision

We provide training for teachers and all staff in the promotion of positive relationships and strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying.

Agreed Code of Conduct

Students have an entitlement to be educated in an environment, which is safe, caring and respectful of their individual needs. Students have a responsibility to treat all other students, teachers and other staff with respect. They have a responsibility to refrain from engaging in bullying behaviour and to report it if they are aware of it occurring.

Parents

Parents have an entitlement to expect that their child will be educated in an environment, which is safe, caring and respectful of their individual needs. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their child co-operates with teachers, other staff and other students. They have a responsibility to inform the school of any incidents of bullying, which they are aware of.

Teachers and other Staff

Teachers and other adults have an entitlement to work in an environment, which is characterised by respect, and caring for all. Teachers and other adults have a responsibility to contribute to the creation of such an environment and to work for the well being of all students.

Procedures for dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour, including contact with parents and external agencies

Each case of bullying will be dealt with individually and follow-up action will be tailored to meet the individual needs of the pupils concerned. All accusations of bullying will be taken seriously. The following steps will be followed:-

1. Reporting of an incident

When a bullying incident is reported, the information will be passed on to the following people:-

- The teacher of any child involved
- The director
- The designated teacher for child protection

2. Investigation of an incident

This will normally be carried out by the Director / designated teacher for child protection, in co-operation with any teachers concerned. Students involved will be interviewed and a record made of their responses using the incident report form. Parents of all students involved will be informed of the action up to this point and will be kept informed of subsequent action.

3. Agreeing a plan for resolution

Working with the students concerned, the Director/ designated teacher will devise a plan for resolution of the conflict. This plan will include targets for acceptable behaviour and will set out support measures, which

will be provided for the students concerned. Any disciplinary action required would use the system of sanctions.

4. Reviewing the situation

The situation will be monitored and formally reviewed within one month of the initial report. This will be done by the Director/ designated teacher, in co-operation with the other teachers, students and parents concerned.

5. Involvement of other agencies in provision of support

When necessary, the service will draw on support from a range of outside agencies including Education Welfare, Alternative Provision Team and the Educational Psychology Service. In most instances, the service will seek to deal with the situation from within its own resources. However, if it becomes clear at step 3 or 4 that outside help is needed, the service will not hesitate to avail of it.

Monitoring and Review of the Anti-bullying Policy

Implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Director and designated teacher for child protection. This policy will be formally evaluated and reviewed every three years.

Reviewed 1st October 2013