

Evolve Enterprise: Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

At Evolve Merseyside we are committed to providing a warm, caring and safe environment for all our children so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in Evolve. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. At Evolve Merseyside, we acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time – indeed, it would be unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. We are a TELLING environment. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to try and prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying. The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of Evolve have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with Evolve policy. This will happen in the following ways:

- Evolve will meet the legal requirement for all AEP to have an anti-bullying policy in place.
- Evolve will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in The Children Act 1989, The SEN and Disability Act 2001, The Government Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' 2003 (outcome 2) and The Children Act 2004.
- All directors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All directors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what Evolve's policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.

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- All pupils and parents/guardians will know what Evolve policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- Pupils and parents/guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- A range of initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies etc) and proactive strategies (PHSE [Personal, Health & Social Education] lessons, circle time, mindfulness etc) will be used throughout Evolve to reduce the opportunities for bullying to occur.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within Evolve environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

What Is Bullying?

Evolve has adopted the following collaborative definition of bullying which is our shared understanding of what bullying is:

Bullying is any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for the victims to defend themselves (remember STOP – if it happens **Several Times on Purpose**). Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victim's.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture and religion
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Homophobic because of/or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Online/cyber setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive text messages, emails and abusing the victims via their mobile phones

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- Any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational needs.

Bullying is not:

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose (STOP). Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

Where does bullying happen?

It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, outside. Bullying may also happen on the way to and from school. In such cases, the directors are empowered by law to deal with such incidents but must do so in accordance with Evolve's policy.

At Evolve Merseyside, we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside as well as inside school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off Evolve premises. The following steps may be taken:

- Talk to the local Community Police Officer about problems on the streets
- Talk to the Head Teachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the premises
- Map out safe routes to school for children.
- Discuss coping strategies with parents
- Talk to the children about how to handle or avoid bullying outside Evolve premises

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied.

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Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on Evolves mini bus/in the taxi
- changes their usual routine/route to school
- begins truanting
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to underperform in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money/snack/sandwiches have been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Wherever you are, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you.

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- Try not to let the bully know that he/she is making you feel upset.
- Try to ignore them.
- Be assertive – stand up to them, look at them directly in the eye, tell them to stop and mean it.
- Stay in a group, bullies usually pick on individuals.
- Get away as quickly as you can.
- Tell someone you can trust – it can be a director, teacher, a member of student support, office staff, a parent, a friend, a brother, a sister or a relative.
- If you are scared, ask a friend to go with you when you tell someone.
- If you don't feel you can talk to someone about it, write it down.
- When you tell an adult about the bullying give them as many facts as you can (What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?).
- Keep a diary of what's been happening and refer to it when you tell someone.
- Keep on speaking out until someone listens and helps you.
- Never be afraid to do something about it and quick.
- Don't suffer in silence.
- Don't blame yourself for what is happening.

What can you do if you see someone else being bullied? (*The role of the bystander*)

Ignoring bullying is cowardly and unfair to the victim. Staying silent means the bully has won and gives them more power. There are ways you can help without putting yourself in danger.

- Don't rush over and take the bully on yourself.
- Don't smile or laugh at the situation.
- Don't be made to join in.
- If safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop bullying.
- If you can, let the bully know you do not like his or her behaviour.
- Shout for help.
- Let the victim(s) know that you are going to get help.
- Tell a member of staff as soon as you can.
- Try and befriend the person being bullied.
- Encourage the person to talk to someone and get help.

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- Ask someone you trust about what to do.
- Call a helpline for some advice.

Bullying of children with Special Educational Needs

Evolve Merseyside is an inclusive AEP. We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are.

We have some children who have learning disabilities and/or communication difficulties. Everyone involved with Evolve is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are therefore particularly vigilant at all times.

High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying as seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying at Evolve Merseyside. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved.

The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

1. Report all bullying allegations and incidents to staff.
2. Staff will make sure the victim(s) is and feels safe.
3. Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).
4. Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately.
5. The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
6. Staff will attempt to adopt a problem solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour.

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7. Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
8. Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
9. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied (see next section).
10. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
11. An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour.
12. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on the standard Incident Report Sheet. All reports will also be recorded in the 'Bullying Log' which will be kept in the Evolve office at the George Howard Centre.
13. In serious cases parents will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.
14. After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
15. Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.
16. If necessary and appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead in school, Social Services or police will be consulted.

The following sanctions may be used:

The children have also discussed this question in their classes and some of the sanctions they suggested are included in the list below:

- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing
- Lose privileges
- Lose playtimes (stay with class teacher, write lines or do extra work)
- Stand outside the office
- Spend playtimes and lunchtimes with an adult
- Parents will be invited in to school
- Go on a self-improvement report
- Be removed from class and work in isolation
- Report to the directors

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- Be withdrawn from participation in visit, clubs and events not essential to the curriculum.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout Evolve to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur.

These can include:

- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in Evolve and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Producing a 'child speak' version of the policy for the children
- Young People agreeing on their own set of rules
- Making national anti-bullying week a high profile event each year
- Awareness raising through regular anti-bullying discussions
- PHSE (Personal, Health & Social Education) used to support this policy
- Setting up of a circle of friends support network where a small group of children volunteer to help and support an individual experiencing difficulties
- Children being read stories about bullying
- Using drama activities and role-plays to help children be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Creation of an anti-bullying school notice board in Evolve.
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour
- Encouraging the whole Evolve community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another
- Organising regular anti-bullying training for all staff

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Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated.

Sources of further information, support and help

There is a vast amount of information and guidance available about bullying that can provide a wide range of support and help. The following list is just a small selection of the support available that teachers, parents and children have found useful.

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