

RIVER BOURNE COMMUNITY FARM

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Updated September 2014



Anti- Bullying Policy Statement

The aim of the River Bourne Community Farm anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of the community, including staff and volunteers, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the farms policy on bullying: therefore the aim of the policy is to help members of the farm to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

This anti-bullying document is compliant with relevant legislation and current DfE Guidance.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and is often motivated by prejudice. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- Physical (including sexual) assault.
- Verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks.
- Cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail.
- Indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self esteem; and destroys their sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim.

There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour. If staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police.

Anti-Bullying Procedure

What to look for

Children who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school.

Members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying; legal responsibilities are known and community members should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with farm policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, MOST people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

What to do

The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should cases arise:

If you are the victim

1. If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think that what he/she is doing is wrong.
2. Share your feelings with someone else.
3. If possible talk to a member of Farm Staff, your Tutor at school, or any other responsible adults on the farm about the incident. If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends; talk to other students on the farm or at your school or any trusted adult. They may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can.

The Education Co-ordinator on the farm, **Saje Hancock**, can be contacted via email on shancock@riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk

The Farm member of staff with lead responsibility for safeguarding and protection and who should be informed of any incidents of abuse, or suspected abuse, is **Jane Wilkinson, Farm Office Manager** janewilkinson@riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk

There are also people outside the farm who would be willing to help - Childline: 0800 1111

Procedure if a pupil should witness bullying behaviour

1. Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
2. Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the bully, or with their permission, confront the bully yourself.
3. Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see their Tutor on their behalf.

Procedure for members of Staff should you witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to you

1. Reassure and support the pupils involved.
2. Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant member of the farm team.
3. Inform an appropriate member of the farm team as soon as possible. Staff must record all incidents of reported bullying and ensure that Jane Wilkinson is informed. She will keep a central log of all complaints or incidences of bullying and record the way in which they were dealt.

What will happen?

The victim will be interviewed by the Education Coordinator or Office Manager, on their own, and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss his own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

Once they are clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them.

Details of the incident will be recorded on all the pupils' files and the offence recorded as a bullying incident. The farm team will decide on an appropriate course of action.

In the first instance the Education Coordinator or Office Manager will interview the pupil or pupils whose behaviour has caused distress and give him/them a formal bullying warning; making it clear that any further incident (or discussion about the current incident) would be considered to be further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support and counselling will be offered. A suitable punishment will also be given.

If the Education Coordinator decides it is appropriate, or it is a pupil's second offence, the Head of the student's school will become involved and the parents of the perpetrator/s will be informed by letter or telephone. The following sanctions may be applied in accordance with the Farm behavioural policy.

- **Formal Warning from Education Coordinator or Office Manager.** They will speak to the pupils involved and will contact the parents or guardians giving details of the offence and inviting them in to the farm to discuss the matter and to be present when their child is given a Formal Farm Warning. Their support for the farm's actions should be enlisted if possible.
- **Suspension** at the farm's discretion
- **Exclusion** at the farm's discretion

These are minimum sanctions. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, it is the policy of the farm to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by farm staff. The record of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Education Coordinator and Office Manager to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

The farm will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the farm's actions to prevent bullying.

We are absolutely confident that the vast majority of farm students will agree with our sentiments on bullying. It is our intention to identify and take action against those who do not.

References

DCSF Safe to Learn, Embedding anti-bullying work in schools

DfE Guidance – Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies (July 2011)

www.cyberbullying.org