

Case study: Making clearer to students the differences between bullying and friendship issues

How Wisborough Green Primary School has sought to clarify what constitutes bullying amongst pupils at school

This case studies main focuses have been to:

- To clarify to pupils what constituted as bullying behaviour
- For children to feel able to report instances of bullying
- To have an anti-bullying policy which pupils are able to refer to

Background on the School

We were finding there were more and more children who were saying they were being bullied by others. We investigated every situation, and in most cases, found the children were having difficulty maintaining relationships and needed support. The children didn't have a clear understanding of what 'bullying behaviour' was. We found that lots of children were saying they were being bullied and it became a 'buzz' word around the school. We needed to help the children understand the difference between bullying behaviour and friendship difficulties.

Desired outcome

For the children, and their parents, to have a greater understanding about what 'bullying behaviour' is.

For all children to feel confident to speak out and tell an adult when they feel unhappy so a problem can be solved.

To teach children the importance of bystanders, and to report anything that is a concern.

To ensure all staff deal with any relationship difficulties consistently and empathetically.

To write a new anti-bullying policy along with a child friendly version.

What is the action we took?

We developed 'TimeTo Talk' boxes for every class, with one in the Headteacher's office. Some of the school artists decorated the boxes and shared them in an assembly. Paper clocks were given to all classes for the children to write their names on if they wanted to talk about something they were worried about.

Whole school assemblies were delivered to share the new initiative and classroom doors were decorated with 'Time to Talk' displays to promote the new initiative.

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Lessons were delivered on being a bystander, posing the question, 'What is your responsibility?', and whole school assemblies were delivered on 'Belonging', looking at how we can make sure everyone feels like they belong.

Parents were informed through weekly newsletter and were invited to join an 'Anti-Bullying' working party

A dedicated governor was appointed to support the work of the school and liaise with parents and a new policy was written with staff and children – to be developed further with parents next time.

New reporting formats have been designed for children, parents and staff and a child friendly leaflet is being developed with the school council – an assembly to gather shared ideas has been held.

Outcome

Children feel they have a way to communicate their worries – especially if they don't want to be seen telling and use the 'Time to talk' boxes, which helps with their problems

Class teachers dedicate time to talking through any worries with individuals and whole classes if needed

Children communicate their worries using the 'Time to Talk' box in the Headteacher's office if they feel a problem hasn't been solved

Staff feel happier with the anti-bullying policy – especially the definition of bullying and the new reporting form will help children and parents to decide if the concern is a bullying one or a relationship difficulty

Other children feel they can tell, as a bystander, if they are worried about someone else and they know the school will deal with the problem

Next year:

Develop anti-bullying workshops – with parents and governor support, so there is a greater understanding about what bullying is and what it isn't

Children continue to feel they can tell when there is something they are not happy about

New policy up and running – there will be less reported incidents of 'bullying behaviour' and more solving of relational problems

Learning

It takes a long time to embed a change and children need a lot of support to understand what constitutes bullying.

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Having a disagreement is okay, it's developing the skills to solve the disagreements is what is important, so relationships can continue to thrive.

We are going to try and have informal 'coffee and catch up' sessions every half term to develop more positive relationships with parents and give them a forum to share any concerns.