

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
13 JANUARY 1999**

NOTE: Copies of all reports mentioned below have been sent to all members of the Education Committee. If you have any queries on this report please contact Elaine Shell, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford. (Telephone: 01992 555563)

1. SECONDARY TRANSFER 2000 : ADMISSION RULES

The Director of Education has been asked to consult with the governing bodies of all schools, with all admitting authorities for all schools in the relevant area, with Local Admission Forums and with all Local Education Authorities adjoining Hertfordshire on the processes contained within the Secretary of State for Education and Employment's scheme for co-ordinated arrangements for admission to secondary schools in September 1999 being used for September 2000 admissions. The Director will also consult on the rules for admission to community schools for September 2000 and on a proposal that the traditional area for a single sex school be defined as one from which over the last three years an average of at least 6% of those applying for the schools are first rank preferences for 1997 and 1998 and first rankings for 1999.

The Committee have also asked the Director of Education to consult with all admitting authorities and with Admission Forums, to ensure that admission rules are co-ordinated so that children are able to secure places in local schools, that all schools take a share of challenging pupils, and to ensure that the rules of all admitting authorities in Hertfordshire are consistent with the DfEE's Code of Practice. In the event of it not being possible to achieve this, the Committee have agreed that the Director of Education, following consultation with the Education Spokespersons, should refer the matter to the Adjudicator.

The Committee also agreed that a County and Local Admissions Forums should be set up. The county councillor membership of Local Admission Forums will be a minimum of 5 (to be appointed by the Director of Education after consultation with the Education Committee spokespersons) and each will include one co-optee to represent special educational needs. The procedure for appointing school representatives will be determined by the Director following consultation with Education Committee spokespersons. The Chairman of the Education Committee, or his nominee, will chair the County Admission Forum, which will also have a County Councillor membership of at least five.

2. BULLYING POLICY

Schools have a responsibility to provide safe environments in which effective learning can take place for all pupils. The maintenance of good behaviour and discipline are essential elements in the creation of such an environment. With this in mind, the Committee have considered a policy for preventing and responding to bullying.

The policy, produced by an officer group comprising representatives from the Hertfordshire Education Service, the Education Welfare Service, the Educational Psychology Service, the Multi-Ethnic Curriculum Support Service, and the Special Educational Needs Advisory Service, has the support of the Hertfordshire Association of Secondary School Headteachers, the Primary Heads Forum, and the Special Schools Heads' Executive. The Risk Management Consultant from the County Council's insurers, Zurich Municipal, has also confirmed that the policy reflects best practice.

The policy, as amended and approved by the Committee, is attached.

All schools will be provided with a copy and will be requested to review and amend their existing policies in accordance with the County Council's policy. Advice and information leaflets for parents and carers, which have been produced in nine languages, will be distributed through schools, and training sessions for staff will be arranged to support schools in the implementation of their policies and practice in relation to this issue.

R Mays
Chairman
County Hall
Hertford

13 January 1999

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY

POLICY ON PREVENTING AND RESPONDING TO BULLYING

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The LEA recognises and affirms the right of every child to learn in a safe and secure environment and is committed to supporting schools in the development of policies and strategies for preventing and responding to bullying.
- 1.2 It is acknowledged that bullying can seriously disrupt an individual's educational progress and achievement
- 1.3 The LEA expects all schools to develop policies which aim to:
 - reduce and eradicate wherever possible instances in which pupils are subjected to bullying in any form
 - establish appropriate means of providing after-care should an incident of bullying occur
 - ensure that all pupils and staff are aware of the policy and fulfil their obligations to it

2. Definition of Bullying

- 2.1 "Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. name calling, racist remarks *) or indirect (e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups).
[DfEE Circular 10/95]

* For any bullying incident which includes racism the County Guidelines for dealing with Racial Harassment should be referred to.

- 2.2 Single incidences of verbal or physical attack, and behaviour which is hurtful but not intentional, must also be taken seriously and dealt with by the school according to the principles outlined in the Policy.

3. The Role of the School

- 3.1 DfEE Circular 8/94 (paragraph 56) places the following expectations on schools:
 - School staff must act - and importantly be seen to act - firmly against bullying wherever and whenever it appears
 - School behaviour policies and the associated rules of conduct should make specific reference to bullying

- Governing bodies should regularly review their school's policy on bullying
- School prospectuses and other documents issued to parents and pupils should make it clear that bullying will not be tolerated
- Prospectuses should also explain arrangements through which pupils troubled by bullying can draw their concerns to the attention of staff in the confidence that these will be carefully investigated and, if substantiated, taken seriously and acted upon
- Individual members of staff must be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it. Failure to respond to incidents may be interpreted as condoning the behaviour

3.2 Schools have a responsibility to develop environments in which all members of the school community (children and adults) are encouraged to -

- treat everyone with kindness and respect
- act with thought and consideration to others
- behave courteously, being polite and helpful at all times
- be friendly and co-operative
- be honest and truthful
- treat property with respect

Schools also have a responsibility to take steps to prevent any member of the school community (adults and children) from -

- making unkind or offensive comments (including comments about people's appearance or ability/disability)
- behaving in a racist, sexist or homophobic manner
- using foul or unacceptable language
- being rude or aggressive
- shouting
- using physical aggression
- damaging property

3.3 All members of the school community need to understand what constitutes bullying and be alert to signs that bullying is taking place. Specific roles and responsibilities held by staff and pupils should be developed and noted in the school's policy. The school should ensure that its response to bullying is clearly understood by all members of the school community and everyone should be clear about their role and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying.

- 3.4 Training and guidance should be provided for all school staff to ensure that they are able to carry out the responsibilities which are required by the school's policy.

Pupils

It is important that pupils should:

- be involved in the development and reviewing of behaviour and anti-bullying policies and practice
- learn about what constitutes bullying and what to do about it
- have opportunities to develop the skills to resist bullying and to deal with bullying
- be aware that knowing about bullying by or to others and doing nothing is unacceptable

Parents

Parents, carers and families have an important role to play in helping schools to deal with bullying. They should:

- discourage their children from using bullying behaviour at school, at home or elsewhere
- take an active interest in their children's school life, discuss friendships, how playtime is spent and the journey to and from school
- watch out for signs that their children are being bullied, or are bullying others
- contact the school at the first sign if they are worried that their children are being bullied or are bullying others

Governors

The governing body has an important role to play in ensuring that the school has a policy, that the policy is operated by all staff and that it is effective, The governing body should:

- review the school's bullying policy regularly
- consult all interested parties in revising the policy as necessary
- help to explain and comment the policy to all interested parties
- ask for information to enable it to monitor the implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of the policy

- 3.5 Victims and witnesses of bullying should know that it is 'OK to tell' and that they will receive practical help if they so do.

- 3.6 Anyone who bullies should be made aware of the effect of their actions. It should be made clear to them that they are bullying, that their behaviour is unacceptable and that it will not be tolerated. It should also be recognised, however, that some bullies themselves need help and support and that the school has a responsibility to ensure that they receive it.

- 3.7 All incidents of bullying should be recorded and monitored. The record should include details about the nature of the incident, a description of the incident itself, a note of the action taken and a list of people who were notified. This includes racial incidents (see County Guidelines For Dealing With Racial Harassment).

- 3.8 Policy, practice and methods of recording of incidents should be regularly reviewed and reported to the Governing Body. Reports to the Governing Body should include details about variations in the number of reported incidents over a given period of time and consideration of any action which needs to be taken to reduce the risks of incidents of bullying taking place.
- 3.9 Anti-bullying policy and practice should be developed within the context of a whole school policy for promoting positive behaviour. Thus responding to bullying, as well as other forms of unacceptable behaviour, has a wider context.
- 3.10 Schools should be aware that there might be behaviour which is hurtful but is not intentional. Such behaviour should always be treated seriously with support given to all parties. Offenders should be made aware of the effects of their actions.
- 3.11 Schools should address bullying within the curriculum in order to give pupils an understanding of what bullying is, develop skills to prevent and deal with bullying situations and attitudes which promote responsibility.
- 3.12 Schools should ensure that their staff act as positive role models for pupils.
- 3.13 Schools should have clearly stated procedures for responding to incidents of bullying. These should include ensuring that:
- the school's opposition to such behaviour is made clear
 - the reasons for the school's objections to such behaviour are explained
 - steps are taken to ensure, as far as possible, that such behaviour is not repeated
 - the parents of the offender are informed of the school's policy not to tolerate such behaviour
 - children who have been bullied, and their parents, are supported
 - the nature and response to an incident is made known to other staff

4. The Role of the Education Department

- 4.1 The work of the Education department in preventing and responding to bullying is co-ordinated by the Head of the Education Welfare and Student Support Service.
- 4.2 Support for schools, parents and children is provided by services across the Department. There is, however, one contact/lead person for each area of responsibility :

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY	CONTACT/LEAD PERSON
Support for schools	
Give clear guidance to schools on the development of effective anti-bullying policies and strategies	PSHE Advisers (HES)
Offer Training and Development opportunities for all staff (including anti-bullying curriculum)	PSHE Advisers (HES)
Monitor whether schools have effective anti-bullying polices and strategies and whether they are implemented effectively	School Development Adviser (HES)
Provide advice to schools on responding to specific incidents of bullying in school	School Development Adviser (HES)
Where a child's regular attendance is affected by bullying	Head of Education Welfare Service
Where this is part of a Stage 2 consultation or related to a named child	Head of Educational Psychology Service
Where this is racially motivated bullying	Head of Minority Ethnic Curriculum Support Service
Monitor the number and type of bullying incidents in school (through an annual sampling survey and reports from the School Development Advisers)	The Head of the Education Welfare and Student Support Service
Where the monitoring of bullying incidents indicate concerns in a particular school the LEA has a responsibility to ensure that steps are taken to safeguard the well-being and safety of the children	School Development Adviser (HES)

Support for parents	
Provide written advice and guidance (through leaflets)	The Head of the Education Welfare and Student Support Service
Provide advice and guidance in response to complaints	Head of Conciliation, Advice and Appeals Service
Provide support where the child's regular school attendance is affected by bullying at school	Head of Education Welfare Service
Provide opportunities for development of parenting skills	PSHE Advisers (HES)
Support for Children	
Provide support where the child's regular school attendance is affected by bullying in school	Head of Education Welfare Service
Referral at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice where a child's special educational needs are associated with- a) EBD including bullying other children b) EBD or learning difficulties arising from being bullied	Head of Educational Psychology Service
Provide befriending from a Youth Worker where on-going support is needed and/or where bullying is part of a larger difficulty in the child's life	Head of Youth Programmes Unit
Ensure access to counselling services where a child is perceived to have suffered trauma damage	Development Team Manager

Where there are concerns that a child may be suffering significant harm as a result of bullying at school the Child Protection EWO should be contacted.

5. Arrangements for Monitoring and Evaluation

- 5.1 The Head of the Education Welfare and Student Support Service is responsible for monitoring the arrangements described in this Policy Statement.
- 5.2 An Officer Group, chaired by the Head of the Education Welfare and Student Support Service and consisting of representatives from HES, the Education Welfare Service, CAAS, the SEN Advisory and Support Service, the SEN Support Service and MECSS will meet every 6 months to -
- monitor and evaluate the working of this policy
 - evaluate the data (including recording parental complaints, incidents in schools and effective polices and strategies used in schools)
 - agree responses to concerns identified through the evaluation of the data
 - produce reports for the Departmental Steering Group