

# Goole Town Council

## Anti-bullying Policy

March 2012

“Bullied children and bullies alike are badly affected when bullying is allowed to thrive.  
Bullying must never be tolerated”

(1999, KIDSCAPE Survey: Long Term Effects of Bullying)

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## **Anti-bullying Policy Statement**

Goole Town Council is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all children and young people, so they can participate in activities in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our organisation. If bullying does occur, all children and young people should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the Child Protection Officer (CPO, Nicola Dixon) or, in her absence, the Deputy CPO, (Charlie Studdy).

## **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding personal belongings, threatening gestures)
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racist	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic	because of, or focusing on the issues of sexuality
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber <sup>1</sup>	all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

## **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Children and young people who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving and may well have serious issues themselves, which affect their behaviour.

Goole Town Council has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying, in order to carry out their duty of care to safeguard all children involved in Council-run activities from harm. All children have a right to protection, and the needs of disabled children and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account.

## **Policy aims**

The aim of Goole Town Council's Anti-bullying Policy is to promote good practice and that:

- All volunteers and paid staff, as well as children and young people should have an understanding of what bullying is
- All volunteers and paid staff, as well as children and young people should know what the Council's policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises
- The Council takes bullying seriously. Children and young people and their parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Bullying will not be tolerated

## **Some of the Signs and Symptoms of Being Bullied**

A child may indicate by signs or behavior that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of coming to the group or participating in certain activities
- Doesn't want to go to Council-run activities on their own
- Changes their usual routine

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Cyber-bullying visit [www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying)

- 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 before coming to the group/organization
- Begins to behave negatively
- Comes home with clothes torn or personal possessions damaged or missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has money that is continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money or lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### **Procedures if bullying is suspected**

If bullying is suspected, the following procedures should be:

- Report bullying incidents to CPO or Deputy CPO
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by CPO or Deputy CPO
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
- Reassure the victim that you can be trusted and will help them, although you cannot promise to tell no-one else.
- Keep records of what is said (what happened, by whom, when).
- Report any concerns to the CPO or Deputy CPO

An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour by:

- Talk with the bully(ies), explain the situation, and try to get the bully(ies) to understand the consequences of their behaviour. Seek an apology to the victim(s).
- Inform the bully(ies)'s parents.
- Insist on the return of 'borrowed' items and that the bully(ies) compensate the victim.
- Impose sanctions as necessary.
- Encourage and support the bully(ies) to change behaviour.
- Hold meetings with the families to report on progress.
- Inform all organisation members of action taken.
- Keep a written record of action taken.
- Look at supporting the bully(ies) with any issues they may have, link in with existing support services

### **Outcomes**

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to apologise genuinely and sometimes other consequences may take place
- In serious cases, exclusion from the Council's activities may be considered
- If possible, the children and young people will be reconciled

- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place

### **Prevention**

We will use methods to help children and young people prevent bullying, as and when appropriate. These may include:

- Writing a set of rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

### **Support to deal with the aftermath of bullying**

- Consideration should be given to the kind of support that children, parents and members of staff or volunteers may need.
- Consideration should also be given to what kind of support may be appropriate for the alleged bully (ies)

Use of helplines, support groups and open meetings will maintain an open culture and help the healing process. Some useful organizations are:

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| ○ KIDSCAPE parents Helpline (Mon-Fri 10-4) | 0845 1 205 204   |
| ○ Childline                                | 0800 1111  |
| ○ Parentline Plus                          | 0808 800 2222  |
| ○ Youth Access                             | 020 8772 9900  |
| ○ Childline                                | <a href="http://www.childline.org.uk">www.childline.org.uk</a> |
| ○ Bullying Online                          | <a href="http://www.bullying.co.uk">www.bullying.co.uk</a>     |
| ○ Kidscape                                 | <a href="http://www.kidscape.org.uk">www.kidscape.org.uk</a>   |

(Information adapted from 'Kidscape – Anti-bullying policy for schools')

### **Declaration for Goole Town Council Staff, Freelancers and Volunteers**

I confirm that I have received a copy of Goole Town Council's anti-bullying policy and I commit to upholding and working within the guidelines.

Signature:

Date: