



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Adopted October 2019
Updated September 2024

Anti-bullying Policy

We are very proud of the fact that bullying at The ARC Centre is a rare occurrence. We believe that this is as a result of the ARC's ethos which encourages the children to care for each other. We have created an atmosphere where children feel that they can speak to each other and to adults openly, with the confidence that they will be listened to.

Nevertheless, we recognise that bullying is a serious issue which deserves the full attention and concern of all the adults within the ARC community. The following policy reflects and informs our approach.

What is bullying?

If we are to deal with the issue of bullying effectively, then it is necessary to have agreement on what actually constitutes bullying.

For the purposes of the Policy, The ARC Centre defines bullying behaviour as

Several
Times
On
Purpose

We appreciate that there can be times whereby children do not appear to 'get along' with one another. Where possible, we will try to work with both parties to support building relationships. For the behaviour to be deemed as bullying, there needs to be an ongoing element to this; it is not something that can happen once and then take place several months later after a period of calm between both parties.

ARC staff (as opposed to parents) are best placed to make the decision as to whether bullying behaviour is evident after reviewing all of the information provided, as they are not emotionally involved in the situation.

Bullying can take many forms including but not limited to:

Physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings;

Verbal - name-calling, insulting, racist remarks;

Indirect - spreading unkind stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups, cyber bullying (using the internet, mobile phones or social media).

Low-level group misbehaviour - This causes distress and escalation of unacceptable behaviour

We recognise that in very young children whilst learning socially acceptable boundaries they may on occasion exhibit some of this behaviour, often without deliberate intent and awareness of the consequences. Such occurrences may not constitute bullying. In these cases the ARC's normal disciplinary procedures will be applied.

There may also be times where children can fall out with one another and both may become embroiled in an argument between one another. Whilst unfortunate, if both members are involved in this conflict situation, it would not constitute bullying. We will always try to support the children in resolving these differences in opinion, seeking a peaceful resolution.

What steps do we take to prevent bullying?

There are a range of ongoing activities which help to prevent bullying. They include:

- praising and recognising co-operative behaviour;
- active adult supervision during break times and lunch times;
- providing a range of equipment to be used during classes;
- ensure all adults within the ARC environment embrace a listening culture where children's concerns are taken seriously;

- talking about our policy and encouraging children to speak out;
- encouraging inclusiveness at all times.

What happens when a bullying incident is reported?

All incidents occurring whilst children are the responsibility of the ARC should be reported to the class Ranger.

A Bullying Incident Form should be completed when staff suspect there to be a recurring pattern of unwanted behaviour towards an individual or group over a sustained period of time or where ANY allegation of bullying is made so that this can be investigated.

How does the ARC investigate incidents of bullying within the ARC?

Once bullying is reported, a member of the leadership team will consider the concerns raised on the Bullying Incident Form. In order to get a clear understanding of the situation the member of staff will need to investigate the matter which may include but is not limited to:

- Speaking to each of the children involved.
- Speaking with other children who may have witnessed the behaviour.
- Carrying out an observation of the pupils in question.
- Speaking to the child's class Ranger or previous class Ranger to get their thoughts on the situation.
- Speaking to the child's parents to ascertain their views.

Once the member of the leadership has investigated the matter, they will decide as to whether they believe bullying behaviour to be present. This will be communicated to those concerned.

What happens when an incident of bullying is confirmed?

In such cases our practice will be as follows:

1. Director talks to victim(s) - listens to their concerns and worries in a supportive, non-threatening manner - will normally suggest that a meeting with the perpetrator(s) might help.
2. Director talks to perpetrator(s) in a non-confrontational manner - discusses the incident attempts to discover the reasons / motives - impresses on the perpetrator(s) the thoughts and feelings of the victim (in a manner which does not further threaten the victim) providing strategies for the perpetrator(s) to help change behaviour.
3. Director meets with both the victim and perpetrator (if both willing) to try and find a way forwards and to put a stop to any further episodes of bullying behaviour.
4. Director informs the class Ranger, other involved adults, (and occasionally other children), of outcomes.
5. Meet with staff / pupils involved (where necessary) to review the situation - discuss any further issues. This would happen ideally within a two-week period.
6. Monitor as necessary, keeping a record of any low level behaviour.

What sanctions are appropriate for an incident of bullying?

In light of the approach outlined above additional sanctions may not be helpful; however in certain severe cases, the following sanctions can and will be applied:

- Completion of reflective behaviour sheet;
- Written letter of apology to victim/s

- Exclusion from lunch times;
- Individual supervision at break times / lunch times if the child is present during these times;
- Temporary exclusion from ARC and, in the most extreme cases, permanent exclusion.

Parental involvement

Parents will be kept informed of the investigation arising from the allegations and any subsequent action that the ARC may take to prevent a further occurrence.