

Friday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019



Dear Parent/Carer,

At various points in the school year, we will have a focus on bullying and we remind the children about how to recognise bullying and what to do. It is a word that crops up in the press a lot, because it can have such drastic effects on people's lives, both children and adults. It is for this reason that I am writing to you, because I want to ensure that Russell Hall is a place where this does not happen and children and adults know what to do if it does.

I sent a similar letter to this one out to parents in 2015 and lots of parents said that they found it really useful, so I thought it would be a good idea to send it again.

Firstly, it is essential that we have a joint understanding of what the term 'Bullying' means and that we all use it correctly. Our children used to talk about 'being bullied' and when we investigated, often they had had a fall out with someone, or someone had been unkind or hurt them in some way. Whilst these things still needed to be dealt with, we have spent time trying to clarify with the children that these isolated incidents are not bullying. A little while ago, the School Council were asked to write the definition of bullying for the Anti-bullying Policy. This is what they wrote:

***Bullying is when someone is picking on another person over a period of time.***

*Picking on someone can be saying unkind things to them, shouting at them, lying about them or changing their words to get them in to trouble. It could be when someone persuades another to do bad things by threatening them or taking things from them. It may be picking on someone because of something personal about that person, including the way that they look, behave, their beliefs, their home life or because they are unable to do something in particular. It might be hurting someone on the outside or on the inside. This might be done face-to-face, on paper, through texts or over the phone or internet.*

I think they did a great job of making it very simple and clear for other children to understand. This has helped children to understand the term better and we will be going over this again at school.

We will never completely eradicate bullying, because children are still growing up and learning and at times will still make poor choices and decisions about how to treat others. However, as well as teaching children how to make better choices, we aim to teach children how to be resilient, what to do if others are unkind to them and very importantly what to do if they think they are being bullied. This way, we can ensure that when bullying does happen, it is dealt with quickly and effectively. The main message is always to tell someone and we talk to children about who that might be and what will happen once they have done this.

#### **What can you do as a parent?**

Listen to your child and listen to the details of what they recount. Does it fit into the definition of bullying as outlined above?

Try to talk through with your child what they could do in a scenario. These are my top tips which I teach to all of our children and which you could remind the children of (using them depends on the situation that a child is in and we discuss this too):

- Ignore, smile, walk away – don't show that you are bothered
- Use humour
- Practice using a firm voice, making eye contact and rehearse phrases 'stop it or I am going to tell a teacher'





- If anyone tries to hurt them use a firm voice to say 'no' or 'stop it' and go immediately to an adult.
- Tell an adult clearly what has happened and if it happens again, try to tell the same adult that it has happened again or tell someone that it has happened before and who you told last time.
- Tell someone at home, who would be able to follow it up

Where possible (this depends on the age/confidence/severity of what is happening) try to let the child deal with it, using the advice that you have given them. This will develop their ability to deal with situations in the future, help them to become more resilient and give them confidence.

Do follow up with your child, as casually as possible, on what they did and what happened. Praise them for their actions and talk through next steps with them, depending on the outcome.

Be careful when checking in with your child at the end of a school day, not to focus on a particular relationship with another child. If they think that you want to hear a report, they will tell you things which they probably wouldn't have bothered to before, because they think it is important to you. Ask them generally about their day and let them tell you if there have been any further problems.

Always come and speak to someone in school if you feel that your child is being bullied. School has an electronic system which we use to make a record of the meeting, your concerns and what action they are going to put in place. This enables us to look back over time to see if there has been any concerns in the past. It also means that we can share the information with any key staff in school, who can then assist in monitoring the situation and supporting your child effectively.

We are pleased that incidents of bullying at Russell Hall are rare, but we need to ensure that we give out the same messages regularly, to ensure that bullying remains a rarity in our school. This judgement is made by looking at our existing records of bullying incidents and also what you, as parents have said in the past about bullying in school. You have also said that that you think that it is rare and that when it does occur, school deals with it well.

Many thanks for your continued support,

Yours sincerely

Mrs A Grist  
Headteacher