Red Hall Primary School

Dealing with Homophobic Name Calling Policy

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Our Ethos

At Red Hall Primary School, we are committed to supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of our whole school community – pupils, staff, parents/carers and governors.

We have worked hard to develop a unique ethos, which puts our children and the staff's well-being at the heart of everything we do. This is what sits at the core of the service we provide at Red Hall Primary School.

We know that everyone experiences life challenges that can make us vulnerable and at times, anyone may need additional emotional support. We take the view that positive mental health is everybody's business and that we all have a role to play.

At our school we:

- o help children to understand and manage their emotions and feelings better
- o help children and staff to feel comfortable sharing any concerns or worries
- o help children socially to form and maintain relationships
- o promote self-esteem and ensure children and staff know that they count
- o support children to recognise the impact of choices they make
- o encourage children and staff to be confident
- o help children and staff to develop emotional resilience and to manage setbacks

'Every child in every school has the right to learn free from the fear of bullying, whatever form that bullying may take. Everyone involved in a child's education needs to work together to ensure this is the case.'[1]

Incidents of homophobic name calling/bullying are taken seriously and responded to in a similar way to other incidents. We recognise both indirect homophobic abuse e.g. 'your bag's gay" and direct homophobic abuse e.g. a boy is called a 'poof'.

Principles

The Law

- It is illegal to discriminate against those who are lesbian, homosexual, or bisexual (2007 Equality Act)
- Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, head teachers, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school staff, must identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others, self discipline among pupils and to prevent all forms of bullying. This includes the prevention of homophobic bullying.
- Staff are protected under the Employment Equality (Sexual orientation) Regulations 2003.

What does it look like?

- Homophobic bullying/name calling occurs when bullying motivated by a prejudice against lesbians, gay or bisexual people
- It can include spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are "gay" – for example, "You're such a gay boy" or "That's gay"

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[1] Safe To Learn, Embedding Ant- Bullying work in Schools – Homophobic Bullying DCSF 2007

- Even when pupils may not know what the words mean, but use homophobic language against others, it is still a form of bullying/name calling
- We do not view homophobic name-calling as "harmless banter". We recognise that if it is not challenged at primary school it is harder to address at secondary school
- If a pupil is not explicitly told that homophobic bullying is wrong, they may think it is OK to do this

Responding to an Incident

If we hear a child using homophobic language **we will address it**, using the agreed guidance below and guided by our knowledge of the individual pupil's maturity and personal circumstances.

Foundation pupils

1. Establish why homophobic language was used? What was the motivation?
2. How did it make X feel?
3. Explain 'gay' is not the right word to use. What could they have done/said instead? Help child to understand how their behaviour affects others.
4. Ask the child to choose other words/actions which would help solve the problem in a positive way.

Y1-Y3 pupils

1. Establish why homophobic language was used? What was the motivation?
2. How did it make X feel?
3. Ask if they know what the word means. After pupil answers –

- Clarify "It's when two men or two women love each other".
- State "Calling someone gay/something gay is not acceptable when the word is used to tease or upset someone." Help child to understand how their behaviour affects others.

4. Resolve conflict (write letter, verbal apologies, shake hands etc) in line with Expectations and Choice Framework.
5. If name-calling continues sanction child in line with Expectations and Choice Framework.

Y4 - Y6

1. Establish why homophobic language was used. What was the motivation?
2. How did it make X feel?
3. Ask if they know what the words mean. After pupil answers –

- Clarify "It's when two men or two women love each other and there's nothing wrong with that/the law says there is nothing wrong with that"

- State "Calling someone gay/something gay is not acceptable when the word is used to tease or upset someone, as it's not using the word appropriately." Help child to understand how their behaviour affects others.

4. Resolve conflict (write letter, verbal apologies, shake hands etc) in line with Expectations and Choice Framework.
5. If name-calling continues sanction child in line with Expectations and Choice Framework.

Recording of incidents

Any incidents of homophobic language being used are recorded using the CPOMs system. The appropriate staff members are informed as well as all Senior Leaders. The Head teacher reports the number of incidents to the Governing body through the termly Head teacher's report.

If you wish to read further: please visit www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications and read Safe To Learn, the over arching guidance on bullying and the supplementary guidance: Homophobic Bullying.
Cyberbullying
There is also material on countering racist bullying.