



St John's Catholic Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full'

(John 10:10)

Our Approach to Bullying

Occurrences of bullying are taken very seriously. In recognition of the damage that bullying can cause to children, in both the short and long term, they are dealt with as quickly as possible. If a child is bullied at school, it can affect the decisions they make and ultimately their life chances.

Bullying, both verbal and physical, will not be tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent it happening and protect pupils from emotional or physical harm, whilst helping those children who bully to develop positive relationships with other pupils.

Although bullying is sometimes widespread within communities, the policies and practice of this school demonstrate that we do not think of bullying as an acceptable fact of life. This policy contains guidelines for all members of the school community.

In our school children have a right to feel welcome, safe and content. In our school we will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks even if these were not intended to hurt. Children feel safe in a school where bullying is taken seriously and acted upon. They need to feel that their voices are heard, both in structured meetings and when reporting incidents to individual adults in school.

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour and, in the worst cases, can be repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the person concerned to defend him or herself. This is regarded as being different to a single act of

aggression, which although is serious, will need to be dealt with differently. Bullying can take many forms. The main types are:-

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg. hiding books) 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 focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls and misuse of associated technology i.e. camera & video facilities.

It is important to understand that bullying is not odd, occasional falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional 'joke' is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

It is bullying if it is done repeatedly and on purpose. Whenever the opportunity arises it must be made profoundly clear that we will not tolerate bullying at St. John's. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can grow and learn in a relaxed and safe setting.

Working definition of bullying

Our child friendly definition is:

"Anything someone does to you that, when you ask them to stop, they continue to do so".

Aims

- We aim to prevent bullying at St. John's Catholic Primary School and deal quickly and effectively with any occurrences.
- We aim to involve pupils in combating bullying.
- To ensure that pupils who engage in bullying recognise the effects of their actions and change.
- We aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school through personal, social and health education.
- We aim to improve the play facilities so that we provide an interesting and stimulating environment for pupils; alongside quiet seating areas that can be easily supervised.

As a school community we aim to:

- Discuss, monitor and review our anti bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Support all staff to promote positive relationships to prevent bullying and will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensure that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Report back to parents/carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents/carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Seek to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilise support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.

Reasons for being a victim may be:

- A child who is perceived as being different;
- Race/sex/background;
- New child in school or a child with few friends;
- A child with family crisis;
- Disability or special need of some kind;
- Children who may be on the edge or outside a group;
- Having friends who are difficult to trust.

Reasons for engaging in bullying may be:

- Victim of violence or emotional abuse;
- Experience of being bullied themselves;
- Enjoyment of power/creating fear;
- No ability to show feelings;
- Copying behaviour;
- Unhappy;
- Insecure;
- Low self-esteem;
- A sense of inequality of power.

Early signs of distress:

- Withdrawn;
- Deterioration of work;
- Spurious illness;
- Isolation;
- Desire to remain with adults;
- Erratic attendance;
- General unhappiness/anxiety/fear;
- Late arrivals;
- Bed wetting;
- Crying themselves to sleep;

- Unexplained cuts, scratches or bruises;
- Unexplained missing/damaged possessions.

Strategies for preventing, identifying and responding to bullying:

We will:

- Promote anti-bullying strategies for all pupils via the school's PHSE programmes;
- Be vigilant for signs of bullying;
- Always take reports of bullying seriously and investigate them thoroughly;
- Carry out regular audits to provide accurate data in order to measure improvements.
- Create and support an inclusive environment to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience.
- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience.
- Provide a range of approaches for pupils, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Challenge practice which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying in all forms throughout the curriculum and supported with a range of approaches such as through displays, assemblies, peer support and the school council.
- Regularly up date and evaluate our approaches to take into account the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Train all staff including teaching staff, support staff (including administration staff, lunchtime support staff and site support staff) and pastoral staff to identify all forms of bullying, follow the school policy and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents.)
- Proactively gather and record concerns and intelligence about bullying incidents and issues so as to effectively develop strategies to prevent bullying from occurring.
- Actively create 'safe spaces' for vulnerable children.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullies.
- Work with agencies and the wider school community to prevent and tackle concerns.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- Be encourages to use social media responsibly.

Involvement of pupils

We will:

- Regularly canvas children's' views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns and embedded messages in the wider school curriculum.
- Publicise the details of help lines and websites.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying in order to address the problems they have.
- Children will be encouraged to report all incidents of bullying to an adult, through creating a safe environment for children to speak. This will be done through assemblies and the PSHE curriculum. Incidents will then be referred to the class teacher or directly to the Headteacher, depending on the situation.

Each class teacher should:

Use the curriculum to increase the children's awareness of bullying and to help them to develop strategies to combat it. Use discussion and role-play to explore issues related to bullying and to give individual children confidence to deal with 'bullying'.

If the incident is not too serious, a 'problem solving' approach may help. The adult tries to remain neutral and deliberately avoids direct, closed questions, which might be perceived as accusatory or interrogational in style. He or she makes sure each pupil has an opportunity to talk and keeps the discussion focused on finding a solution and stopping the bullying from recurring. The teacher can aim to help the pupils find their own solution to the personal disagreement and also discuss with them how their proposals will be put into action. A follow-up meeting with the pupils can find out whether their solution has been effective or not.

A record must be kept of the incident i.e. date, time, place, names of children involved and their accounts of what happened. Older pupils may be able to write these themselves.

Persistent bullies will be involved in a plan between home and school and strategies will be put in place to make sure that he/she is not able to continue their actions.

It is important that children who bully understand that they can, and must, change. This can be a very positive experience for children at a key stage in the development of their interpersonal skills.

The senior leadership team will monitor the frequency of incidences of bullying. Whole school strategies will be developed if it is noticed that there has been an increase in bullying, however slight.

Strategies to support the victims of bullying

As mentioned earlier, children should be encouraged to report incidents which they have found upsetting. This is done in a variety of ways, firstly, by making it clear to pupils that they have a responsibility to themselves and others to report incidents. The way in which teachers and senior managers deal with reports of bullying may also encourage or discourage children from reporting things in the future. Liaison with parents in terms of awareness of the Anti-bullying policy and any incidents will allow them to fulfil their role in reporting any concerns to the school. This is especially important when children are reluctant to come forward in school.

If the problems experienced by the child appear to have ceased, there is still essential follow-up work which needs to be done. The class teacher will ask the child at intervals and observe the child's behaviour closely in order to ensure that any bullying has stopped. A date will also be set for a formal meeting with parents approximately two weeks after the incident has been dealt with to discuss the matter. If this is a one-off incident of bullying, it is likely that the class teacher will hold the meeting. However, if an incident has led to further incidents, the Headteacher will be involved with the class teacher and the parents.

Staff

- Ensure pupils are supervised well at playtime and lunchtime.
- Monitor secluded areas such as toilets, corridors and doorways.
- Observe pupils' play patterns and relationships – note children who appear isolated or unhappy and inform the class teacher.
- Investigate every allegation of bullying – this includes where a child perceives that they are being bullied even if the evidence does not, at first glance, appear to verify this.
- Encourage children to use the play equipment and quiet areas around the school.

Parents

Parents of both victim and bully will be informed and staff will undertake to give feedback to parents on the steps taken. Involvement of parents at an early stage is essential.

Parents will be encourage to report any concerns to their child's teacher, as we recognise that there are occasions when a child's worries may only be expressed at home. When an investigation is being carried out, a date to discuss progress should be set at the initial meeting.

This policy should be seen as part of the School Behaviour policy and will be reviewed at least annually and in the light of any changing circumstances.

Monitoring, Management and Review

All staff in the school community are aware of the school's Anti-bullying policy and are monitored to ensure that the policy is adhered to. It is the job of Senior Managers to identify any need for further training for staff and any aspect of school improvement that would make inappropriate behaviour less likely.

Aspects of bullying behaviour are discussed in our personal, social and health education programmes as well as in school meetings. The results of audits carried out by interviewing pupils help to feed into the information gathering to enable us to develop effective policies.

The person responsible for this Policy is Jonathan Shields

Date of review: October 2017

Date of next review: October 2018