

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

'LIVE, LOVE AND LEARN IN A CARING CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY'

Introduction

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

We firmly believe that no one deserves to be a victim of bullying and that bullying behavior is in all circumstances unacceptable. If it does occur, all pupils should be able to tell the staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

The following principles inform our anti-bullying approach:

- All adults in the school community (staff, governors and parents/carers) are expected to present positive role models to children.
- Bullying is a shared problem and staff and parents will need to work together in partnership to resolve incidents.
- The safety and welfare of the children concerned will at all times be central to decisions about actions taken in response to bullying.
- Anti-bullying approaches will be consistent with the values of a Catholic community and preparing children for life in an inclusive society. These include incorporating an acceptance of and valuing of difference, the need to cope with difficult individuals and the role of forgiveness.
- When incidents have been dealt with, all parties should be supported and enabled to move on positively. In keeping with our shared faith, it is our aim that in the resolution of incidents pupils should wherever possible be reconciled.

What is bullying?

Bullying behavior is defined when all three of the following dimensions occur *:

- Hurt has been deliberately/knowingly caused (physically or emotionally)
- It is a repeated incident or experience e.g. multiple incidents
- Involves an imbalance of power:
 - target feels s/he cannot defend her/himself, or
 - perpetrator/s exploiting their power (eg size, age, popularity etc.)

*HCC guidelines February 2012

Hurt has been deliberately/knowingly caused (physically or emotionally)

It is the deliberate, unjustifiable and unprovoked use of aggressive behaviour. It includes actions that cause physical, emotional or mental hurt to the victim and actions that violate another person's freedom and rights.

It is a repeated incident or experience e.g. multiple incidents

Being bullied is the experience of persistent or repeated anti-social behaviour.

Involves an imbalance of power

The person/s being bullied find it difficult to reject or deal with the offending behaviour, or those involved in the bullying behaviour have power over the victim. Some power imbalances can be subtle or build up over time, but more common examples include that they are bigger/stronger/older, have more friends, are more established in the school or care less about the consequences of their actions. Bullying behaviour can involve individuals or groups.

Bullying can be:

- *Emotional* being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- *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 issue of sexuality
- *Verbal* name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- *Cyber* all internet areas, e.g. e-mail and internet chat room misuse; mobile threats by text messaging and calls; misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

**racist bullying is defined as 'any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.'*

When is it not bullying?

- when the incident is a one off or is in isolation
- when the action is not deliberate
- teasing/banter between friends without intention to cause hurt (should not happen again)
- falling out between friends after a quarrel, disagreement or misunderstanding
- conflict that got out of hand (should not happen again)
- activities that all parties have consented to and enjoyed

Not all hurtful behaviour is bullying, but all hurtful behaviour is unacceptable in school. Although not all hurtful behaviour is intentional, all hurtful behaviours are a matter of concern and will be dealt with by the school.

Where pupils cause harm or distress without intent, the impact of their behaviour will be pointed out and any continuance will be regarded as intentional.

Preventing bullying

The school will promote an anti-bullying ethos through:

- displaying material around the school by a variety of means (posters, website etc.)
- providing information on policy and practice to parents/carers, staff and visitors both in literature and on the website
- teaching pupils how to raise their concerns and how to help each other respond assertively to bullying
- using curriculum opportunities to address the issues
- making sure all staff (teachers, teaching assistants and other support workers) are trained to model appropriate behaviour and challenge bullying according to school guidance.

Above all, pupils are encouraged to become actively and increasingly involved in the anti-bullying work of our school by following these DOs and DON'Ts:

| DO | DON'T |
|---|--|
| DO be assertive and say “No!” to bullying. | DON'T turn a blind eye to bullying. |
| DO tell someone if you think you are being bullied or threatened. | DON'T join in with making fun of the child being bullied, even if you don't feel able to challenge the bullying behaviour yourself. |
| DO be observant for signs that another child is unhappy. | DON'T gang up against another child in a vulnerable position. |
| DO tell a member of staff when you think someone is being bullied or threatened. | DON'T be a bystander. If you do nothing to help, you are involved in the bullying. There is no such thing as an innocent bystander. |
| DO tell when you think someone is bullying others or is threatening them. | |
| DO support other children when they are vulnerable. | |

Labelling Pupils

The school avoids at all times labelling pupils as either victims or bullies. It is important that pupils who have been the targets of bullying behaviours are able to see that this experience will end and that it is not the result of something about themselves that has attracted or deserved such treatment by others.

Similarly children who have engaged in bullying behaviour will be expected to resolve the matter and change their behaviour. It should be remembered that there is no typical “bully”. Many children may use bullying behaviours from time to time.

Investigating allegations of bullying

All incidents of bullying must be reported and all such reports will be taken seriously. The perspective of the person who feels bullied will contribute to understanding and establishing the seriousness of the incident.

All identified incidents should be recorded by adults in the school using our agreed forms. (Annex 1 and 2)

- a) All allegations of bullying should be reported to the class teacher for initial investigation using **Form 1** - the format for the initial recording of all alleged hurtful incidents.
- b) The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must then be investigated and stopped quickly. Incidents of bullying must be recorded by staff/class teacher using **Form 2** and copied to the Headteacher.
- c) Parents should also be informed and invited to attend a meeting to discuss the matter. If necessary and appropriate, police should be consulted.
- d) Attempts must be made to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
- e) Persistent bullying could result in fixed term or permanent exclusion as a last resort.

Please note that if having investigated the bullying allegation, including witnesses, if there is no evidence to support the allegation, the school will not be able to take one child's word over another and the process can't be taken any further.

Single incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to and will be dealt with by the class teacher. (The Headteacher will be kept informed of any incidents dealt with by the class teacher so that he/she holds the overview across the school.) Follow up and ongoing monitoring will be conducted by the class teacher whilst keeping the Headteacher informed at all times, even if it is felt that the matter has been resolved. If the behaviour dealt with by class teachers continues it will be referred to the Headteacher.

All repeated bullying behaviour should be reported directly to the Headteacher. Significant incidents will be entered in the serious incidents book and all parents whose children are directly involved will be notified of significant incidents.

Responses to all bullying behaviour will be educative and seek to ensure that this behaviour will not be repeated. A child who has been involved in bullying behaviour will be expected to take responsibility for the impact of their behaviour on others, the reasons for their behaviour will be explored and they will be expected to improve and change. The aim will be to resolve incidents, rebuild relationships and restore a safe environment for all. Incidents will be resolved in age-appropriate ways. Those who have been bullied have a right to know that action has been taken.

Timings

The school recognises that speed of response is important and wherever possible incidents will be resolved quickly. However, significant incidents will involve investigation and this can cause delay to the resolution. The school will need to take the time necessary to respond to and resolve incidents appropriately, while ensuring the safety of the child who feels bullied.

The role/involvement of parents

Parents have an important role in actively encouraging their child/ren to be a positive member of the school. Dealing with behaviour problems effectively requires the school and parents to work in partnership. To this end it is included in the Home School Agreement.

If parents have concerns about bullying or hurtful behaviour they should take up those concerns with the class teacher as soon as possible.

Parents should raise any concerns about bullying or other hurtful behaviour directly with the school and not with the parents of other parties, involved or otherwise. While we recognise that parents who are friends may wish to resolve matters informally they are advised that the school should always be made aware of tensions and difficulties between children so that they can be supported appropriately. The best place to resolve conflicts between children is in school where all sides and aspects of incidents can be explored.

Parents are expected to exercise reasonable confidentiality around incidents in which they are involved. In particular, parents are requested not to spread stories about incidents. Partial information can be inaccurate and may affect the reputation of the school and of individual children and damage the atmosphere in the school community.

Parents will be informed of any significant incidents involving their children in order to enable them to support their child and the school in seeking resolution and restoring a safe environment for all children.

Outcomes

The successful application of this policy should quickly resolve most incidents of bullying. Hopefully, this should lead to an apology by the bully/bullies and a reconciliation of the parties involved. However, in serious cases it may be necessary to consider suspension or even exclusion. In any event, after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case must be carefully monitored to prevent a recurrence.

The Governing Body supports the Headteacher in all strategies to eliminate bullying from our school, while still recognising that it is likely to occur in school from time to time. It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor and review the anti-bullying policy and its effectiveness.