

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy (Pupils) 2023

I am special in God's eyes

We will be a happy, welcoming school with Christ at the centre, where everyone is recognised as special
"Do not be afraid for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by your name,
you are mine.
Because you are precious in my eyes,
because you are honoured and I love you."
Isaiah 43 : 2-5

Introduction

At St Joseph's Catholic Infant School every effort will be made to provide a safe and secure environment where all pupils can develop knowledge, skills and confidence. To this end we totally reject all forms of bullying. We take seriously any signs of distress caused by bullying and are determined to deal with incidents of bullying efficiently, effectively and consistently.

In response to our mission statement we take seriously our responsibility to respect each member of our community and to ensure equality of opportunity and esteem for all. We seek to develop a positive attitude to the cultural diversity of our school community.

Regular opportunities will be found to consider issues related to bullying and to reinforce the school Anti-Bullying policy.

We do this through:

- Religious Education
- Assemblies
- PSHE
- School Council

Bullying is seen as deliberate behaviour, usually persistent, which has the intention of intimidating another person. The act of bullying may be physical, psychological, verbal or a combination of these.

All staff have a duty to respond to any issues of bullying they witness or that are brought to their attention.

Definition

Bullying is any behaviour, which is deliberately intended to hurt, threaten or frighten another person or group of people. It is usually unprovoked, happens on a regular basis as part of a pattern of behaviour and can continue for a long period of time. It always reflects the abuse of power, with one (or more) persons a victim and the other, a bully, dominance of the powerful over the powerless. Bullying can take place in school, out of school, online or text messaging (also known as cyber bullying). It is important to distinguish between bullying behaviour, which is usually deliberate and planned, and behaviour which although unacceptable, can be related to immaturity and a child's stage of development rather than a pre-meditated or pre-planned act.

Aims and objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. At St Joseph's we therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

We aim to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

At St Joseph's school we follow the advice given by the DfE in their guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying'. We also seek advice and support from BSCB including the Education Psychology Service, the County Attendance Team and our local Pupil Referral Unit.

The role of governors (Local Academy Committee)

The Local Academy Committee supports the Head Teacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The Local Academy Committee will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.

The Local Academy Committee monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The governors require the Head Teacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the governors about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the chair of governors to look into the matter. The Local Academy Committee responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases the Local Academy Committee notifies the Head Teacher, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the Local Academy Committee.

The role of the Head Teacher

It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Head Teacher reports to the Local Academy Committee about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The Head Teacher ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Head Teacher and other staff draw the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Head Teacher may decide to use an assembly as the forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong, and why a pupil is being punished. At times specific activities are carried out to teach children about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and children are taught who they can seek help from.

The Head Teacher ensures that all staff, including lunchtime staff, receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.

The Head Teacher sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour. This is reinforced through the school's Behaviour Policy and its rewards system which are enshrined in the school's Mission Statement – 'We are all special in God's eyes'.

The role of the teacher and support staff

All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and seek to prevent it from taking place.

Teachers keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class, and that they are aware of in the school. If teachers witness an act of bullying, they will either investigate it themselves or refer it to the Head Teacher. Teachers and support staff do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then, the Head Teacher informs the parents of all children concerned.

Any adult who witnesses an incident of bullying either inside or outside of the classroom should report it to the Head Teacher who will then discuss what measures will be taken. Midday supervisors report incidents of poor behaviour to the class teacher and any significant incidents are reported to the Head teacher. Midday supervisors meet with the SMT (Senior Management Team) each term to discuss lunchtime supervision.

When any bullying takes place between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying. Time is spent talking to the child who has bullied: explaining why his/her action was wrong, and that child is encouraged to change his/her behaviour in future. If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, we inform the Head Teacher and the Special Needs coordinator. We then invite the child's parents into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Head Teacher may contact external support agencies, such as the social services, the Primary Referral Unit and education psychologists.

All members of staff are reminded at least annually of school policy and procedures with regard to behaviour management.

Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories etc., within the formal curriculum, to help pupils understand the feelings of bullied children, and to practise the restraint required to avoid lapsing into bullying behaviour. Circle time is used to praise, reward and celebrate the success of all children, and thus to help create a positive atmosphere.

The role of parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Head Teacher. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure, as detailed on the Trust website (accessed via the school website).

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.

The role of pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. Often the youngest children in our school let us know something is not right by changes in their behaviour that are out of character.

Pupils are invited to tell us their views about a range of school issues, including bullying in class discussions e.g. circle time or after lunch. This helps us to identify areas of concerns and patterns of behaviour in our school that we can address. It also helps us know when we are getting things right.

Monitoring and review

The implementation of this policy is monitored regularly by the Head Teacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy.

This Anti-Bullying Policy is the governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by examining the school's incident book, and by discussion with the Head Teacher. Governors analyse information with regard to gender, age and ethnic background of all children involved in bullying incidents.

This policy will be reviewed annually.

Linked Policies

This policy is linked to the:

Anti-Bullying and Harassment at Work Policy and Procedure for Schools

Date: September 2023

Review Date: September 2024

Appendix One

GUIDELINES FOR PREVENTING BULLYING

The nature of bullying means that it often takes place "secretly" in places where supervision is not constant e.g. toilets, cloakroom areas, less visible areas in the playground or out of earshot of teachers and other adults. This means that everyone needs to be vigilant:

- Check toilets as you go by
- Check cloakroom areas, particularly at play and lunchtimes
- Listen to the children
- Observe the children's behaviour and friendship patterns
- Never ignore aggressive behaviour - to ignore it is to condone it!

The sort of atmosphere that we want in our school is characterised by kindness, friendliness and tolerance. There should be respect for others and every child should feel safe and secure.

What should the child do?

1. Tell a teacher, they will report it and every incident will be investigated.
2. Be assertive - try to stick up for yourself.
3. You should not keep it a secret and you should not be ashamed.
4. Do not think that only violence is bullying - hurtful whispering or ostracizing is very upsetting and can make children miserable.

In order to prevent bullying, everyone must:

- Remind the children of the rules for acceptable behaviour. Our school rules are drawn up by the children and teachers and are displayed around the classrooms and school.
- Tell the children that bullying (verbal or physical) is not tolerated in this school. Everyone is expected to ensure that it does not happen and has the responsibility to tell - it is not telling tales.
- Encourage the children to discuss bullying in class, what it is, what can be done etc.
- If necessary, break up the group dynamics by assigning places in the classroom.

Most bullying groups have a leader with other children being frightened of not bullying. Turn peer pressure against bullying and break up groups.

- Teach children to be assertive. Differences should be acceptable and never a cause for bullying.
- Deal with bullying and intimidation immediately. Sorting it out is the responsibility of adults.
- Report all incidents or suspected incidents of bullying to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

IMPORTANT

If bullying is happening, find out the facts by talking to the bullies and victims individually. If the bullying is about particular issue (e.g. death, divorce, disfigurement), mount an education programme about the problem, but not focused on a particular child. Call in parents, ask for their suggestions and solicit their support.

If you come across bullying, what can you do?

- Remain calm; you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control over the situation.
- Take the incident or report seriously
- Take action as quickly as possible
- Think hard about whether your action needs to be private or public; who are the children involved?
- Reassure the victim(s); don't make them feel inadequate or foolish
- Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim(s)
- Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove
- Encourage the bully to see the victim(s) point of view
- Punish the bully if you have to, but be very careful how you do this. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it is all right to bully if you have the power
- Explain clearly the punishment and why it is being given.

Involve others:

- Inform the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
- Inform colleagues if the incident arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant e.g. toilets
- Inform/ask your Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher to speak to both sets of parents calmly, clearly and concisely; reassure both sets of parents that the incident will not linger on or be held against anyone.

Final steps:

- Make sure that the incident does not live on through reminders from you
- Try to think ahead to prevent a reoccurrence of the event if you uncover the trigger factor.

If you have to deal with bullying, what should you avoid?

- Being over-protective and refuse to allow the victim to help his/herself
- Assuming that the bully is bad through and through; try to look objectively at the behaviour with the bully
- Keeping the whole incident secret because you have dealt with it
- Trying to hide the incident from the parents of the victim or bully
- Calling in parents without having a constructive plan to offer either side.

Breaking up Bully 'Gangs'

- Meet with the victim(s) separately - have them write down what happened or write their version for them and read it back to them
- Meet with each member of the gang separately - have them write down what happened or write their version for them and read it back to them
- Agree with each member of the gang separately what you expect and discuss how he/she has broken the school guidelines
- Meet with the gang as a group and have each state what happened in your individual meeting; ensure that everyone is clear about what happened
- Prepare them to face their peer group - "What are you going to say when you leave here?"
- Whatever is decided, reiterate to all children that they are responsible if anyone is bullied - there are no innocent bystanders
- Talk to parents of all involved - show them the written statements
- Keep a file on bullying with all statements and penalties
- Do not accept false excuses:
 - if the bullying was an accident, did the children act by helping the victim or getting help or giving sympathy?
 - if it was just a laugh, was everyone laughing? if it was a game, was everyone enjoying it?

Why do children become "chronic" bullies?

- feel insecure
- feel inadequate
- feel humiliated
- are bullied by parents and siblings
- become a scapegoat in the family
- are physically, emotionally, sexually abused
- are under considerable pressure to succeed
- are not allowed to show feelings
- feel that they cannot fit in, they look odd or feel different to their peers
- feel no sense of accomplishment.

Punishment of bullies reinforces their negative feelings.

Helping the Bully:

- set clear limits
- write them down
- explain the penalties
- work on self-esteem, bolstering any good behaviour
- don't allow excuses