

St Joseph's RC Primary School



Anti-Bullying Policy



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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Bullying: A definition. It is important to recognise what, in law, is defined as bullying:

'Deliberate, hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time, and in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.' (DfES)

St. Joseph's School does not tolerate any form of bullying. It is up to all of us to stop bullying by making it unacceptable for anybody to be a bully without being found out. Bullying can take a wide range of forms, but if you do anything to another person which is meant to hurt them or embarrass them, either by yourself or as part of a group, this may be considered to be bullying. Some of the different types of bullying recognised by the school include:

*Emotional (being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, abusive comments, tormenting such as hiding belongings)

*Physical (pushing, hitting, shoving or any form of physical violence, unwanted physical contact.)

*Verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours)

*Cyber (all forms of abuse involving the internet, chat rooms mobile phones, email etc)

* Exclusion (deliberately ignoring and refusing to allow someone to join in)

* Possessions (hiding, stealing and destroying belongings)

Bullying can be motivated by many different factors; these include racial, homophobic, cultural and religious differences.

If you are being bullied the following responses should help:

1. Explain to the bully that his or her words/actions are upsetting; he or she may not be aware of this. With a friend if you can, say firmly, "Do you know that's a really hurtful thing to say/do?" "If you haven't anything good to say - say nothing." However if the bullying continues, try not to show your feelings.

2. Try to speak up for yourself, with the support of a friend if you can: Younger children are advised to say, "We don't do that in our school! Just play fair!" Or you can strongly and loudly say, "That's despicable. We don't do that in our school." Or, "You're wrecking the game - stop messing about and play football!"
3. Then with your friend or by yourself, walk away quickly and confidently, even if you don't feel that way inside. Teachers, helpers, prefects and your dinner ladies will always be watching out for you, especially at break times. We will see how you are behaving, and will also notice who is causing the upset.
4. There are lots of activities at break times, so choose your favourite and try to keep with a friend or friends.
5. The bully will not stop if she thinks he or she can get away with such behaviour. Discuss the problem with your friends, tell a member of staff or ask your friends to tell a member of staff. Talk to your family. Don't forget that you could also talk to your prefects.
6. Remember, we are all unique children of God. If you are different in any way, be proud of it-it's good to be an individual .

You can help to stop bullying:

1. If the girl or boy being bullied is in any danger, fetch help. If he or she is not, stay with them ; just being there can help to ease the situation.
2. Show that you and your friends disapprove. Speak up for what is right: for example say, loudly, "That's despicable. We don't do that in this school!" or, "You're wrecking the game - stop messing about and play football!" (or whatever game you are playing.) Or prefects can help the younger children to control the situation by saying, " We don't do that in our school. Play fair!"
3. Give sympathy and support to any other child who may be bullied.
4. Be careful about teasing or making personal remarks. If you think someone might not find your comments funny - don't say them. Think about other people's feelings before you speak.
5. If you know of serious bullying tell someone. The victim may be too scared or lonely to tell.

2. Parental Involvement :

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact.

If your child is being bullied :

Parents along with peers will probably be the first to hear of a bullying incident. They should not dismiss it. Parents should contact school if they are worried. It is essential to stay calm, supportive and find out the facts of the situation. Reassurance will be needed in order to persuade your child that he or she has done the right thing by telling you. You may find it helpful to have the following checklist at your side to ensure that correct information is passed to the school.

- *Who was involved?
- * Where did it take place?
- * How often?
- * Why did it take place?
- * What form did the bullying take?

When you inform the school of these details you will want to ask what you can do to support the school in the action taken to support your child. You will also want to make a note of the suggested strategy the school intends to take. Stay in touch with the school so that they can be kept informed of how things are improving and to establish further contact if necessary.

If your child is involved in the bullying It is important to work with the school to modify the patterns of behaviour which are causing your child to bully. Do not panic and blame yourself. Acknowledge that these things do happen and the school has mechanisms in place to deal with this issue. It is helpful to recognise some of the reasons why pupils behave in this way from time to time. Children sometimes bully others because:

- * They are not aware of how hurtful it is
- * They are copying the behaviour of older siblings or people they admire
- * They have a temporary difficulty integrating in their peer group
- * They are bullying others because of encouragement from friends
- * They are going through a difficult time personally and need help
- * They have not yet learnt satisfactory ways for making firm relationships

To stop your child from bullying others :

- * Talk with your child and help him or her to understand that what they are doing is unacceptable as it makes other children unhappy
- * Discourage other members of the family from using aggressive behaviour in order to get what they want
- * Suggest ways of joining in activities with other pupils without bullying
- * Liaise with the school: Talk to your child's teacher, Mrs Jones, our Learning Mentor or to the Head teacher who will always do her best to see you straight away if at all possible.
- * Make time to have regular chats about how things are going at school
- * Check that your child has identified an adult at school to whom he/she can go to if she has a problem or a worry of any kind .

NB the School will want to and need to take action if bullying occurs. The matter will be sensitively handled but it needs to be effective.

If you have a complaint about how any issue has been dealt with, please use the complaints procedure as set out in our brochure: contact school in the first instance .

3. Although the definition of bullying in common law includes a repetitive element, staff should be vigilant about seemingly isolated incidents which can form a pattern or the development of an asymmetrical power relationship.

Signs of bullying:

A pupil who is being bullied may display some of the following signs:

- * Becomes frightened of coming to school, or frightened to attend specific lessons or go into specific areas of the school
- * Changes to their usual routine
- * Becomes more withdrawn or anxious than previously
- * Begins stammering
- * Threatens to run away or runs away
- * Threatens suicide
- * Begins to perform poorly at school
- * Frequently has missing or damaged possessions
- * Is always asking for extra money or never has money
- * Has unexplained injuries

- * Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- * Begins to bully others
- * Stops eating or attending meals
- * Is afraid to use the internet or a mobile phone
- * Becomes nervous when a cyber message is received
- * Is reluctant to discuss reasons for any of the above

4. School Policy on Prevention of Bullying

The school aims to prevent bullying from becoming established. When the children's views are sought, they report that they feel safe and there is no bullying. Children are given strategies to help them develop self confidence and become assertive yet polite individuals and team members. Staff are vigilant and have successfully established a culture in which bullying is not tolerated and where it is seen as the responsibility of all members of the school community to report any instances of bullying.

- * Teachers and other members of staff are always there to listen to children and to watch carefully for signs of loneliness or unhappiness.

- * The Year Six Forum provides an opportunity for children to raise general issues of concern.

- * The curriculum, especially Religious Education, is used as a vital means of supporting families in teaching children right from wrong, how to manage these feelings and specific issues are taken up by Teachers and our Learning Mentor.

- * Children are encouraged to become strong individuals, developing a secure sense of self belief by nurturing their talents. We aim to raise self esteem by raising actual attainment in all areas of learning to the highest extent possible for each child.

Bullying events may be identified in several ways:

- * Disclosure to a member of staff by the individual being bullied
- * Disclosure to another pupil by the individual being bullied
- * Witnesses to specific bullying events
- * Suspicion of bullying based upon the indicators listed above.

In all cases an allegation of bullying should be treated seriously, open mindedly, fairly and investigated thoroughly. Isolated incidents between pupils may be considered on a

case by case basis, but may not require the more prolonged investigation which is often associated with bullying.

Investigating a suspected case of bullying

All members of staff have a duty to respond straight away if they suspect, or are made aware of, a case of bullying. It may be possible for the staff involved to carry out an initial investigation; however, the preferred route is for staff to make a note of the date, time and nature of the incident in their Incident book. Patterns may then be noticeable or developing. Evidence should be passed onto the child's class teacher, the Child Protection Leader (head teacher) and the Learning Mentor. Monitoring and vigilance should then be stepped up - it is then even more important than normal. An investigation of bullying will take time: there are no instant solutions. However, the member of staff investigating should take the following steps:

- * Victim(s), Aggressor(s) and Witness(es) will be interviewed by the member of staff investigating. All parties will be reassured of the discretion of the school in dealing with such matters within the limits of our confidentiality policy. The victim(s) in particular should be reassured that the matter will be dealt with and is being treated seriously.
- * If the victim reports the matter, they should be spoken to first. If not, any witnesses should be interviewed, followed by the accused pupil and finally the victim.
- * All pupils involved in the situation should be given a fair hearing and be permitted to tell their version of events without comment upon the nature of the behaviour described.
- * A written summary of the information gathered should be made, and agreed by the individuals involved. This is important as it will enable the victim and witnesses to feel reassured that action is being taken, and for the accused party to feel that they have had a fair hearing.
- * Remember that it can be hard to establish the facts
- * A problem solving approach which avoids blame can be more effective in clarifying the situation and achieving change

5. Action by the school

If it is felt that bullying has taken place, the victim should be told that action will be taken to prevent bullying from continuing. The bully needs to understand the effects of their actions upon the victim, and should be given support in order to modify their

behaviour, including, if appropriate, counselling. If, in spite of support, the bullying behaviour continues, there are a number of possible sanctions available to the school. These may include:

- * A verbal warning, recorded in the bully's file .
- * Punishment which aims to deprive the bully of opportunities to carry on with their behaviour. These may include: missing break and lunchtime play, missing half-termly homework and good behaviour treats, detention after school.
- * A letter of apology to the victim, with a copy to be kept on file
- * The Headteacher will take action in the case of persistent or severe bullying which may include referral to outside agencies, the instigation of a CAF, fixed term or permanent exclusion.(in which case, parents have the right to appeal the decision.)

Inform Parents

Whenever a serious case of bullying is uncovered the parents or guardian of both the victim and the bully would normally be informed either in writing or by personal contact.

Follow Up

The victim should be asked periodically whether the situation has been resolved and has remained resolved (usually after a week, with further follow up after several weeks). If any reprisals are reported, the Head teacher must be informed immediately for further action to be taken.

Cyber Bullying

It is recognised that in the case of cyber bullying, the victim and aggressor may not both be on the school premises at the time when the incidents occur. However, the school recognises its responsibility to address the problem where possible and will take action to prevent incidents of this nature, which may include consultation with the IT Manager. Where there is a question of a law having been broken, consultation of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 should be made, on a case by case basis. It includes legal powers that relate more directly to cyber-bullying; it outlines the power of head teachers to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off site and provides a defence in relation to the confiscation of mobile phones and other items. Mobile

phones are not allowed in our school. If any are ever brought into school (perhaps for use by the pupil with parents' consent in an out of school activity, such as a 'sleep over' etc.) the phone must be handed in to the class teacher and then to the school office immediately. It is also recognised that bystanders can easily become perpetrators by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, for example or by taking part in online polls or discussions. Pupils, parents and staff should also refer to the School's e-safety policy for further information.

Bullying on the Basis of Race, Colour, Ethnicity, Gender, Sexual Orientation or Age
Alleged bullying which focuses on the areas of equality and diversity will be addressed in the same way as other forms of bullying. However it will be seen in the context of St. Joseph's commitment to promoting an environment where all members of its community are valued and celebrated equally for their differences, as unique and loved children of God.