

# **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**





## St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure



Each one of us has been created by God for a special purpose and is therefore uniquely special. Together we pray, grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus.

### Introduction

As Catholic Schools, we encourage and promote respect for all people based on our beliefs and gospel values that God is the Father of us all. We actively promote the commandment of love for one another, treating others as we would like to be treated. In St. Joseph's everyone takes this responsibility seriously – staff, governors, children and parents.

Effective learning can only take place when pupils and staff have a feeling of self-confidence, well-being and security and are working in conditions conducive to equality of opportunity, mutual respect, tolerance and co-operation. Children cannot learn in fear and we have a responsibility to create and maintain a secure and safe environment at school for pupils in our care. Urgent and effective action is necessary by all in our school community where any offensive act, hostility or incitement is found.

The Governing Body and staff of St. Joseph's recognise their legal duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to work with other agencies in safeguarding children and protecting them from significant harm. As members of the school community of St. Joseph's we uphold the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, Articles 2 and 19, which state that, 'The rights of the child should be respected irrespective of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, or national or racial origin.'

St. Joseph's School has agreed this detailed policy to respond to any cases of bullying.

- We aim to prevent bullying by delivering an anti-bullying programme through the curriculum.
- We ensure that all reports of incidents are kept confidential to minimise repercussions for the victims.
- We support the policy of inclusion in its anti-bullying message.
- We will take firm action and employ zero tolerance in order to protect and provide a happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying.

## What is Bullying?

Bullying is the wilful conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Safe to Learn defines bullying as: Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group. This can be physical or verbal and includes hitting, name-calling, teasing, sending to “coventry,” as well as racial and sexual harassment. It can also include threatening gestures and looks. These offensive acts are often deliberately repeated against the victim. Bullying acts are harmful to emotional health and well-being and educational progress.

## Steps for Dealing with Bullying

- A. Identifying the bullying
- B. Dealing with the perpetrator
- C. Victim support
- D. Bully support

### A. Identifying Bullying

#### *Categories of bullying*

Physical, verbal, non- verbal, written and cyber

*Examples of Physical bullying:* Hitting, scratching, punching, pushing, pulling hair, pulling clothes, stone throwing, shouting into ears, tripping, ignoring, shunning, racially offensive behaviour, sexually offensive behaviour, fighting, demanding money, material goods and /or favours through intimidation or force, spitting.

*Examples of verbal bullying:* Name-calling, laughing, making fun of family, teasing, swearing, blackmail, spreading rumours, sexually offensive remarks, racially offensive remarks, telling lies, extortion, annoying, interrupting, conning, screaming words, threats of violence, ridiculing, mimicking, sarcasm, demanding money, material goods and/or favours through intimidation.

*Examples of non-verbal bullying:* Signs with fingers, staring, ignoring, sending to “coventry”, pulling faces, dirty looks, putting out tongue, forgetting to pay a loan, borrowing equipment without permission, stealing, damaging another’s possessions, vandalism, invading privacy, writing lies, incitement of others to commit an act of bullying, graffiti designed to intimidate and/or embarrass, threats of violence, interfering with property, mimicking.

*Examples of written and cyber bullying:* This may include written notes either to or about the victim, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter entries or other electronic entries. This includes texting and sexting (CP).

*Examples of Prejudiced Based Bullying:* This many include homophobic and transphobic bullying; bullying because of a disability or race. Radicalisation, extremist behaviours and forced gang membership and induction are also types of prejudiced based bullying.

## **B. Dealing with the Perpetrator (the bully)**

Where the perpetrator is member of staff, immediate recourse to our disciplinary procedures is appropriate.

If parents or any other adults behave in an offensive manner with regard to bullying, they will be warned in writing that their behaviour is unacceptable, and if necessary, forbidden to reappear within our premises.

Bullying is subject to our Good Behaviour Policy and Practice. Bullying may take many varied forms and cannot be written as an exhaustive list, nor may the sanctions be written in the same way. A guide is set out below:

1. All serious incidents are to be reported to the class teacher and reported in the Bullying Log (kept in the Headteacher's office).

In all cases the perpetrator must understand that his/her actions are unacceptable.

The consequences of his/her actions must be clearly explained along with a reminder of the next step should any incident of bullying be repeated.

A parent must always be informed (verbally) of serious bullying and the circumstances. A reminder of how serious the school views bullying must be made and the next step indicated should any incident of bullying be repeated.

Removing the bully from the playground for a specified period is a suitable sanction. If the bullying takes place in the classroom the perpetrator will need to be seated away from other children for a specified period. In serious or persistent cases, the removal to another class for a specified period may be necessary. The Headteacher or Deputy Head will always be involved at this point.

Persistent bullying during a dinner break may lead to lunchtime exclusion. This will be with the approval of the Headteacher who will implement the action.

It is the responsibility of the adult supervising to give a clear account to the teacher. This must be in writing so that any further steps/actions/concerns are based on factual evidence, using the Bullying Incident form (Appendix D – Good Behaviour Policy).

2. Where events are unclear or will need following through, a written account is to be taken from the victim, perpetrator and any witnesses. For some children it may be necessary for a scribe to assist.
3. Persistent or a one-off serious incident is to be reported to the Deputy Head of School. A letter home to parents will always be sent at this stage.
4. The Headteacher is to be informed immediately of serious/persistent cases.

The sanction of exclusion will be used where it is appropriate. The Headteacher will view the logbook at regular intervals.

### **C. Victim Support**

Explain to the victim the actions taken in dealing with the offender and express the school's attitude towards such behaviour.

Allow the victim the opportunity to express his/her own concerns

Provide further support and counselling where necessary

In serious cases, the Headteacher will meet with the victim's parents to discuss the action taken.

### **D. Perpetrator Support**

Allow the bully the opportunity to express his or her own concerns

Provide support or counselling where necessary

Investigate and address the reasons for the bully e.g. lack of self-esteem, home-role model

The use of a "bubble" group, in liaison with the LLI may be appropriate

### **Anti-Bullying and SEND**

Bullying is one of the most damaging forms of discrimination and as such our vulnerable pupils such as those with SEND needs are especially exposed. We need to be aware that children with SEND and disabilities may;

- be adversely affected by negative attitudes to disability and perceptions of difference;
- find it more difficult to resist bullies;
- be more isolated,
- not have many friends,
- not understand that what is happening is bullying;

- have difficulties telling people about bullying.

It is also important to recognise that all children are potentially vulnerable to bullying and that learners with SEND and disabilities may be bullied for a range of other reasons too.

Because learners with SEN and disabilities will have varied needs, selecting the right approach needs sensitivity and awareness of the strengths of the children involved. For example:

- Learners with language difficulties are less likely to find verbal fogging techniques work for them.
- Some learners will struggle to remember details of an incident several days later. This means that in their case, action should be taken at once if it is to be meaningful.
- Some learners with SEN and disabilities cannot recognise bullying behaviour nor identify the child who is using bullying behaviour. In such circumstances, work with bystanders and ongoing proactive work will be most productive.

Staff need to be alert to changes in learners' behaviour and make sure they understand the cause. Often it is due to factors not related to their SEN or disability. Some learners with SEN and disabilities may be unable to recognise that they are being bullied and may not be able to report it. They may have been threatened or feel that they will not be believed. A preventative programme challenges prejudice and works with the majority of learners to reinforce messages that bullying is not to be tolerated. The list below highlights what to consider to make sure all learners feel confident they can report bullying and be heard.

- Is there a quiet place in school to go to and talk?
- Does the staff member understand the child's communication needs?
- Can the child understand the staff member?
- Are their personal communication tools available to them?
- Have they had time to calm down and fully tell what they want to?
- Does the child need a supporter?
- Are staff visible and available to all learners out of the classroom?

If you suspect a SEND child has or is being bullied or a child with SEND tells you they are being bullied, then immediately refer to the LLI for advice and support. It is very important that the child feels secure immediately.

An excellent document to support SEN and anti-bullying is:

<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/media/7482/sen-and-disabilities.pdf>

**Anti-Bullying and Looked After Children**

As part of safeguarding training, our staff are aware of the vulnerabilities of pupils who are looked after. These children are encouraged to speak out and the LLI keeps a special monitor on these children to intercept any incidents or respond quickly to any incidents.

The LLI is made aware of all bullying incidents and keeps the register and so is well placed to support and assist.

### **Anti-Bullying and EAL**

There are many features and strategies applicable to EAL children in terms of reasons to bully e.g. a child who speaks little English or has a strong accent may be picked out by others. Again, an EAL child may not have the language or confidence to talk about their experience. However, the same level of support must be accorded to these children and the advice and guidance of the LLI sought immediately.

### **Governors' Role in Responding to Bullying**

The Governing Body must satisfy themselves that the school's policy, structures and systems are preventative, yet capable of dealing effectively with bullying should it occur.

Monitoring of the policy and the bullying logbook, by the Governing Body, are essential elements in their own monitoring role. Names of bullies and details must not be reported if that may prejudice any further action necessary.

If the safety and education of other pupils is persistently threatened by a pupil, and permanent or fixed term exclusion is actioned by the Headteacher, then the Governing Body will be called upon to hear the case. These steps will follow the agreed exclusion procedures.

### **Role of Teacher and all other Adults Employed in the School**

Incidents should be acted on as soon as possible. *Not to act is to condone.*

All serious incidents of bullying must be reported to the class teacher/teacher immediately. A written account by the supervising adult must be made for future reference. It is the responsibility and duty of the supervising adult to fill in the Bullying Incident Form and email a copy to the Headteacher.

Adults must ensure that separate written accounts of an incident are gained from the victim and the perpetrator. Written evidence is vital and emphasises the seriousness of the incident.

A conscientious exercise of professional duties should minimise the opportunities available to bullies. Danger periods are breaks, lunchtimes and before the start of the school day or after.

If bullying strategies are used by staff this reinforces the idea that bullying is a legitimate way of exercising power and control. Disciplinary action will follow any bullying strategies used by a member of staff.

Teaching about bullying through the curriculum in P.S.H.E; citizenship and circle time is an essential strategy in prevention.

### **Role of Pupils**

Pupils need to understand what bullying is: its causes, effects and methods of prevention. Pupils must accept that they have a duty to prevent bullying, and to report it to a teacher should it occur. They have a vital role to play in this and so their own security must be reassured.

Pupil action may be Direct through intervention in a bullying situation (the difficulties of this are acknowledged), or Indirect, by reporting bullying or potential bullying to another adult at home or school. "Telling is OK."

Pupils need to understand that those who tolerate bullies are supporting them and that pressure from pupils can stop bullying.

### **Role of Parents**

Parents have a key role in the prevention and identification of bullying. Parents can help identify early signs of possible bullying such as:

- an unwillingness to attend school
- refusal to go to school
- a pattern of vague headaches or stomach aches moodiness
- requests for extra money equipment missing
- being scared to walk to and from school complain of hunger
- have unexplained injuries
- become withdrawn and distressed
- refuse to say what the problem is
- have possessions go missing regularly

If parents suspect their child or another child is being bullied or is bullying, they should contact the school immediately.

If the problem occurs *only* outside the school, the school will offer help and support but it may be necessary to contact the police.

Parents should not encourage their child to hit back although (s)he may need to defend her/himself if physically attacked. Parents should encourage their child to develop a wide circle of friends, as a child in this situation is much less likely to be bullied.

Parents may unwittingly encourage bullying behaviour if they use the above strategies themselves at home as this reinforces the idea that bullying works and

is acceptable.

Parents should make sure they understand the consequences for bullies who fail to respond to help and support. The schools will ensure parents are fully aware of steps.

### **Responsibility of Staff**

The staff have a role to play in creating a climate and attitude within the school which does not sustain or condone bullying. Valuing others and treating everyone, their property and the school with respect are important points of good example.

Examples to pupils of good practice are essential. Staff must ensure that:

- they treat each other and pupils with consideration
- notices around the school are polite and positive
- verbal and physical responses are appropriate
- the agreed procedures are carried out and written documentation is completed.

We investigate all reports of bullying.

Staff must be alert to signs of bullying. Along with those that parents may notice the following may be indicators:

- concentrate less in class
- be reluctant to go out to play
- cling to adults in the playground
- begin hurting others for no apparent reason
- become quiet
- become uncharacteristically aggressive
- deterioration in work quality

### **Responsibility of SLT**

Particular responsibilities include:

- ensuring coherent curriculum content on bullying
- ensuring policy, procedure, practice and consequences are clear to parents and available
- evaluating and monitoring the policy and keeping them updated and relevant
- supporting all staff in dealing with bullying should it occur
- facilitating staff training and development

The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Leader of Learning for Inclusion have a specific role in victim and perpetrator support.

The Headteacher is responsible for keeping the Governing Body informed of trends and dealing with serious cases where fixed or permanent exclusion may be required, sending monitoring requests to the LA of Barking and Dagenham.

Strategies in St. Joseph's School to prevent bullying:

1. At the beginning of the year, each class revisits our school charter on the rights and responsibilities of individuals.
2. Year 6 children (after training) become Guardian Angels to try to help set up a safer environment and provide a listening ear.
3. All pupils have access to a Worry Box where they may report any concerns.
4. We are a 'telling school.' This message is regularly enforced by all members of staff. If children feel they are being bullied in or out of school, they must tell an adult who will take appropriate action
5. At playtime we have Playground Friends to help children play together.
6. We have Play Leaders/Sports Leaders (Year 5 & 6 children) who help to support KS1 pupils.
7. We use assemblies to reinforce the message of respect, our zero tolerance of bullying and what to do if you think you are being bullied either inside or outside school.
8. A circle of friends is used where cases of bullying may benefit.
9. The use of PSHCE (Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education), SEAL, (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning), RRR, (Rights, Respect, Responsibilities) lessons are used to deal with concerns, problems and promote positive relationships and behaviour.

Policy review: September 2024

Next review: September 2026