

# ST. JOSEPH'S R.C. PRIMARY SCHOOL BULLYING POLICY

## Introduction

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School is committed to creating a caring, friendly environment in which to learn and work. We want to develop an ethos where people feel relaxed and secure. All members of our community are encouraged to challenge bullying and to seek help for themselves or others if they feel bullying is happening.

## Aims of Policy

The aim of this policy is to prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying, and to promote an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. This policy applies to everyone in, and every one visiting, our community. This will happen through

- Listening to students views, opinions and concerns using pupil councils as discussion groups;
- Raising awareness of, and defining bullying as well as gaining an understanding of why some people bully;
- Education about bullying within PSHE and opportunities within other curriculum areas;
- Using the authority's guidelines on Behaviour Management and the Staff Discipline Code to respond to any bullying incidents that occur;
- Provision of support for all members of the school community who may be involved in a bullying situation;
- Developing and supporting home, school and community partnerships.

## Statutory duties of schools

Head teachers have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils. Under the Education Inspections Bill 2006 the duties are extended to include preventing/responding to bullying that happens outside school, where it is reasonable to do so. Schools also have a duty to 'safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils' (Education Act 2002) and to ensure that children and young people are safe from bullying and discrimination (Children Act 2004). Government guidance advises that the policy should also address the bullying of staff by pupils ('Safe to learn' DCSF 2007).

## What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional**, Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding personal possessions, making threatening or humiliating gestures)
- **Physical**, Pushing, kicking, hitting or any use of violence
- **Racist**, Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual**, Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic**, Abusive comments focussing on sexuality
- **Verbal**, Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, name calling

## Recognising Vulnerable Students

Students may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Doesn't want to go on a school or public bus
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins truanting
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering

[Type text]

St. Joseph's R.C. Primary School Anti-bullying policy Dec 2009 M. Connor

- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly at school work
- Arrives home with damaged clothes or possessions
- Has money or possessions "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money or possessions
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Arrives home hungry
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and investigated. Pupils who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour. Pupils who are aware of bullying ('bystanders') can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

All pupils will be encouraged to report bullying by:-

- talking to a member of staff of their choice
- completing a 'bullying concern' form and placing it in the box in learning mentor's room
- contacting local and national support agencies for advice/support

Staff who are being bullied will be encouraged to report it to a colleague of their choice.

Parents will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying and to support the school in tackling it.

Trying to resolve bullying directly with pupils or their families can lead to problems

### **Responding to reports about bullying**

#### **School**

The school will take the following steps when dealing with concerns about bullying:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, it will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been made aware of it
- A clear account of the concern will be recorded and given to the head teacher
- The head teacher will interview everyone involved and keep a detailed record. This will be held in line with the school's data protection policy/practice
- Class teacher will be kept informed of outcomes.
- Parents and other relevant adults will be kept informed
- Where bullying occurs outside school, any other relevant schools or agencies (e.g. youth clubs, transport providers) will be informed about the concerns and any actions taken

#### **Pupils and staff**

Pupils and staff who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- providing reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- the use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies e.g. educational psychology, where appropriate

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by the learning mentor by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the pupil became involved
- establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- informing parents to help change the attitude of the pupil

[Type text]

- the use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies where appropriate

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending
- Parental consultations
- kept in at break times/dinnertimes
- exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Referred to UCAN Centre
- minor fixed-term exclusion
- major fixed-term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

### **Roles and responsibilities**

All members of the school community, both pupils and adults, have a responsibility to recognise and report acts of bullying. Pupils are encouraged to report bullying to any adult they feel comfortable talking to and parents with concerns should contact either the pupil's teacher, learning mentor or head teacher.

All teaching staff will actively investigate allegations of bullying and take action in line with the school's Behaviour Management Policy. It is normal practice for the parents of all the pupils concerned to be kept informed and encouraged to play a part in finding a solution to individual problems. Incidents of bullying are recorded and monitored by the learning mentor and head teacher.

The Head Teacher will be responsible for the effective implementation of this policy, for any staff training required and for regular policy review.

### **Parents**

- Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and school. However, where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the formal Complaints Procedure.
- Where a pupil is involved in bullying others outside school, e.g. in the street or through the use of the internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the school in addressing their child's behaviour, for example restricting/monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone at home.
- Referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate

### **Preventative measures**

The school will:

- raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, circle time, assemblies, informal discussion, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- participate in national and local initiatives such as Anti-bullying Week and the work of Durham's Anti-bullying Partnership
- seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive anti-bullying education
- consider the use of specific strategies, for example peer mentoring, on a regular basis and implement them if appropriate, subject to available resources.

### **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The head teacher is identified to lead on the implementation of the policy and identify training needs and act as the link person with the local authority.

An annual report will be made to the governing body, The school will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.