

Holy Family Catholic High School & 6th Form



Anti-Bullying Policy

Date of policy: November 2021

Review date: November 2022

RATIONALE

Our anti-bullying policy forms an integral part of our whole school behaviour policy and our aim is to reassure staff, pupils and parents that bullying is always unacceptable. We are a Catholic community, committed to the vision of the School as a place whose cornerstone is Christ. It follows that our community must be one of love and compassion.

Our mission statement encapsulates this ethos in the idea of RESPECT:

“Treating each individual as fully human and fully equal. We have a duty to provide a safe environment for each individual and to endanger any individual by our actions would be a mark of disrespect.”

It is therefore the responsibility of all members of the school: pupils, parents, teachers and support staff, to take immediate and appropriate action when relationships within our community fail to reflect these ideals.

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously our first priority, but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical.

CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience. The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. There is no need for the school to seek parental consent to search through a young person’s mobile phone.

If an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules has been seized and the member of staff has reasonable ground to suspect that it contains evidence in relation to an offence, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device that is suspected to be evidence

relevant to an offence, or that is a pornographic image of a child or an extreme pornographic image, should not be deleted prior to giving the device to the police¹.

If a staff member material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

Click [here](#) for the Safeguarding Policy on *Peer-to-Peer Abuse*

HATE INCIDENTS

Hate incidents are defined by the school as incidents that include speech and/or action[s] that the school judges to be motivated by prejudice or hate. This can be based on the victim's actual or perceived race, colour, national origin, religious belief, sexual orientation, age, disability or whether the person is transgender.

A victim of hate crime does not necessarily have to be a member of a minority group, or be classed as vulnerable, and incidents may arise because of association.

Hate incidents can include:

- Verbal abuse; threats insults; nuisance telephone calls, text messages, social media posts or any form of electronic communication; name-calling and intimidation.
- Physical assaults and attacks.
- Attacks against the person's property. For example, offensive graffiti and damage to property.
- Singling out another person and treating them differently because you are not the same as them.

The school takes hate incidents very seriously and, in some circumstances, they could lead to permanent exclusion.

THE EFFECTS OF BULLYING ON THE INDIVIDUAL

The lives of students who are bullied are made miserable – they may suffer injury, attend school erratically or infrequently, lose self-confidence, and underachieve educationally and socially. Many of the outward signs of bullying can be the same as other indicators of abuse such as non-accidental injuries (including self-abuse), low self-esteem, unhappiness, fear, distress or anxiety. If unchecked, others may come to see bullying behaviour as acceptable within the school. It is not unknown for victims to become bullies of younger or more vulnerable students than themselves. Bullying that is not addressed may have lasting effects on the child and his / her peer group and family.

SIGNS TO LOOK FOR

- Marked changes in behaviour e.g. continually losing money or starting to steal
- Feigning illness
- Clinging to adults
- Changes in work patterns and or attainment
- Lack of concentration
- Truancy
- Physical signs
- Emotional changes

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

As a school we need to undertake the following:

Identify the problem

- Understand the problem and agree on the necessity of intervention
- Identify pupils at risk
- Identify places and times
- Involve everyone concerned: pupils, parents, all staff and outside agencies

¹ Section 62 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009 defines prohibited images of children. Section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Immigrations Act 2008 defines extreme pornographic images.

WHOLE SCHOOL

Bullying is dealt with in many areas across the school:

1. Anti-Bullying sessions within the PHSE programme
2. Anti-Bullying posters in classrooms and on notice boards in corridors
3. Use of the curriculum time to raise awareness
4. Focus on anti-bullying week
5. Raise awareness of how to deal with bullying through the Assembly programme led by heads of year, form tutors and students
6. Involvement of school councils and other student forums in discussion of Anti Bullying
7. Audit of current practice, the school layout and transport arrangements
8. Rewarding good behaviour through the schools reward system (*Class Charts*)
9. Supervision of hotspots
10. Intervention and support delivered by Student Services and the Bully Buster team

REPORTING

The atmosphere in school and at home should be such that pupils feel confident and are encouraged to report instances of bullying to a teacher, a parent or another adult of their choosing. They should feel secure in the knowledge that all reported instances will be treated seriously and sensitively and will be dealt with immediately. Pupils should feel assured that reporting instances of bullying of either themselves, or another pupil, will not make matters worse and that ALL bullies will be sanctioned. Not reporting protects the bully and could give the impression that they may continue, perhaps bullying others too.

GUIDELINES TO ALL STAFF WHEN DEALING WITH BULLYING

Stage One

It is vital that we create an atmosphere where any pupil who is being bullied or witnesses bullying can speak freely and be believed. Pupils should be confident that the matter will be handled with sensitivity and discretion. Sometimes a pupil may find it difficult to acknowledge a problem in school and will confide only in a parent. It is equally important that parents who approach the school are dealt with sensitively and discreetly. Pupils also have the opportunity to meet with peer mentors from the Bully Buster Team.

All Staff should:

- Listen to pupils
- Assure them that their allegations will be dealt with in confidence initially, but that a referral may need to be made to another member of staff e.g. Progress Leader, Learning Mentor, behaviour Lead or Inclusion Manager.
- Assure them that appropriate action will be taken
- Encourage them to involve their parents

An appropriate member of staff should make a full investigation

Stage Two

The appropriate member of staff should then take the following action:

- Support the victim
- Obtain reports from victim, bully and any witnesses
- Speak privately to the bully
- Attempt mediation and reconciliation between victim and bully
- Encourage an apology from bully to victim
- Counsel bully and victim to enable them to face their peer group positively
- Speak to the parents of the bully and victim and offer them support
- Break up group dynamics of pupils known to be bullying others
- Establish a monitoring open door period to ensure reconciliation has been successful
- Exclude the bully for a fixed term if appropriate

A record of the incident should be passed to the Progress Leader who will keep a central record of bullying incidents for his/her year group as it passes through the school. The Assistant Head i/c Personal Development behaviour and Welfare will maintain an audit of bullying incidents.

The victim should be seen at regular intervals to ensure they feel secure and that there are no further incidents. Senior staff will be involved if any further incidents occur.

We are all responsible for making sure that everyone is safe, happy, able to achieve and can make a positive contribution in the school.