



## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **Mount Carmel R.C. High School**

#### **Anti-Bullying Policy**

##### **Definition**

Bullying behaviour is often a feature of the complex system of power relations that exists between people living, working or studying together. Such behaviour can undermine the physical, social and emotional wellbeing of our students and as such a structured whole school programme is essential.

The school defines bullying as deliberate and sustained actions aimed at undermining the self-esteem and well-being of another person. This may involve direct physical or verbal attacks or may be indirect and involve the propagation of harmful rumours, gossip or unkind remarks.

This definition is inclusive of racist, sexist and homophobic bullying.

##### **Rationale**

###### **The Aims of the School**

- 1)** To deliver the appropriate curriculum, according to needs, aspirations, motivation and ability.
- 2)** As a Catholic school, to offer a distinctive curriculum in religious education in school life and worship.
- 3)** As a Christian institution to maintain efficient functioning and to display witness in all aspects of work and relationships in order to form a community in which Christian values are seen to affect attitudes and in which students and staff grow in mutual respect in a working, caring community.

##### **Purposes**

1. To encourage individuals to take responsibility for their own actions, exercise self-discipline and to always consider the needs of others.
2. To provide a quiet, calm and orderly atmosphere in the school.

3. To provide each person with a sense of safety and stability.
4. To promote and nurture positive, supportive relationships throughout the school community.
5. To ensure that fair and just treatment is provided and all comments or behaviours which undermine the dignity and self-esteem of individuals are challenged.

In order to ensure that the conditions described above prevail there are several strategies both pro-active and reactive which form the school's policy on bullying.

### **Pro-active Strategies**

1) Primary Liaison. Pupils are given information about expectations and procedures with regard to being bullied or bullying during a liaison meeting with pupils and staff during their last year at primary school. In this way many of the rumours which concern them can be assuaged.

#### 2) Code of Conduct

On entry to the school and at the beginning of each new school year pupils are given a 'Personal Planner' which has written information and reminders regarding expectations, rules, and action to be taken in various circumstances. Within this document there is a 'Code of Conduct' which makes specific reference to Bullying.

#### 3) P.S.H.C.E. and Religious Education Programmes

The issues which surround the serious nature of bullying in its various forms are covered in detail as part of the 'Personal and Social Education' and R.E. programme for all pupils in Years 7-11. This ensures that all students know what to do if they feel they are being bullied and of the consequences of indulging in bullying.

5) Assemblies Pupils are encouraged to help with the preparation and presentation of their year assemblies. Within several of the topics, relationships, tolerance and our treatment of each other are presented as well as assemblies specifically about bullying. This encourages children to make clear statements about their views and feelings about bullies and being bullied.

6). Advice and support is regularly sought from other agencies that contribute directly or indirectly to the school's anti-bullying strategy. These include school nurse, YOT, PCSO, Children's Social Care, and ELCAS.

### **Reactive Strategies to incidences of bullying.**

**In order that any action can be taken it is essential that a member of staff is made aware of the fact that a child is being or has been bullied.**

Although all teaching and support staff are asked to be vigilant with regard to signs of bullying it is often the case that bullying is carried out away from 'public' view and so must be reported by the victim or another pupil in order that it can be dealt with.

Pupils are encouraged to disclose problems relating to bullying using a variety of mechanisms. Pupils may disclose bullying issues in the following ways:

- To any member of staff. All staff have a duty of care in this respect but it is anticipated that form tutors and Achievement Co-ordinators will be the usual route for such disclosures. Staff have a duty to maintain confidentiality and pass such disclosures to pastoral staff immediately.
- To peer mentors, buddies or prefects. This facility is regularly publicized and training will be given to all of the pupils involved. Issues around confidentiality are discussed prior to any disclosures. Support from school adults is then instigated.
- Through Student Questionnaires, we will introduce a virtual anti-bully box, and annual questionnaires. These are useful in determining the extent of bullying problems within school and the effectiveness of school responses.
- The senior prefect team are being trained to act as restorative mentors. This will include interviewing pupils who have been involved in bullying and asking them to reflect on both their behaviour and how they feel their victim feels.

Pupils are encouraged to report behaviour that they consider to be bullying whether it is directed towards themselves or other pupils.

Incidences of bullying which are due to racial discrimination or prejudice are dealt with very thoroughly and in addition to receiving the same sanctions as for other types of bullying it is made very clear to pupils why this type of bullying is particularly abhorrent and totally unacceptable both in and out of school.

All information received from parents is followed up rigorously in cases where a child has felt unable to bring a matter to a teacher's attention. This means finding out as much information as possible in order that a situation can be dealt with fully and fairly. Parents are informed of what information has been found out and what action has been taken. A record of the incident will be made on the 'Conduct Log' of the pupil responsible for the bullying.

### **Counselling children who have been bullied by others**

Pastoral staff will work with the pupils to establish the nature and extent of the bullying. This may require further interviews with parents and students. Parents will be informed of the problem.

Where appropriate the 'support group' approach to anti-bullying is used.

The victim is encouraged to use any medium that they are comfortable with to express how the bullying is making them feel.

With the consent of the victim, the bullies and students who will support the pupil are interviewed. The pupil may or may not choose to be present at this meeting. Using the resources produced by the victim the group are made aware of how the bullying is making the victim feel.

The group are asked to share their reactions to the information and encouraged to formulate a strategy for supporting the pupil.

Counselling sessions aimed at raising the self-esteem and assertiveness of the victim may be arranged with the pastoral leaders.

The parent and victim are contacted regularly to ensure that the problem has been resolved.

### **Counselling children who have bullied others**

Every attempt is made to help a child understand why he/she has been in serious trouble for behaving in a way that is unacceptable.

In some circumstances it is possible to identify underlying problems that contribute towards antisocial behaviour. These problems may be addressed through further counselling or through the intervention of other agencies. In such cases referral should be made in consultation with the pastoral leader.

Pupils are given every opportunity to start afresh and in many cases an incident in which they have bullied is a 'one off' situation that is never repeated.

A record is kept of incidents involving bullying of any kind on the 'Conduct Log' of the pupil or pupils responsible.

### **Physical bullying**

In circumstances which clearly indicate that the attack was **unprovoked** then the child guilty of this action may be excluded. His/Her parents will be asked to come into school with the child to discuss the serious nature of the offence and the consequence of further behaviour of this kind. A letter is sent with the child or by post relating the details of the incident and contact will also have been made, where possible, by phone.

In cases of serious physical assault i.e. those requiring medical treatment the incident may involve the Police. The child who has been bullied will be counselled and reassured by his/her tutor or pastoral leader and asked to report immediately any repercussions, physical or verbal.

Where bullying is physical but cannot be said to be unprovoked where practicable all children who were involved or who witnessed the incident and so are in a position to offer their 'version' of events would be interviewed by a member of staff. Having had the benefit

of all sides of a particular story the staff involved will then decide on appropriate action. This will include informing parents either by phone or letter and a written record of the incident being placed in the student's 'conduct log'.

**Verbal and Online Bullying** In many ways just as unpleasant as physical bullying and is regarded as a very serious matter.

Name calling, threatening or menacing behaviour are three ways in which this type of bullying presents itself. Again, as in physical bullying the key to stopping the behaviour is through the matter being reported to a member of staff.

In all cases of this kind of bullying being reported the pupils involved will be interviewed and action appropriate to the situation taken. The sanctions imposed are the same as for physical bullying though it is unlikely that an exclusion would be appropriate unless the incident was a repetition of an earlier incident or physical threats continued.

**Friendship issues** On many occasions children temporarily 'fall out' with each other and bullying can take place in subtle but effective ways such as making unpleasant comments or 'dirty looks' or keeping a child out of social groups.

In these cases, when staff are informed, both parties are to be interviewed separately and then, if agreed with the pupils, together in an attempt to 'smooth the waters' and to make the child see why their behaviour is not acceptable. Ownership of the solution should be given to the pupils and a method of monitoring the situation using third parties should be agreed. The consequences of continuing to behave in an unacceptable way towards each other must then be made clear. Regular contact should be maintained over the next few weeks to monitor progress.

### **Out of School Bullying**

In cases of bullying outside of school hours either on the way to or from school we employ the same procedures as for incidents within school in order to promote the good behaviour of our pupils. The responsibility for the behaviour of pupils in these circumstances, however, lies with their parents and pupils. The 'school's' powers are very limited in these situations and in some cases police involvement may be appropriate.

### **Recording Bullying Issues**

Bullying incidents that occur in the classroom should be documented through the completion of a SIMS log.

The pastoral leaders will ensure action.

The action taken should be recorded by the pastoral leader on SIMS.

This should then be recorded on the conduct log of those involved in bullying and those who are the victims.

Where disclosures occur, or incidents are spotted outside of the classroom Pastoral Leaders should be informed and enquiries made. Actions in relation to such incidents should be documented on SIMS.

This document should be viewed in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy and other related policies.

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