

Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Agreed by Governors and staff
Spring 2024
Review Date
Spring 2025

This policy outlines the school's views on bullying in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. It should also be considered alongside our Safeguarding policy, PSHE policy, HSRE curriculum policy, Inclusion policy and e-safety policy.

Statement of Intent

We at St Augustine's Catholic Primary School are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere.

We offer a happy, open, and inclusive environment where all children are valued. The development of maturity and self-esteem is central to our ethos as we believe that self-confident, valued, and happy children learn best. For children to achieve their highest potential, they need to feel safe, secure, and nurtured. Knowing that they have a voice and that it matters is crucial to all that we do.

We are very aware of the possible consequences of bullying and through this policy and practice we strive to address the negative effect that such experiences may have on both pupils and staff within the school.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Mission Statement

Our Catholic school is united in God's love, enabling everyone to grow in love for one another and to develop in faith. We strive for all children to achieve their best by becoming active and confident learners in a nurturing and caring environment. We guide everyone to shine in their own unique way.

'Unique and United in God's love. We let our light shine'

Statutory duty 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 governors, staff, parents, and children.

What is bullying?

Bullying is a subjective experience that can take many forms. Various national and international definitions of bullying exist and most of these definitions have three things in common which reflect CYP's experience of bullying and evidence gained from extensive research in this area. The three common aspects in most definitions of bullying are that:

It is deliberately hurtful behaviour

It is usually repeated over time

There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

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.

(Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies – DfE, 2017, pg. 8)

For the children at our school the definition of someone who bullies is someone who:

‘Deliberately keeps on hurting you by what they do or say, someone who threatens you and makes you too frightened to tell the teacher’.

‘Keeps on hurting the feelings of others on purpose by hitting out or by words or gestures; a person who makes you feel small or will not let you join in’.

Aims of this policy

To promote a happy and secure environment where children can develop educationally, spiritually, socially, and emotionally

To be proactive in our anti-bullying approach through clear policy and procedures

To promote consistency of approach and create a climate in which all types of bullying are overcome through zero tolerance

To engender in our pupils’ attitudes of care and co-operation and reduce rivalry and conflict

To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour

To clarify roles and responsibilities regarding policy implementation

To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school governors, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/guardians

To formalise procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour

To formalise procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour

To support victims and perpetrators in an attempt to eradicate bullying behaviour.

Objectives of this Policy

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should understand what bullying is.

All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.

All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

To make explicit the school’s zero tolerance policy towards bullying.

The school recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school that overflows back into school and vice versa. The school will do what is reasonably practical to eliminate any such behaviour.

Why is it important to respond to Bullying?

We believe that everyone is made in the image of God and has an intrinsic right to be treated with love and respect. Pupils who are bullying others are not behaving in a manner that is acceptable to the faith traditions represented within our school and need to learn different ways of behaving.

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be the victim of a bully.

The school is responsible for the social, emotional, and educational well-being of all its pupils, and consequently, will respond immediately to any instances of bullying.

Bullying crushes self confidence and self respect and can result in lifelong scars.

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 is NOT a single incident it is systematic and prolonged and usually involves an imbalance of power.

Bullying can take many different forms:

- Cyberbullying: e.g., chatroom/ blogs/message board, email, gaming console, 'happy slapping', Instant messaging (Snap Chat, WhatsApp etc.), mobile phones including photos, social network site e.g., Facebook, video hosting sites (YouTube), webcam, Sexting
- Damage to property: e.g., graffiti, personal property
- Inciting others to bullying behaviour e.g., encouraging pupils with special educational needs to bully others so that they receive the consequences rather than the instigator
- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g., hiding books, spreading rumours, threatening gestures)
- Literature: e.g., distribution/possession of posters/leaflets, literature, or material, e.g., pornography, wearing or display of offensive insignia
- Physical hurt/attack: e.g., physical intimidation, mimicry, unwanted or inappropriate touching
- Psychological: e.g., damage to reputation (sexual, denial of identity, gender /ethnicity), extortion of belongings, identity theft / impersonation, isolation /refusal to work/play with other pupil, revealing personal information, threats
- Verbal: e.g., 'joke' making, mimicry/ridicule, name calling, spreading rumours, swearing, verbal abuse, gossiping
- Victimisation after previous complaint e.g., bullying due to either victims or bystanders speaking out because of a past bullying incident.

Effects of bullying

Bullying can affect the victim in many ways and some of these effects can be longstanding.

- Victims may spend their lives in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and may believe that it is something about them which has led the bully to pick on them.
- The victim's life may be characterised by unhappiness, a sense of desolation and desperation and exclusion from normal social experiences. These feelings can permeate all aspects of the victim's life and may lead to a strong desire to escape the situation by running away from home, truanting from school, and in some cases self-harm or even take their own life.
- The victims of bullying may have reduced self esteem and self worth and their performance in school and other areas often deteriorates.
- Research evidence has shown that victims of bullying may be more likely to experience mental health problems at some stage in their lives.
- Research suggests that children who bully tend to become involved in other forms of difficult behaviour and like victims of bullying tend to underachieve at school.
- Research also suggests that children who bully are more likely to get into trouble with the law, suffer from alcohol abuse, have employment problems, suffer marital breakdown, suffer from some form of psychiatric disorder and are more likely to commit violent crimes later in life.

- Bullying behaviour does not just affect the victim and the perpetrator. Those who witness or know of bullying may live in fear that it will be their turn next.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Signs of bullying can be extremely variable and will very much depend on the individual. It is important, however, that parents/carers and school staff are aware of the signs and symptoms associated with bullying so that they can identify possible problems.

The more common signs include:

- Physical signs e.g., Physical injuries, damaged clothing with no convincing explanation and general ill-health due to stress
- Emotional signs e.g., mood swings, apparent changes in personality, constant anxiety/nervousness, depression or tearfulness for no apparent reason, lack of confidence, negative self-image, hostility, and defensiveness
- Behavioural signs e.g., withdrawn, frequent, unexplained absences, poor concentration, eating disorders, alcohol/substance misuse, evidence of self-harming and disruptive/challenging/ bullying behaviour
- General e.g., frequently “lose” money/possessions, appears tired and lethargic, avoids entering/ leaving school with others.

It should be stated that usually victims of bullying become so through no fault or action of their own. However, on occasion, it is important to recognise that there can be different types of victims because they:

- Are new to the class
- Are different in appearance, speech, or background from other people
- Suffer from low self esteem (but this is not clear whether this is the cause or effect of bullying).

Prevention

Taking the view that bullying is an interaction that establishes group identity, dominance and status at the expense of others, then it is only by the development of ‘higher values’ such as empathy, consideration, unselfishness, that the bully is likely to relinquish his/her behaviour and function differently in as social setting. If the preventative policy depends upon policing the environment, forbidding the behaviour, encouraging the victims, and punishing the perpetrators then no lasting changes can be expected. The strategies employed must impact upon the lasting behaviour of the perpetrator. Through the following preventative strategies and planned curricular opportunities we hope to lay the foundations of positive behaviour and to eliminate bullying before it becomes an issue: we will use the curriculum, overt and hidden, as a proactive medium to develop Christian understanding and social responsibility.

This includes:

The Catholic ethos of the school

Use of a Values based approach to education throughout the school

Awareness raising through Anti-Bullying weeks, assemblies, or lessons

Clear Anti-Bullying policy which all members of the school are aware of

Anti-Bullying message embedded throughout the curriculum and through

National Healthy Schools Status

Reward system for positive behaviour

Playground supervision at playtime and lunchtime

Children’s participation in formulating school/class charters/ rules

Pupil consultation – through questionnaires and School Council

Positive role models reflected through staff behaviour

Signing behaviour contracts

Reading stories about bullying

Using bullying as an assembly theme

Drawing pictures, writing stories and poems about bullying and its consequences

Making up role plays

Having discussions about bullying and why it matters

Religious Education curriculum

Circle Time and PSHE activities

Responding to Bullying Incidents

When bullying has been reported or observed then the following 7 steps will be taken:

INTERVIEW WITH THE VICTIM - When a teacher/ member of staff finds out that bullying has happened they start by talking to the victim about his/her feelings. They do not question the victim about the incidents, but they do need to know who was involved.

CONVENE A MEETING - The teacher arranges to meet with the pupils who have been involved, this may include by-standers. The victim must give permission for this to take place and feel easy about it. The meeting will include bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate bullying.

EXPLAIN THE PROBLEM - The teacher tells them about the way the victim is feeling. At no time does the teacher discuss the details of the incidents or allocate blame to the group.

SHARE RESPONSIBILITY - The teacher does not attribute blame but states that they know that the group are responsible and can do something about it.

ASK THE GROUP FOR IDEAS - Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier. The teacher gives some positive responses but will not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

LEAVE IT TO THEM - The teacher ends the meeting by passing the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. They arrange to meet with them again to see how things are going on.

MEET THEM AGAIN - The teacher discusses with each pupil, including the victim, how things have been going. They arrange to meet with them again to see how things are going on.

The above procedure is Stage 1. If we find that the situation is not resolved after following this process and the behaviour continues, or the incident is very serious then the following stages are considered:

STAGE 2 Contact parent/carer and convene a meeting.

STAGE 3 Put an Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP) in place

STAGE 4 Contact other agencies e.g., Behaviour Support Team, Educational Psychologist, Police (If a child is over 10 years of age, they are criminally responsible).

STAGE 5 In serious cases, a fixed period or even permanent seclusion/ exclusion will be considered

Outcomes

The bully/ies will be asked to apologise sincerely. Other consequences may also be put into place in line with the school's Behaviour Management Policy

If possible, the pupils will be reconciled

After incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure that repeated bullying does not take place.

Where bullying has a severe impact

In some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to a child or young person experiencing pronounced social, emotional, or mental health difficulties. Through our Pastoral team we ensure we make appropriate provision for a child's short-term needs, including setting out what actions they are taking when bullying has had a serious impact on a child's ability to learn. If the bullying leads to persistent, long-lasting difficulties that cause the child or young person to have significantly greater difficulties we will consider introducing a Counsellor for support.

In July 2012 the cross Government 'No Health Without Mental Health: Implementation Framework' was published. It describes the role that both schools and local authorities should play in supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.

Recording and reporting incidents

All bullying and hate incidents are recorded by staff using the school's CPOMs which automatically informs all the necessary staff.

It is important that staff log any follow up information or incidents.

The Headteacher will also report incidents to the Governors on a termly basis.

Vulnerable pupils

Bullying can happen to all children and young people, and it can affect their social, mental, and emotional health. School staff support all pupils who are bullied. This means them being alert to the effect any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact. There is evidence to suggest that pupils that are badly bullied in school are more likely to be bullied out of school, for instance either on their way to or from school or through cyberbullying.

Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. Children in care that are frequently on the move may also be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer.

These young people are often the same young people who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition, children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all.

Support for staff who are bullied

It is important that we take measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils. But it is equally important that we make it clear that bullying of staff, whether by pupils, parents, or colleagues, is unacceptable.

The DFE has published a separate advice note which provides advice for headteachers and all school staff on how to protect themselves from cyberbullying and how to tackle it if it happens.

Cyberbullying

It is vital that children learn how to be safe when using new technologies of the computer and mobile phone. There needs to be a focus on empowering children by equipping them with the skills and knowledge they need to use technology safely and responsibly, and managing the risks, wherever and whenever they go online.

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

Some guidelines for children at our school:

Mobile Phone Bullying: -

- Do not reply. Save incoming numbers/text messages to show an adult.
- Tell an adult straight away. Ask the adult to contact your network provider who may be able to change your number/block incoming calls/texts from that number.
- Do not tell everyone at school/home your mobile phone number, tell only close friends and family.
- Do not use a phone at school. If a phone is required after school, or brought in by mistake, our policy is to leave your phone in the office safe until the end of the school day.
- Do not take photographs or video footage on mobile phones to pass around as a form of bullying. If you receive any footage, save it, and inform an adult, this practice is illegal and must be stopped.

E-Mail/social media Bullying: -

- Again, do not reply, save e-mails/messages/screenshots to show an adult. Keep your e-mail address and logins private, tell only close friends and family.
- If it occurs in school, make sure you tell a member of staff immediately.

Social Media: -

- As many networking sites have a minimum age requirement of 13, St Augustine's encourages children to not use social media sites.
- At our school, children are educated on how to remain safe while networking on child-friendly sites, but we also discuss safe and appropriate use of social media sites in preparation for later life.

Investigation of alleged cyber-bullying:

Children will be encouraged to do the following if they receive a nasty message:

- » Save it.
- » Not to reply.
- » Block future messages.
- » Show it to their parents or a member of staff.

The parent will be encouraged to report it to a member of staff at school. The member of staff will ensure that the child's class teacher is aware of the investigation. The class teacher will investigate the allegation with the perpetrator and recipient and report to the Deputy Head or Head teacher.

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. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have 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 police. If a staff member finds 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.

Action:

The SLT will write to the perpetrator's parents and report the nature of the cyber-bullying. A first incidence of cyber-bullying will warrant a warning by letter and a Yellow or Red Card in school.

Any further incidences will warrant further sanctions and parents called in

Serious and/or persistent cyber-bullying may result in a fixed term seclusion/exclusion and the involvement of the Police.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be part of the everyday life of the school. It will be maintained regularly through display of posters, PSHE curriculum and assemblies.

It will be a regular item on School Council Agendas, at staff and Governors' meetings.

Its effectiveness will be monitored through annual parent and pupil questionnaires and reported incidents.

It will be reviewed by all the staff and the governor's curriculum committee.

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

USEFUL CONTACTS

A list of useful contact numbers, websites etc for bullying issues:

Childline – 0800 1111 – A free, confidential helpline for children and young people offering advice and support, by phone and online, 24 hours a day

EACH - 0808 1000 143 - a free phone helpline for children experiencing homophobic bullying. Open Monday to Friday 10am-5pm

Parentline Plus – 0808 8002222 – a free 24hr phone helpline for anyone caring for children or textphone 0800 783 6783 for the deaf or hard of hearing

National Bullying Helpline – 0845 2255787

Websites

Anti-Bullying alliance – www.Anti-Bullyingalliance.org.uk – information, resources and advice relating to bullying

Kidscape – www.kidscape.org.uk - Bullying advice, helpline, information, Anti-Bullying resources and training

Need2Know – www.need2know.co.uk – youth friendly site featuring tips on how to stop bullying, what to do if you bully others etc

NSPCC – www.nspcc.org.uk - advice on what to do if you are being bullied or see someone who is

Think U Know – www.thinkuknow.co.uk - Website for cyberbullying and e-safety information. Has separate areas for parent/carers, staff and children aged 5-7, 8-10 and 11-16