



## OUR LADY AND ST. EDWARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

### ANTI BULLYING POLICY AND PROCEDURES

*'Hand in hand we learn and together we achieve'*

#### **Aims of Policy**

The aim of this policy document is to ensure that clear policy guidance is in place to support effective procedures and practice in relation to incidents of, or allegations of bullying.

We aim to live out our School Mission Statement:

***"Our school is more than a building, it is a community where we learn, grow and achieve. It is a welcoming and joyful place where everyone feels happy, safe and protected. We are valued as individuals and our talents are shared and celebrated.  
Hand in hand we journey together with Jesus by our side."***

We would expect pupils to act safely and feel safe in school, including that they understand the issues relating to all forms of bullying. Children should be able to work in an environment which is free from discrimination, harassment and victimisation. We want Our Lady and St. Edward's to be a place where diversity is celebrated and individuals feel valued and respected for who they are. We aim to provide an environment in which our children are secure and confident, irrespective of their age, race, gender, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief and socio-economic circumstances.

We aim to create an environment where children feel safe and secure and where each child is valued. To this end, we will strive to deal effectively with any situation that causes unhappiness to any pupil in school. We strive to create an atmosphere of happiness and security in Our Lady and St. Edward's. Bullying violates this ideal and will never be condoned or accepted.

#### **Definition**

Bullying is the deliberate intention to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Bullying can be a single incident or a systematic series of incidents. Bullying is a deliberate act to make a person or persons unhappy over a period of time. It can take a number of forms and can be physical, verbal or indirect. The intention to hurt and the feeling of hurt are important factors.

It is important that it is understood that there is a significant difference between bullying, as described above, and the general incidents between children that can occur in school.

Bullying takes a variety of forms. The following covers the most significant of these:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings
- Verbal - name calling, insulting, repeated teasing, racist remarks, threats.
- Moving away as a person approaches
- Leaving notes (including text messages, emails and online)
- Physical assault

- Taking or damaging belongings
- Name calling
- Taunting
- Mocking
- Making offensive comments
- Cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging, emailing and use of social media platforms; sending offensive or degrading images; impersonating and hacking into accounts online using internet enabled devices,
- Producing offensive graffiti
- Gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- Excluding people from groups
- Intimidation

Although bullying can occur between individuals it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

### **Prejudice Related Bullying**

Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin including Gypsy, Roma, Travellers
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex / gender
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British Values, schools must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disabilist in nature. We will record these types of bullying, even that which represents a one-off incident.

Other vulnerable groups include:

- bullying related to appearance, health or weight
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious. There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

### **Prejudice Related Language**

Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disabilist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race / ethnicity / nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transsexual, or are perceived to be, or have a parent / carer or sibling who is; because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language is generally used to refer to something or someone as

inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are different in some way or their friends, family members or their parents / carers.

In the case of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language particularly, dismissing it as banter is not helpful as even if these terms are not referring to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity they are using the terms to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of prejudice related language in our school even if it appears to be being used without any intent. Persistent use of prejudice related language and / or bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

### **Where does bullying take place?**

Bullying is not confined to the school premises and may persist outside school, in the local community, on the journey to and from school and may continue into Further Education.

The school acknowledges its responsibilities to support families if bullying occurs off the premises.

### **Cyberbullying**

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims.

Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and then be progressed online or start online and influence behaviour in school.

Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other forms of bullying.

#### **Cyberbullying can include:-**

- Hacking into someone's accounts / sites
- Posting prejudice / hate messages
- Impersonating someone online
- Public posting of images
- Exclusion
- Threats and manipulation
- Stalking

We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our e-safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour.

### **Homophobic bullying and using homophobic language**

Homophobic language is terms of abuse used towards lesbian, gay and bisexual people or those thought to be LGB. It is also used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are different in some way or have gay friends, family members or their parents / carers are gay.

Dismissing it as banter is not helpful as even if these terms are not referring to a person's sexuality they are using the terms to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of homophobic language in our school even if it appears to be being used without any homophobic intent. Persistent

use of homophobic language or homophobic bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

We adopt a zero tolerance policy with homophobic language with all incidents dealt with seriously and logged and reported to parents.

### **Transphobic Bullying**

Transphobic bullying often occurs as a result of others' prejudice being directed at a child or young person because:

- They are transgender
- They are perceived to be transgender
- They do not fit with traditional gender norms (eg. boys with long hair, girls playing team sports)
- They have transgender friends or family members
- They are perceived as being different

We will challenge the use of any unkind behaviour in our school and teach children to celebrate our differences. Persistent use of transphobic language or bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

We adopt a zero tolerance policy with transphobic language with all incidents dealt with seriously and logged and reported to parents.

### **Strategies for prevention of Bullying**

We have a number of curriculum areas that specifically contribute to the work we do in developing an anti-bullying attitude in school. We hope that through this work children will:-

- Know and understand what bullying is
- Believe that bullying is unacceptable
- Know what they should do if they feel they are being bullied or believe another child is
- Feel safe, confident and secure in school

This work is done through the P.S.H.E programme in school which covers the topic of bullying. Work and discussion in R.E. topics can lend itself to reinforcing the key principles of the school in relation to care for others. Circle time, assemblies and other opportunities are taken to ensure that children have the knowledge and skills required to deal with any bullying.

In addition, the Achievement Mentor and Inclusion Team support children with a range of strategies and programmes to support this area. Inclusion runs groups relating to self-esteem, confidence, managing friendships whilst the Achievement Mentor would be very involved in any instances of bullying. Our children have the right to feel valued and we strive to make them feel valued.

Bullying that takes place via the internet or via phones is an area that crosses over into Child Protection. For this reason the school gives parents information on keeping their children safe on the internet (meetings, letters home with guidance) and also covers this during P.S.H.E and computing lessons.

Outside agencies will be called upon to provide support.

### **Reporting Bullying**

All reported incidents will be investigated.

Children are encouraged to feel that they can share any concerns or worries with staff in school. This would generally be the class teacher but children are reassured that they can talk to any adult whom they trust in school. All staff are aware that any allegation of bullying must then be brought to the attention of the Senior Management Team.

After being informed, the school will ensure that the following happen:

- Class Teacher and / or the Headteacher / Achievement Mentor will discuss with parent and / or child.
- A careful investigation into the incident should then take place. This will be done sensitively and with every effort to protect the victim and / or the child who has told.
- More serious or repeated offences must be reported to the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher at the earliest opportunity.
- The 'bullied' child will be reassured that they must always tell someone about any incidents and they have the right to be safe and happy in school.
- Staff will monitor children involved in incidents afterwards for a time and inform other staff as deemed necessary to help with this.
- Parents of all children involved in a serious incident should be informed by staff.

### **Procedure for dealing with Bullying**

#### **Stages in Procedure**

1. The victim and the perpetrator will be counselled and the bully given the opportunity to change his / her behaviour and parents will be informed..
2. IF THIS FAILS the bully's parents will be invited into school to discuss the behaviour and their co-operation requested for changing this behaviour.
3. IF THIS FAILS the bully will be suspended from the playground for a fixed term.
4. IF THIS FAILS the bully will be suspended from school for a fixed term.
5. Bullying incidents are recorded using CPOMS.

The parents' support is very important if we wish to work together to minimise bullying in our school.

Any incidents or reports of bullying are logged in the "Bullying" file kept in the Headteachers' office.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy**

Staff will review the Anti-Bullying policy and procedures on an annual basis.

It is important to be vigilant at all times during the school day and staff also need to be aware of the 'recurrence' of incidents at a later time.