

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy



*"Praying together,
Learning for life,
Caring for all"*

Date: October 2017

To be reviewed: October 2018

POLICY FOR ANTI-BULLYING

Not all name calling, not every push or trip, not every incidence of hiding a pupil's books and belongings is included within this heading. Not every fight or theft of another pupil's property is an act of bullying. These are all types of behaviour of which we should be aware and which we should take steps to discourage and stop, but they are not necessarily *bullying*, which is characterised by repeated patterns of hostile behaviour.

There is no universally accepted, closed definition of 'bullying'. The comments here are intended to cover the situations where one or more pupils (the victims) have their lives made unacceptably unpleasant by the actions of one or more other pupils (the aggressors). **Only the victims can judge when the level of behaviour has become unacceptable to the point where we have bullying.** Then there must be action: we must not say "it's only teasing" but equally, we must not over-react.

The situation at St. Joseph's

Whilst most children experience few if any problems, occasionally some can experience verbal, physical and psychological aggression by individuals or groups of children. The victims' problems are very real: they can feel alone and vulnerable; life at home can become difficult, with tears, disturbed sleep patterns, etc. This behaviour can be experienced anywhere and at anytime; in the playground, in the dining hall, even (very subtly) in the classroom. Increasingly, children are at risk of being bullied via the internet and text messaging. The school is not embarrassed to discuss such matters – these things go on at all schools. Wherever and however it takes place, the School views such actions with equal gravity.

How do we find out about unacceptable behaviour?

- A member of staff spotting things are not as they should be for a particular pupil.
- The victim approaching a member of staff who then reports the matter.
- A friend of the victim reports the matter.
- Parents alert the school about things being amiss.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

Bullying Hurts!

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

Everybody has the right to feel happy and safe.

No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying.

Bullies need to learn different ways of behaving.

Our reaction when parents contact us to report a problem

We do try to rectify matters when we know about them. We listen carefully and make it clear that the problem will be treated seriously and investigated as a matter

of urgency. However, we recognise that these matters can take time to sort out. These situations are invariably more complex than they first appear, and often take months to be resolved.

A senior member of staff will be informed as a matter of course that allegations have been made. Pupils are normally interviewed separately. However, it may be useful at a later stage to interview pupils together – this can form part of the re-education process – it is right that we try to help the pupils to learn from the way they have behaved.

What will happen next?

- Details of the problem will be kept in the pupils' files
- Parents will be contacted – to report back to them if they had originally alerted us, or to alert them of a situation involving their child of which they may not be aware. On-going communication between school and parent is vital throughout the process.
- The situation will be monitored by the class teacher – both the aggressor and the victim will be followed up to ensure that there is no recurrence of the problem.
- Where appropriate, programmes of re-education and intervention will be implemented.
- Any child proven guilty of bullying behaviour may face the most serious of sanctions available to the School.

Golden rules for teachers and parents

- 1 Listen to the victim – only he or she really understands their trauma.
- 2 The worst reaction to being told about aggressive behaviour is to do nothing – you isolate the victim still further and you make him or her feel that the bully may be right and it is he who is at fault.
- 3 The problem will never be completely eradicated and so we must continue to be vigilant.

Reaction to bullying is only part of the story; Personal, Social and Health Education and RE lessons also address the issue of bullying.