

# **St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**



## **Anti-Bullying Policy and Guidelines**

September 2023

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Based upon DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL'S ANTI-BULLYING POLICY & GUIDELINES



## **Statement of Principle**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School seeks to provide a safe, secure and positive environment in which children and young people can develop and grow making full use of the range of facilities available to them.

*The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child name 40 articles that ensure children have the right to be safe.*

- *If every child, regardless of their sex, orientation, ethnic origin, social status, language, age, nationality, or religion has these rights, then the children also must respect these rights by treating each other in a kind and humane way.*
- *If every child has a right to be protected from conflict, cruelty, exploitation and neglect, then the children also must respect these rights by not bullying or harming each other.*

Children, young people and the adults involved with them are entitled to be treated with respect and understanding, and to participate in any activity free from intimidation.

St Joseph's School seeks to ensure that those acting on behalf of the school:

- Actively listen to children and young people;
- Act appropriately on information received;

in order to ensure that a safe, secure, positive environment exists.

Bullying is identified as an important area of activity in Durham County Council's Behaviour Support Plan, linked to Behaviour and Equalities Policy.

## **The Nature of Bullying**

Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms, making it extremely difficult to define. Children, young people and adults can bully. The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops.

Bullying is harmful to all involved, not just the bullied, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide. Bullying generally fits into one of two categories: emotionally or physically harmful behaviour. This includes: -

Name calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; pushing; taking belongings; text messaging; emailing; gossiping; excluding people from groups; and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

Definitions are different and individuals have different experiences; however, from the accounts heard from children and young people, bullying is considered to be;

- Repetitive, wilful or persistent
- Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or group
- An imbalance of power leaving the victim feeling defenceless

Some individuals may feel that they are being bullied, even when there is no intention from others to cause them distress. Such perceptions of bullying should be taken seriously.

In more serious instances where adults abuse their power over a child or a child does over another child, bullying may be viewed as child abuse and should be seen within this context.

Bullying is always damaging to those involved. The victim, the bully and those who witness or even know about the bullying are affected.

## **Victims**

Victims may spend their lives in fear. They often feel isolated from their peers and may believe that it is something about themselves 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-harming or taking 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. Victims of bullying may well become socially excluded – which is a clear risk factor to becoming engaged in crime.

## **Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying behaviour is not a natural part of growing up and should not be seen as such.

Children and young people who bully are unlikely to stop while they can continue unchallenged.

## **Others**

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.

Bullying promotes poor models of behaviour and may encourage others to imitate these models. Children and young people who have been bullied in one setting may well become bullies in another.

For children transferring from primary to secondary schools the fear of bullying is widespread.

Evidence has shown that bullying is a major concern for parents and children of all ages.

## REQUIREMENTS

Bullying, including online, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

- To identify how they will put this policy into practice;
- To involve children and young people in the development of this policy and practice;
- To produce a document which is published and communicated and available for all those who are directly, or indirectly, involved with the organisation;
- To have a group, of staff who will have the responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the policy;
- To make clear that everyone has a responsibility for the safety of others;
- To identify and provide appropriate training in relation to bullying behaviour for adults, children and young people;
- To raise awareness of adults, children and young people about bullying
- To ensure that all staff and volunteers involved with children and young people are able to maintain and develop positive relationships with them
- To provide and encourage a safe, listening environment in which adults, children and young people feel free to discuss their concerns regarding bullying behaviour.

## EXPECTATIONS

- All adults, children and young people should be alert for signs of bullying;
  - The issue of bullying should be discussed in schools and other settings openly and regularly;
  - Schools will develop close links with agencies which might help reduce bullying behaviour;
  - All schools will make a commitment to take effective and appropriate action in dealing with bullying behaviour;
  - Schools should develop appropriate mechanisms for:
    - making children and young people who allege they have been bullied immediately safe
    - investigating incidents and clearly stipulating what action will be taken as part of that investigation
    - recording incidents and the subsequent action taken
    - giving consideration to confidentiality issues
    - involving parents and other organisations
- Monitoring and evaluating the actions taken
- School will provide appropriate training and support for the victims of bullying;
  - School will provide appropriate help for those involved in bullying behaviour;
  - School will conduct an audit to identify **where** and **when** bullying is taking place and to use this to inform the action they take;
  - School will have to give careful consideration to how their Anti-Bullying Policy links with the Child Protection procedures.

## **ST JOSEPH'S IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY:**

- We will consult with our pupils, parents, governors & staff in the development & updates of our policy.
- We will set up a peer buddy system so that daily support is in school for our children.
- We will take part in the annual anti-bullying week related to PSHE & our RE schemes, in order to raise awareness of the issues.
- We will provide regular opportunities for pupils to discuss anti bullying issues in class council sessions, circle time and PSHE curriculum time.
- We will try to ensure that all children in our school can identify an adult with whom they feel safe enough to talk to.
- We will ensure that all staff and volunteers involved with children and young people are able to maintain and develop positive relationships with them – this is reflected in our mission statement & behaviour policy.
- We will provide and encourage a safe, listening environment in which adults, children and young people feel free to discuss their concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- We will act swiftly & considerately when an accusation of bullying is made, helping the child involved to feel safe, and involving parents.
- Any incidents of bullying will be taken seriously, and the discipline procedures set out in our behaviour policy will be immediately implemented, with parents being contacted.
- Any incidents will be recorded on cpoms

## **Anti-Bullying Policy Guidelines**

### **1. Introduction**

Bullying is a problem for everyone. The victims of bullying are not the only ones damaged by bullying. Those who watch and are aware of bullying are also harmed. Organisations that put up with bullying do not work as well as they could and people within such organisations are often unhappy.

We know from experience that children and young people who are being bullied often find it difficult to tell someone. Part of this difficulty can stem from their uncertainty about what will happen if they **do** tell. By making available clear guidelines, we can go some way to overcoming this difficulty.

These guidelines are based upon three important points:

- We cannot expect children and young people to draw attention to bullying when it happens – the adults must accept responsibility and take steps to make sure that they are aware of what is happening.
- It is up to **all** adults within an organisation to take bullying seriously, and to do something about it.
- Adults must be a positive role model in the way they treat other adults, or children and young people. Their own behaviour must not be seen to encourage bullying.

### **2. Signs of Bullying**

The behaviour of children, young people and adults is not always easily understood. Changes in behaviour may have many causes. Being bullied can be one reason why a child or young person's behaviour changes.

There is a need to be alert to the possibility that bullying is occurring. These are some signs which need to be investigated sensitively: -

The child or young person may:

- Become withdrawn, clingy, moody, aggressive, unco-operative or non-communicative.
- Behave in immature ways, e.g. revert to thumb sucking or tantrums.
- Have sleep or appetite problems.
- Have more difficulty in concentrating.
- Show variation in performance.
- Have cuts, bruises or aches and pains without adequate explanation.
- Request extra money or start stealing.
- Have clothes or possessions which are damaged or lost.
- Complain of illness more frequently.
- Show a marked change in a well-established pattern of behaviour e.g.
  - A sudden loss of interest in a previously favoured activity
  - Changing times of coming to and going from the house
  - A reluctance to (or no longer wishing to) leave the home
  - A request to change school, youth club, etc.
  - A refusal to return to a place or activity

**SOME VICTIMS OF BULLYING DO NOT APPEAR TO REVEAL ANY OUTWARD SIGNS**

**THESE SIGNS CAN ALSO BE AN INDICATION OF OTHER PROBLEMS AND MAY NOT ALWAYS BE LINKED TO BULLYING**

### **3. Guidelines for Staff**

**Children and Young People have the right to be safe. All staff have a responsibility to keep them safe.**

The following actions may be taken to ensure that awareness of bullying is raised within an organisation: -

- Name a member of staff to be responsible for co-ordinating anti-bullying issues
- Develop an Anti-Bullying Policy with representative young people.
- Review the Anti-Bullying Policy at least annually.
- Keep staff and young people informed of developments on bullying issues by posters, leaflets, white-boards and in schools, assemblies and PSE lessons.
- Specify clearly those types of behaviour that are considered to be bullying and therefore unacceptable.
- Positively encourage co-operative behaviour.
- Reward non-aggressive behaviour.

- Provide support to victims of bullying
- Provide support to those alleged to be bullying
- Make it possible for children and young people to voice their concerns anonymously e.g. a post box for anonymous comments, or notes.
- Provide staff training about bullying.
- Review arrangements for supervising young people, particularly if areas where bullying occurs regularly are identified.
- Maintain supervision in “trouble spots” in the physical environment.
- Make the environment attractive and “owned” by the young people.

### **Immediate Action for Staff**

#### **ENSURE THAT BULLYING INCIDENTS ARE DEALT WITH PROMPTLY**

The following actions are appropriate for use with **both** children and young people who are bullied and those who are involved in bullying.

- Ensure the immediate safety and well-being of children and young people
- Protect and support all parties while the issues are resolved
- Take the necessary steps to stop the bullying
- Listen to and treat children and young people sympathetically and take their concerns seriously
- Encourage children and young people to discuss the incidents of bullying
- Involve children and young people in the discussion about what action will be taken
- Consider a range of strategies to ensure that bullying does not occur again
- Record incidents and actions being taken and bring them to the attention of the named person
- Inform parents and discuss the situation with them calmly
- Maintain contact and work with parents
- Respond calmly and consistently

#### **LISTEN, TAKE ACTION, RECORD AND FOLLOW UP**

#### **4. Ideas for Children and Young People**

#### **YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE. YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPECT OTHERS TO KEEP YOU SAFE.**

Some of the following ideas come from young people themselves, from discussions at conferences and elsewhere.

#### **Speak out about bullying**

Don't be embarrassed or ashamed about speaking out about bullying and asking for help.

Choose who can help.....think about how:

Your parents can help



Your friends can help  
Other adults you trust can help

Speak out about bullying, talk about what is happening and how it makes you feel.

Some people pretend bullying does not exist, this can be hard, but you can still help yourself and can ask others to help you.

Sometimes it is easier to write or draw rather than talk. It is a good idea to keep a diary of incidents.

### **Take Action**

Get together and talk with friends.

Look for posters or leaflets on bullying, the internet can be useful.

Put up posters and hand out leaflets.

Organise an Anti-Bullying Campaign.

Join in activities to stop bullying.

### **Dos and Don'ts**

Do support and befriend the victims of bullying

Do support friends when they are being bullied

Do help others to have confidence to tell someone

Do think of each other's feelings

Do be aware of bullying and look out for it

Do report it, if you witness bullying

Do find out what your school or other organisation says about bullying – most organisations have ways of dealing with bullying

Don't ignore the problem

Don't join in even if everyone else seems to

Don't join in because you're frightened you might be picked on

Don't pick on others or tease

Don't name call

Don't keep quiet about bullying

### **Remember**

Bullying can make children feel scared and alone.

Bullying might mean: Name-calling

Hitting

Ignoring

Scaring  
Picking on  
Teasing  
Rumour spreading  
Nasty text messages, e-mails or phone calls

You should not be silent when you are being bullied

Telling about bullying isn't telling tales or grassing  
Bullying is wrong and should be reported  
Both adults and children bully  
No-one deserves to be bullied  
Bullying is everyone's problem  
Children who bully others need help too, by telling you will get them the help they need so they won't bully others.

## **5. Guidelines for Parents/Families of Children Being Bullied**

If you suspect your child is being bullied:

- Talk to your child about what is happening;  
Be calm  
Show sensitivity  
Show concern  
Reassure your child that he or she is not to blame
- If at all possible, act with your child's agreement;
- Contact someone in the school
- Expect the school to take you seriously and take appropriate action;
- Maintain contact and work with the organisation.

### **Some Do's and Don'ts**

Do listen to your child  
Do take your child's concerns seriously  
Do encourage your child to tell you what has been happening and in particular to report any trouble that has been encountered  
Do help your child to try and find a safe solution  
Do talk to the school  
Do look for signs of distress shown by your child

Don't ignore your child if they say they are worried about being with certain people or in certain places  
Don't tell your child: "Just put up with it". Bullying is never acceptable. Action needs to be taken to stop bullying.  
Don't tell your child to fight back. The bully may be stronger. Your child could be hurt or get into trouble.

Don't immediately rush off and deal with the situation yourself, let the school know and leave it to them to deal with.

Don't approach the parents/carers of the perpetrator as this can make things worse.

**YOUR CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE. YOUR CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO EXPECT OTHER PEOPLE, INCLUDING YOURSELVES, TO HELP KEEP HIM OR HER SAFE**

## **6. Social Media**

### **Some guidelines for Children/Young People**

#### **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 switch on your phone at school, or show it around at school.

#### **Social Media Bullying**

Again, **do not reply**, save messages to show an adult.

If it occurs in school, make sure you tell a member of staff immediately.

Please also see AUP Policy and Social Media Policy

### **Parents Resources**

#### **NSPCC**

**Behave yourself!** A free guide which provides advice on positive ways of encouraging good behaviour in children.

**Parenting: A rough guide** written to encourage parents to work out positive ways of dealing with their children's difficult behaviour.

**Stop the Violence** A short booklet produced by the NSPCC for parents on keeping children safe. Covers violence in the home, violence at school and in the community. Gives some suggestions for how parents can make a difference.

## **Bullying Online**

A useful website with information and advice – [www.bullyingonline.org.uk](http://www.bullyingonline.org.uk)

## **Helplines**

**Anti-Bullying Campaign** Operates a helpline offering advice for parents and counselling for children who are being bullied. Tel 0207 378 1446.

**ChildLine** Children can write or phone free of charge if they have a problem of any kind. Write to: Freepost 1111, London N1 0BR. Tel: 0800 11 11.

**Kidscape** For parents of children who have been bullied. Tel: 0207 730 3300 (Mon – Fri 10 – 4)

**NSPCC Child Protection Helpline** Free 24-hour service which provides counselling, information and advice to anyone concerned about a child at risk of abuse. Tel: 0800 800 500 or text phone 0800 056 0566.

**Parentline** A national help line for anyone who is parenting a child and who is in need of guidance, information or emotional support. Tel: 08088 002222.

**Women's Aid Federation of England** Services for women and children experiencing domestic violence. Tel: 0345 023468.

This policy links with several other policies, practices and action plans including:

- Acceptable Use Policies (AUP)
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection/Safeguarding policy
- Curriculum policies, such as: Computing, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE), Citizenship and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE)
- Online Safety Policy