

St Robert Southwell Catholic Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, governors and parents. In our Catholic school Christ and the Gospel values are at the centre of all our teaching, therefore we recognise and value the sacredness of each individual in our community.

Bullying happens in all schools. 67% of primary school children said they have experienced some form of bullying in school (WSCC survey 2013).

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) is committed to stop bullying in all its forms. In November each year ABA runs a high profile Anti-Bullying Week to raise awareness and provide support for schools and local authorities to respond to and prevent bullying. Parents are rightly concerned about this issue and all staff at St Robert Southwell treat the issue of bullying very seriously. This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy and Cyber Bullying Policy.

A definition of bullying

A person is bullied when he or she is exposed regularly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more persons.

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'. (DfE 2013)

Effects of Bullying (West Sussex Action Against Bullying 2015-2018)

Bullying can affect everyone; those who are bullied, those who bully, and those who witness bullying and is linked to many negative outcomes; it undermines confidence and self-esteem, destroys a sense of security and marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies.

NSPCC 2010 research states that:

Children and young people who are bullied: are more likely to:

- Experience negative physical and mental health issues such as depression and anxiety, increased feelings of sadness and loneliness, changes in sleep and eating patterns, and loss of interest in activities they used to enjoy. These issues may persist into adulthood.
- Decrease their academic achievement and school participation. They are more likely to miss, skip, or drop out of school.
- Have suicidal thoughts and a small number might retaliate through violent measures later in life

Children and young people who are bullies: are more likely to:

- Engage in violent and other risky behaviours into adulthood
- Abuse alcohol and other drugs in adolescence and as adults
- Get into fights, vandalism, and drop out of school
- Engage in early sexual activity
- Have criminal convictions as adults

- Be abusive toward their partners, spouses, or children as adults

How do we know if it is serious?

When a person is bullied they experience pain, hurt or upset. If someone feels unhappy and distressed because of the continual unkind or nasty behaviour of another individual or group of individuals then this will be regarded as a serious situation that requires adult intervention.

Adults sometimes fail to recognise the extent of the torment felt by the victim and dismiss name calling, exclusion or teasing as unimportant but at St Robert Southwell these behaviours are taken seriously.

There are five main categories of bullying:

- physical (causing physical pain or taking belongings)
- verbal (name-calling, insults, taunting)
- non-verbal (eye-rolling, gesturing, ignoring)
- indirect (spreading rumours, excluding from social groups)
- cyber bullying (sending malicious emails, texts or social network messages). See Cyber Bullying Policy.

Bullying is usually distinguishable from friendly teasing or conflict situations. If a pupil is being bullied, they will often:

- be targeted with repeated, negative actions with harmful intent
- experience an imbalance of power in their interactions with the bully (for example, psychological, verbal, social or physical)
- be affected by these interactions in a contrasting way to the bully (the target is usually distressed).

As well as the five main categories of bullying, some pupils experience 'backhanded bullying'. This involves the bully misleading the target or persuading him or her to carry out inappropriate activities, such as stealing from another pupil's bag or locker, which draws negative attention or gets the target into trouble.

School's Key Values and Mission

In our Mission Statement we state that:

We will provide each child with a learning environment which will support, guide and inspire. Our wish is for every child to develop spiritually and intellectually to achieve their potential.

We also believe that we will provide a secure and happy environment where being gentle and kind is valued and encouraged so we will not tolerate any form of bullying. This school is committed to creating a safe environment where young people can learn and play, can talk about their worries confident that adults will listen and will offer help. We will make it clear to pupils, staff, parents and governors that when bullying happens we will work as a community in accordance with the policy set out in this document to help both the people who are harmed and the perpetrators.

We will ensure the safety of the victim and do our best to support improved behaviour from the bully.

How we are addressing bullying.

It must be remembered that although when questioned about facts and reasons when bad behaviour has been brought to the attention of staff, children often respond by giving answers that will get them out of trouble. The facts can often be very contradictory giving each child's own perspective. This is time consuming and may distract staff from effective action in the quest for the truth. Sometimes it is very difficult to get to the truth of the situation.

The school will:

- Teach pupils, through the medium of EPR and assemblies, strategies to recognise and deal with bullying
- Actively participate in projects and activities to promote an Anti-Bullying ethos across the school, for example championing the annual National Anti-Bullying Week.
- Have a clear route of getting 'Help' by providing appropriate skills and accessible information to all children
- Provide adults working with children the skills to deal with bullying by actively listening to the 'voice' of children
- Provide opportunities for children and young people to talk about bullying
- Involve children and young people in developing solutions to reducing bullying in the school

This must be a listening school, children's complaints must be given credence and every effort made to sort out disputes.

- Incidents in the playground must be reported to the class teacher
- If they are more serious they must be reported to the head, or assistant head.
- These incidents must be recorded, in this way both victims and bullies can be tracked.
- An incident log is kept by the headteacher and all incidents logged so that patterns can be spotted.
- Children are listened, to both victim and perpetrator is interviewed and these conversations recorded on an 'Incident Record' form. This form also contains a section for any action taken; this may include any sanctions to be found in the Behaviour Policy.

Teachers must always model good behaviour and not use their position of power to dominate the pupils. They must avoid sarcastic comments, derogatory nicknames and dominating and humiliating behaviour.

EPR

Bullying is an important aspect of the Education for Personal Relationships (EPR) curriculum and each year anti bullying strategies will be taught for half a term throughout the school. Circle Time will be widely used in the school as it is a significant strategy for raising self-esteem.

Issues regarding bullying will often be discussed in assemblies and in the classroom. Children need to feel safe so that they can tell and know that they will be listened to and appropriate intervention will occur. The school wants to become a telling/listening school. Children need to know that 'it's all right to tell'.

The change in attitudes is not always or immediately reflected in changes or skills or behaviours. These changes are difficult and can only be brought about by practice, with support and in the context of a continuing programme of development and change. Parents too need to understand that some incidents can be dealt with quickly whilst issues such as bullying take longer

Using group, problem solving process – the No Blame Approach

Punishing bullies may often make matters worse when the bully takes further revenge on the victim. A strategy that has been developed to deal with bullying 'The No Blame Approach to Bullying', aims to help the victim by enabling the perpetrator to understand what they have done. See Appendix A

Bullying and Autism Spectrum Condition

Children with ASC can be particularly vulnerable to being bullied. The behavioural characteristics and social naivety that accompany ASCs (for example, overly formal speech, unusual behaviour and obsessive interests) can make pupils with an ASC very vulnerable to bullying. Pupils with an ASC are particularly vulnerable to 'backhanded bullying' because they take friendship at face value and find it difficult to discern ulterior motives. The signs of bullying and strategies outlined in this policy are important principals for dealing with all pupils including those with an ASC. However, if and when bullying is experienced by an ASC pupil it is important that staff are aware of the signs and have additional strategies to deal with problems. Staff are trained in ASC so can recognise why pupils with an ASC behave in certain ways, detect when they've been bullied and help to prevent bullying situations from occurring in the first place. If a staff member feels they need more support in this area they can discuss situations with the SENDco and refer to the 'Bullying and Autism Spectrum Disorders' booklet produced by the National Autistic Society. There is a copy in every classroom.

As a school we want ASC pupils to flourish and aim to provide a positive experience in and out of the classroom for them and their peers by encouraging tolerance and understanding of difference. We aim to turn the difficulties faced by our ASC pupils into opportunities that enrich the education of all pupils. See Appendix C

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will take the following forms:

- All incidents will be recorded and tracked in the class incident log and incident records. Over time we will be able to see if bullying has decreased.
- Regular discussions will be held with teaching staff and non teaching staff to see whether incidents are being dealt with effectively.

- Pupil questionnaires/Parent questionnaires will be used to assess the safety of children

Reviewed May 2016

Mrs A Hudspith

Appendix A

The No Blame Approach

It is a simple seven step process that has the following four essential elements:

- The absence of blame
- The encouragement of empathy
- Shared responsibility
- Problem solving

And the steps are as follows:

Step one – interview with the victim

When the teacher finds out that bullying has happened s/he starts by talking to the victim about his **feelings**. S/he does not question him about the incidents but she does need to know who was involved.

Step – two – convene a meeting with the people involved

The teacher arranges to meet with the group of people who have been involved. This will include some bystanders or colluders who joined in but did not initiate the bullying. A group of six to eight pupils is best.

Step three – explain the problem

S/he tells them about the way the victim is feeling. At no time does s/he discuss the details of the incident or allocate blame to the group.

Step four – share responsibility

The teacher does not attribute blame but states s/he knows that the group is responsible and can do something about it.

Step five – ask the group for their 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 s/he does not go on to extract a promise of improved behaviour.

Step six – leave it up to them

The teacher ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the group to solve the problem. S/he arranges to meet with them again to see how things are going.

Step seven – meet them again

About a week later the teacher discusses with each student individually, including the victim, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process.

Whilst this may seem to be a 'soft' option it does work but the steps must be followed as it is written.

Appendix B (ABA) Advice for parents and carers

Signs of Bullying

You may be unsure if your child is being bullied. If you suspect that this may be happening, look out for the following signs. You may see one or more signs, for example your child could:

- Show signs of stress – being moody, silent or crying, or bullying a younger sibling or friend
- Make excuses to miss school, such as stomach complaints or headaches (or your child may be skipping school altogether)
- Seem upset after using the internet or mobile, or change their behaviour - for example, no longer wanting to look at new text messages immediately – and be secretive and unwilling to talk about their online activities and phone use.
- Be withdrawn in their behaviour
- Have more bruises or scrapes than usual
- Change their eating habits
- Have torn clothes, school things that are broken or missing, or have 'lost' money
- Sleep badly
- Be wetting the bed

There could be other reasons for these signs, so you need to ask yourself:

- Could there be anything else bothering your child?
- Could there be changes in your family life like a new baby, or divorce or separation that may be affecting your child's behaviour?

Appendix C - Bullying and Autism: Key points and strategies

Why pupils with an ASC are at risk of being bullied

- The behavioural characteristics and social naivety that accompany ASCs (for example, overly formal speech, unusual behaviour and obsessive interests) can make pupils with an ASC very vulnerable to bullying.
- Pupils with an ASC are particularly vulnerable to 'backhanded bullying' because they take friendship at face value and find it difficult to discern ulterior motives.

Taking bullying seriously

- We are required by law to take measures to prevent and act on bullying and to make sure that people with a disability are not discriminated against.
- School staff play a vital role in promoting understanding and tolerance of difference.
- Training in ASCs can help staff to recognise why pupils with an ASC behave in certain ways, detect when they've been bullied, and help to prevent bullying situations from occurring in the first place.

Strategies for reducing bullying

- Bullying is most likely to take place at unstructured times and in under-supervised areas.
- Support staff need to tread a difficult line between supporting a pupil with an ASC and allowing them to interact with – and be accepted by – their peers.
- Strategies to help prevent bullying include: having clear rules about bullying and its consequences for the bully and making these known to all pupils; identifying areas and times when bullying is more likely to take place and increasing supervision at these times; celebrating 'positive behaviour'; providing quiet and safe places for pupils with an ASC;

- When appropriate encouraging other pupils to look out for pupils with an ASC; being aware of group dynamics and separating 'trouble-makers'.

Promoting understanding of ASCs within the peer group

- Understanding, respecting and accommodating people's differences is the key to successful inclusion.
- By learning about ASCs, pupils are more likely to be tolerant and supportive of the pupil with an ASC in their peer group.
- Permission to disclose a pupil's diagnosis must always be gained from parents/carers and the pupil, where appropriate.

Addressing the topic of bullying

- EPR lessons are used to explore bullying in depth.
- Role-play and "what if..?" scenarios are effective tools in helping pupils develop and try out new responses to bullying.
- Discuss the difference between reporting bullying incidents and 'telling tales' and reassure pupils that measures are in place to prevent retaliation.
- Involve pupils in developing strategies for eradicating bullying.

Dealing with bullying

- Explain to the bully how his or her behaviour has affected the pupil with an ASD, referring to specific areas of difficulty that affect that pupil.
- Make sure that the bully knows the consequences of his or her behaviour and that the appropriate sanctions are consistently carried through.
- Record incidents in a format that provides enough detail to identify patterns and helps to develop future preventative measures

Helping pupils with an ASC develop an awareness of bullying

- Because of their difficulties with 'reading' social situations, pupils with an ASC need to be taught how to distinguish between bullying and accidents or misunderstandings.
- Pupils with an ASC would benefit from structured social skills training to improve their social understanding and to help them learn how to respond in different social contexts.
- Social Stories are an excellent tool for teaching pupils with an ASC how to do this.

Supporting the bullied pupil

- Pupils with an ASC may need to communicate incidents in other ways than talking; for example, through drawing, writing and creating cartoon strips.
- Pupils with an ASC may need to practise set strategies in the event of being bullied, such as using standard phrases and following a prepared plan of action.
- We maintain close links with the parents/carers of vulnerable pupils, and bullies where appropriate, and share strategies to reduce the risk of bullying.

Perceived bullying behaviour in pupils with an ASC

- Due to their social and communication difficulties, it is unlikely that a child with an ASC would actually 'bully' another child in the typical definition of the word. But there are many reasons why pupils with an ASC may display behaviour that appears similar to bullying, such as poor understanding of interactions and a reaction to previous social experiences.
- Pupils with an ASC should practise appropriate ways of engaging with others, initiating interaction and gaining attention, through social skills training sessions.

- Pupils with an ASC need clear, specific guidelines on what are acceptable and unacceptable ways of expressing their feelings.
- Pupils with an ASC will need to be taught cognitively how their behaviour can affect others.
- Consequences should always be pre-determined and explained clearly to the pupil with an ASC in advance. They should be fair, consistent, immediate and appropriate to the pupil's understanding.
- Specific acts of appropriate interaction should be reinforced through praise, a reward system or a specific positive consequence.
- Pupils with an ASC will need to be taught strategies for calming down when they are upset, as an alternative to expressing their anger or frustration inappropriately.
- Behaviour issues can be addressed by setting targets in IEPs