

Anti-Bullying Policy



Aims and Objectives

The ethos of St Aidan's as a Christian school encompasses all aspects of care and value of the individual. Every member of the St Aidan's community has the right to feel safe and happy and therefore has a duty to behave in a considerate way and to respect the rights of others. All pupils should care for and support each other.

The aim of our anti-bullying policy is to clarify for pupils and staff that bullying is always unacceptable. We aim to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear. The school's pastoral care arrangements positively aim to prevent bullying as well as deal with incidents as they occur. Bullying is dealt with as an issue in the curriculum, in assemblies and in our day to day interactions with each other. Pupils are made aware that bullying should be reported to any member of staff and that whoever takes the report will act immediately and sensitively.

Definition of bullying

Bullying may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person, that is repeated over a period of time. It is widely recognised that there are many different types of bullying, including racial, religious, cultural, sexual, homophobic, verbal, emotional (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours), and/or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). It can take the form of Cyber bullying (which involves the use of information and communication technologies and can involve social networking sites, like Facebook, emails and mobile phones- used for text messages and as cameras). It can involve a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory. There are varying degrees of severity of bullying, but, at its most serious, it can cause psychological damage and even suicide (although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously.

Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied can include:

- Unwillingness to come to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (eg giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Room with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises

- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmare
- Talking of suicide or running away
- Unwillingness to join in activities
- Being overly emotional – outbursts of tears

Preventative Measures

We take the following preventative measures:

We use age-appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHCE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school, the issue of bullying is visited regularly in this programme.

Other lessons, particularly RS and English highlight the issue of bullying, and reinforce our intolerance of such behaviour by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable.

All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.

All reported incidents are investigated at once, and reported incidents are subsequently monitored.

We raise staff awareness through Year meetings and INSET.

We have a strong and experienced pastoral team, Heads of Year in charge of each year group working with an experienced Deputy Headteacher with overall responsibility for pastoral care.

Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow up work with both victims and bullies.

We take action to reduce the risk of bullying at those times and places where it is more likely to occur. School Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and supervise the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur.

We operate a Peer Listener system, whereby Sixth form pupils act as mentors and buddies to year 7 pupils at lunchtimes in order to help them settle in to school life.

The school's nurses investigate suspect visits to the medical room if they suspect bullying has occurred.

The school has a Chaplain and has access to the local Primary Mental Health Care worker- these can work with individuals on issues of self-esteem.

We have a duty to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, which involve our pupils.

ICT

We expect all pupils to adhere to the ICT Code of Conduct. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our Network Office monitors all use of the network.

Sanctions are imposed for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.

We issue pupils with their own school email address. Access to personal email accounts and social network sites are blocked.

We offer guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyber bullying in ICT lessons.

Guidance is offered on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.

We discourage the use of Mobile phones in public areas of the school, where they may cause annoyance to others, or in classrooms. The cameras on mobile phones should not be used in school.

Strategies for dealing with incidents

The pupil planner has a page advising pupils how to deal with bullying including telling.

We ensure that pupils know what to do when they are bullied or if they witness bullying.

Bullying is always wrong, a victim of bullying must not be made to feel guilty because she/he is bullied.

Staff are available and willing to listen. We treat the incidents seriously.

We negotiate an agreed form of atonement which is acceptable to the victim.

We help the bully to become aware that his/her actions are to be considered to be bullying and that these are hurtful to the victim. We find out the reasons why she/he bullies others and help the bully resolve his/her problems.

Incidents will be recorded and parents informed.

The situation will be monitored by staff, and parents and pupils encouraged to contact school again with concerns.

Sanctions

The school has number of sanctions that it can use for poor behaviour, the ultimate of which is Exclusion. Sanctions are detailed in the school's Behaviour policy.

Useful sites:

www.childline.org.uk www.bullying.co.uk

www.antibullying.net

