

**The Catholic Schools of the Waveney Valley**

**Anti Bullying Policy for St Benet's and St Edmund's Primary Schools**

**2021**



**Reviewed by: Mrs Samantha Barlow**

**Approved by: Governing Body**

**Date: December 2021**

**Next Review: November 2022**

## **Introduction:**

Schools have a duty of care for pupils and staff alike and, to this end, The Catholic Schools of the Waveney Valley, strives to create a safe and happy environment, believing that all bullying is unacceptable, whether at home, at school, at work, in the local community or when social networking.

We believe that school should provide a safe, caring and happy place for young people to learn and for adults to work. If this is achieved, the school will be able to develop teaching and learning, whilst fostering an attitude of responsible behaviour at all times to promote safety, both on the premises and out of school hours.

The policy's primary objective is to ensure that members of the school community are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and how to manage a bullying incident if it occurs. However, bullying is not confined to school and this policy aims to make pupils aware of what action they can take both now and in their adult lives, whether as victims of bullying, or as bystanders.

## **Context:**

Since the Education and Inspections Act 2008, the Equality Act (2010), Equality Duty (2011), the increased use of technology and the introduction of the new Ofsted framework in January 2012, the policy needed to be reviewed and amended.

The new policy draws on Department for Education guidance on dealing with bullying, particularly 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (2017). This policy should be read in conjunction with the Relationship and Behaviour Policy which can be requested from the school office or found on our school website.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Senior Leadership Team have overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation. Cases will be managed according to the circumstances and will be recorded and analysed to see whether patterns emerge from the nature of the bullying or the identity of the perpetrators.

The Senior Leadership Team and Staff will ensure that the policy is implemented equally in all cases, without regard to ethnic origin, cultural differences, gender, disability and sexuality. They will ensure that pupils are listened to and that their concerns are appropriately addressed.

All staff and volunteers share responsibility for ensuring that the policy and procedures are followed, and consistently and fairly applied. Mutual support amongst all staff is essential for creating a high quality and safe learning environment, promoting good behaviour and implementing the agreed policy and procedures consistently.

Parents and Carers will be encouraged to work in partnership with the school in order that high standards of behaviour are maintained both in and out of school, and that pupils respect both similarities and differences between themselves and other members of the school and the wider community.

Pupils will be expected to take responsibility for their own behaviour and will be made fully aware of the school's anti-bullying policy, the procedures arising from cases of bullying and the rationale behind them.

All pupils have a collective responsibility to ensure that they are considerate towards one another and respectful of each other's differences.

If the steps prescribed in section 10 have not fully resolved parents' or carers' concerns about bullying, advice on the Complaints Procedure can be requested from The St John the Baptist Trust website.

### **Definitions of Bullying:**

Bullying behaviour can be defined as an action, or number of repeated actions, causing harm to people or relationships. This behaviour could be intentional or unintentional and may be on-going. The definition equally encompasses physical or non-physical actions; therefore the harm could be physical, emotional, or both.

A paper for the Office of the Children's Commissioner (2006) outlined four key characteristics:

- **Repetitive and persistent**
- **Intentionally harmful**
- **Involving an imbalance of power**
- **Causing feelings of distress, fear, loneliness or lack of confidence**

A research review for the NSPCC produced a useful definition for the five essential components of bullying:

- 1. There is an intention to harm e.g. a person teasing another with the intention of deliberately upsetting them**
- 2. There is a harmful outcome: a person or persons are hurt emotionally or physically**
- 3. The act can be direct or indirect e.g. it could involve direct aggression such as kicking someone, or it could be an indirect act such as spreading rumours via Facebook**
- 4. There is usually repetition from the perpetrator. However, for vulnerable pupils in the school community, who may experience bullying, the repetition may be the repeat of the act by several individuals or groups of people**
- 5. There is unequal power. A person or several persons who are (perceived as) more powerful due to, for example, their age or physical strength or size will abuse their power by bullying.**

Bullying behaviour can be direct or indirect, simple or complex.

Direct bullying includes physical threats, verbal insults or taunts and directly contacting a person with obscene or insulting messages by using, for example, a mobile phone.

Indirect bullying includes persistently ignoring a pupil so that they feel socially isolated, spreading malicious rumours, or insults, often via social network sites on the Internet, or writing offensive graffiti.

Cyber-bullying uses technology to harm a person, group of people or a relationship and can happen both inside and outside of school and at any time of the day or night.

Bullying differs from 'friendship fall-out', or other aggressive behaviour:

“If two children or young people of about the same strength have the odd fight or quarrel. It is not bullying.” (Olweus 1989, 1993, 1999)

#### **Where there is bullying:**

- **There is normally a power imbalance so that the victim does not feel able to defend him/herself**
- **It is usually persistent but could be an isolated incident**
- **It might relate to racism, homophobia, sexism, ageism**
- **It might relate to a disability or a special educational need (SEN). In these examples, victims may not be aware of being bullied**
- **There is normally an intention to cause harm, although there may be instances when there is a lack of awareness that the actions are harmful.**

All bullying issues, whatever their nature, will be treated with equal importance and the response will be based upon the guidelines in the policy.

#### **Signs and Symptoms:**

**A victim may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. These may include:**

- **Reluctance to attend school**
- **Unwillingness to travel on the school bus/public transport**
- **Truancy from specific lessons**
- **Damage to clothing or possessions**
- **‘Losing’ more items than usual**
- **Unexplained bruises/swellings**
- **Deterioration of school work/academic performance**
- **Being afraid to use the Internet**
- **Becoming jittery about receiving text messages**
- **Unkempt uniform**
- **Bullying towards siblings**
- **Taking money without permission**

#### **Symptoms may include:**

- **Loss of appetite**
- **Headaches**
- **Stomach aches**
- **Stammering**
- **Sudden changes in behaviour**
- **Lack of confidence**
- **Signs of depression**
- **Nervous/edginess**
- **Difficulty in concentration**

- **Lack of motivation to complete work**

These are examples, but this list is not exhaustive.

### **Reporting Bullying:**

Pupils are encouraged to report all forms of bullying, whether carried out by another pupil or by an adult.

The hope is that by reporting the problem in the first instance, this will become the first step in empowering the victim to overcome the bullying through the defined stages that will then be put into action. Whenever a pupil experiences bullying, it should be reported, whether by the victim, friends of the victim, bystanders or via parents, who would contact the school. Information can be reported to a member of staff, or a member of Senior Leadership Team.

All staff should first immediately secure the safety of the young person before following the school's procedures.

When a problem occurs outside of school and immediate advice or support is required, Childline (0800 1111), for example, would provide an alternative, particularly if a child did not feel comfortable discussing the matter with a parent, family member or carer. The school would hope that the child would feel able to discuss the matter with a member of staff upon their return to school.

Teaching and non-teaching staff, who feel that they are being bullied in the workplace, either by a staff member or by a pupil, can report their concern to their line manager. If their line manager is involved, staff may contact the Executive Head or Chair of Governors if it is regarding the Executive Head.

### **Responding to Bullying:**

We use a three-stage approach to dealing with bullying:

**Stage 1:** Creating a safe learning environment and anti-bullying culture The first stage is on-going, and involves measures designed to encourage pupils to behave positively towards one another, thereby discouraging bullying.

**These measures include:**

- **Providing safe places for vulnerable pupils to go at break times and lunchtimes e.g. classrooms or library area**
- **Opportunities for pupils to discuss bullying issues such as during anti-bullying week, RSHE and Safer Internet Day.**

**Stage 2: If bullying occurs:**

#### **The Restorative Approach**

This approach encourages the reporting of incidents by reducing the victims' anxieties about repercussions and educates the perpetrators, by increasing their understanding of the

difficulties caused by bullying and encouraging perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions.

It may be appropriate to monitor the situation in the first instance, and work closely with parents and the victim to discuss if any action should be taken.

It may be appropriate to hold a Restorative Justice meeting with all those involved. This might mean asking pupils, staff and parents to share their views within a meeting with a facilitator who would ensure that all participants were able to say how they had been affected by the bullying behaviour and what needed to change.

As a way forward, if thought appropriate and agreed upon, a contract would be written between the pupils.

There would then be a series of follow up meetings to ensure that the contract was working and that problems had not re-emerged.

### **Stage 3: If those involved in bullying do not respond to the Restorative Approach**

If those involved do not keep to the agreements made at Restorative Justice Meetings, or repeat bullying behaviour towards other individuals, the matter will be treated as defiance.

The school would then use a range of sanctions,

- including loss of break time/lunchtime, internal exclusion or in extreme cases,
- fixed term or permanent exclusion.
- In all cases parents will be invited in for a formal meeting to discuss the concerns

Based upon legislation in the Children Act (1989), in serious cases, it may also be appropriate to consider the bullying as a child protection concern if 'there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.

Where this is the case, the school must report their concerns to the Local Authority's safeguarding services and may draw on external professionals to support the victim or to tackle issues which have contributed to a child becoming a perpetrator of bullying.

As a last resort, the school may report a bullying issue to the police; particularly if staff feel that the nature of the bullying contravenes the law and other measures have been unsuccessful in preventing its recurrence.

### **Recording bullying and evaluating the policy:**

When bullying of a pupil has been reported, statements will be taken from all relevant parties and stored on file, this is in the form of uploading to CPOMS.

When it is believed that bullying has occurred, the member of staff will complete a behaviour log on CPOMS, indicating the type of bullying and the names of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s).

A behaviour log is used for incidents of poor behaviour that require action by teaching staff. Information from the behaviour log will be stored on CPOMS system as well as other communication with pupils and parents such as a meeting or telephone call.

The measures taken, and sanctions imposed will be recorded and used to inform staff of trends, or to indicate which measures are most successful in ensuring that further bullying is prevented.

**As Pupils:**

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?**

**Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.**

- **Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is WRONG.**
- **Be proud of who you are - it is good to be individual.**
- **Try not to show that you are upset. This is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.**
- **Stay with a group of friends / people.**
- **Be assertive – shout "NO!" Walk away confidently. Go straight to an adult and tell them.**
- **Fighting back may make things worse. If you decide to fight back, talk to a teacher or your parent / guardian first.**
- **Generally it is best to tell a grown up whom you trust straight away. They will support you. Teachers will take you seriously and will help to stop the bullying without making things worse for you.**

### **IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED**

- **Take action. Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and alone.**
- **If you feel you cannot get involved, tell a grown up straight away. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.**

**As a Parent:**

- **Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly decide they do not wish to attend school, they may feel ill regularly or not be doing as well with their work.**
- **Always take an active role in your child's education. Ask how their day has gone, whom they played with etc.**
- **If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, let the school know.**
- **Your concern will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.**
- **It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.**
- **Tell your child that there is nothing wrong with him / her. It is not his/her fault that they are being bullied.**
- **Make sure your child knows our policy on bullying and that they need not be afraid to ask for help.**

If a parent is not satisfied with the way a bullying issue has been addressed, they will be

directed to the school's complaints procedure.

#### **Strategies for Preventing Bullying:**

- **RSHE (Relationship, Sexual, and Health Education) and SMSC (Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural Education)**
- **Parent Review Meetings**
- **Mediation**
- **Restorative Practices**
- **Anti-Bullying Week in November**
- **Peer Mentoring.**
- **Children writing a set of school rules at the start of a new year**
- **Home/School Agreements**
- **Writing stories, poems or drawing pictures about bullying**
- **Reading / telling stories about bullying**
- **Making up role-plays and having discussions about why bullying matters**
- **Respecting all our differences**

#### **Links with other Policies:**

- **Relationship and Behaviour Policy**
- **Acceptable Use policy – Internet Safety**
- **Complaints Policy**
- **Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy**
- **Whole School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
- **Peer on Peer Abuse Policy**