

S107 Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

At the St Andrews S107, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, therefore bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. Our focus on mental health and Wellbeing are a priority, and this policy aims to support the child from this perspective. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to report incidents in the knowledge that they will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to inform the staff at the school. The premise of this policy is our commitment to our core values: Care, Success, Inclusivity and Innovation for all of our community.

This policy runs in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy and reflects the attitudes and strategies included therein.

Aims and objectives

Overall, this policy aims to:

- Provide a secure physical, psychological and social environment in which all pupils feel safe, secure and able to express themselves without fear of intimidation.
- Define bullying to ensure that all staff, children and parents have an understanding of what behaviours and interactions amount to bullying, so it can be effectively identified and handled
- Ensure that all children know what they should do if they are bullied or witness the bullying of another child
- Ensure that all staff and parents know what the school policy is on bullying to facilitate a consistent and effective school wide response to any bullying at school
- Take bullying seriously. Children and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported and that bullying will not be tolerated
- Through staff, children and parents working together, we aim to create an environment and ethos in which bullying is actively discouraged and eradicated.

We also aim to provide helpful strategies to cope with bullying and provide help and support for those children being accused of bullying. At all times our emphasis will be on prevention and our policy will be supported by our PSHE programme of study across the school.

Definition

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, systematically conducted by an individual or group and ongoing over time, with the intention to intimidate, belittle or exclude the victim(s). It is important to distinguish between bullying and other incidents of children being rough, saying something mean to another child or refusing to play a game with someone. Whilst these may be serious and must always be dealt with, they do not fall within the definition of bullying and are dealt with under the behaviour policy.

Bullying is distinct in the intention to cause harm, intimidation or loss of self-esteem through repeated actions. There are many types of bullying, such as physical, emotional and verbal (see Appendix A for more examples), but they generally have three things in common:

1. They are systematic and deliberately hurtful behaviour.
2. They are repeated over time.
3. There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Signs

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if, for example, a child shows changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy or nervous,

feigning illness, clinging to adults or appearing isolated from other children. Appendix B contains a range of possible signs which may indicate that a child is being bullied.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Steps to Successful Resolution

The following steps may be taken when bullying is suspected or reported by child, parent or another adult:

Stage 1

Any alleged bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be fully investigated by the class teacher in Primary or Pastoral Leader in Secondary and measures implemented to protect the victim and ensure that the bullying stops quickly. The Head of Secondary and/or Primary must be informed, and an incident logged on CPOMS.

Stage 2

If evidence is found to support the allegations of bullying, it will be treated as a serious behavioural breach. Relevant staff and parents will be kept informed at all stages. Support will be put in place for the victim. In addition, a Pastoral Leader or member of the SLT will be assigned to support and monitor the situation until a resolution is reached.

Stage 3

Perpetrators of bullying will be given support, including that of restorative justice, where appropriate, and provided with strategies to stop their bullying behaviour. Parents will be invited in to school to meet with a member of the pastoral team.

Stage 4

If a child persists in bullying however, they may be withdrawn from participation at particularly high-risk times of day, (e.g. breaktimes, lunchtimes), or excluded (internal isolation) for whole days and in some instances a fixed term exclusion may be imposed (exclusion off campus), should the Head of School consider it appropriate to do so.

All allegations should be investigated and, whether substantiated or not, all involved must be informed of the outcome. (Appendix C contains further guidance on dealing with incidents)

Outcomes

The perpetrator will be expected to genuinely apologise. Ideally apologies will be face-to-face, but written apologies may also be appropriate given the context.

If possible, the students will be reconciled so that both parties are able to move forward with confidence.

After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

Whilst it is important to have clear procedures for dealing with rare incidents of bullying, it is our aim that by using a range of approaches we will prevent any incidents of bullying. Activities will take place in the pastoral curriculum (PHSE) and when appropriate, in individual classrooms or teams; these may include:

- A school focus on developing children's self-esteem through positive behaviour strategies and the PSHE curriculum. This includes the use of 'circle times' to encourage children to discuss feelings and concerns within a safe and structured format.
- Constant assessment of school buildings, grounds and supervision to ensure that a safe and secure environment is maintained.
- Involvement of all school staff to ensure a consistent approach.
- Maintaining a positive ethos, which encourages pupils to communicate any problems.
- Encouraging parents to talk to teachers immediately if they have any concerns about their child.

- Ensuring children know what they should do if they experience or witness bullying, by highlighting this regularly in assemblies.
- Involvement of the School Council in developing anti-bullying strategies
- Clear, shared and reinforced classroom, playground and other school rules
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories and articles or watching video material about bullying or using them in assemblies
- Having discussions, including the use of Circle Time, about bullying and why it matters
- Providing opportunities for staff feed-back and staff training to develop effective anti-bullying practice

Roles and responsibilities

Children - what can they do to help themselves (positive action to tackle bullying)

Try to stay calm and walk away if this is possible

- Ignore minor teasing and taunting in the first instance
- Don't retaliate as this is often the response a bully wants (however difficult this may seem)
- Victims need to feel secure in the knowledge that assertive behaviour, and even walking away, can be effective ways of dealing with bullying.
- Talk to friends, parents and members of staff about how they feel (they can support)
- Realise that our staff are there to help and support

Children should be encouraged to approach a member of staff if they are being bullied. They must have confidence that:

- It is OK to 'tell' and that they will be taken seriously
- The incident will be investigated and appropriate action taken
- Reassurance, counselling and support is available to help restore self-esteem and confidence
- Every effort will be made to ensure that they will be safe from further bullying or reprisal

All children will be taught to:

- Report any incidents of unkind behaviour or verbal abuse to any adult in the school
- Support others: "Be a good friend. Remember it could be you"
- Be aware of how their behaviour may be viewed by others
- Never touch another pupil in an aggressive or unwelcome manner
- Involve everyone, whenever possible, never deliberately leaving others out of social activities

Staff – what can adults do to help children who are involved in bullying?

- Have an online reporting mechanism available where students can pass on information anonymously
- Set up mentoring and buddying programmes or extend existing programmes to tackle bullying
- Include anti-bullying strategies in assemblies and PSHE programmes
- Ensure that bullies are dealt with and that the sanctions are strong and clearly understood
- Be vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously, acting promptly and discussing any concerns with the Heads of School
- Be suspicious of any changes in behaviour which may indicate that a child is being bullied
- Observe closely the socialisation of new children.
- Be careful of unintended outcomes when choosing groups or when partner work is involved.

Through the curriculum (including PSHE, drama, fiction, poetry, etc.) and assemblies, staff will:

- Raise awareness and encourage children to report incidences
- Help pupils to develop strategies to combat bullying-type behaviour
- Give opportunities for children to discuss the ideas
- Encourage the caring and nurturing side of children and discourage bullying
- Work for a caring, cooperative ethos (home corner, paired, group work)
- Discuss appropriate friendships and relationships
- Reinforce the rules and ethos of the school

All staff on duty, including support staff and lunchtime supervisors, will:

- Patrol areas which are not directly observable
- Note the occurrence of isolated children
- Observe and report inappropriate behaviour of children in the playground
- Listen to children when they seek them out to talk about problems

Teaching support staff and lunchtime supervisors will:

- Be kept apprised of school policy on bullying and receive appropriate behaviour management training

The Heads of School will:

- Act immediately on parents' suspicions
- Record all incidents reported by teachers, parents, and children
- Arrange support for both victims and perpetrators
- Discuss with staff any necessary sanctions

Parents

Parents are expected to report instances of bullying if:

- Their child, or a friend of their child, is a victim
- Their child is involved in bullying

Parents of all children involved in incidents of bullying will be kept informed and their support in dealing with matters will be expected.

Monitoring and review

Implementation of the policy is shared by all members of staff at the school and is overseen by Pastoral Leaders.

This policy should be available on the website and made know to all new parents, pupils and staff.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School and Deputy Head of School to monitor the effectiveness of this policy and to review it annually, in order that it remains meaningful and current.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed when necessary and at least every four years.

Appendix A – Types of Bullying

Emotional

Being unfriendly, excluding, intimidating, tormenting (such as hiding or damaging possessions), threatening gestures, extortion

Physical

Kicking, hitting, punching, pushing, prodding, spitting or any use of violence

Verbal

Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, verbal threats and/or abuse, innuendo, inappropriate comments about appearance

Racist

Deliberate exclusion, racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, and/or stereotyping due to race, colour, ethnicity, nationality, culture or language

Faith based

Targeting a pupil's faith, beliefs, or practices

Sexual

Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments, innuendo, showing inappropriate sexual material

Homophobic

Name-calling, innuendo or negative stereotyping based on sexual orientation, the use of homophobic language

Disability

Exclusion, name-calling, innuendo or negative stereotyping based on disability

Intellectual

Exclusion, name-calling, innuendo or negative stereotyping based on high or low ability levels

Cyber

Abuse or threats on-line (e.g. chat rooms) or via text message, setting up or promoting inappropriate websites, misuse of associated technology, such as camera and video facilities, inappropriate sharing of images from webcams/mobile phones, etc

The above categories of bullying are not mutually exclusive.

Appendix B – Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or going on public transport to or from school or an event involving other pupils; begs to be driven to school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic) or begins to truant
- Shows visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting, suddenly lacking in confidence
- Becomes depressed
- Shows patterns of physical illness (e.g. complains of stomach or head ache in the morning)
- Changes eating patterns or stops eating
- Demonstrates unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or after longer school holidays
- Shows deterioration in educational performance and/or school work
- Demonstrates a loss of concentration, enthusiasm and/or interest in school
- Makes spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- Comes home with clothes torn or has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Appears anxious but is frightened to say what's wrong
- Shows reluctance or refuses to say what is troubling him/her or gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone or is nervous when a cyber message is received
- Attempts or threatens suicide or to run away

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Appendix C – Dealing with Incidents

(Remember to involve the Heads of School as soon as possible)

- Remain calm: you are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and give the bully control of the situation
- Remain neutral and aim to gather all relevant information pertaining to the incident.
- Deliberately avoid direct, closed questioning which may be interpreted as accusatory or interrogational in style
- Take the incident or report seriously and take action as quickly as possible
- Think hard about whether your action needs to be private or public; who are the pupils involved?
- Reassure the victim(s); don't make them feel inadequate or foolish
- Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim
- Make it plain to the individual that you disapprove
- Encourage the individual to see the victim's point of view
- Sanction the individual if you have to, but be very careful how you do this and explain clearly the punishment and why it has been given. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it's all right to bully if you have the power.

Victims who are worried about openly discussing an incident when the aggressors are present (e.g. taunting during a lesson) can be encouraged to go to the teacher with a piece of work, using this as a reason to speak to the teacher.

Involve others: do:

- Inform SLT or appropriate Pastoral Leader
- Inform other staff (both teaching and non-teaching) if an incident happened where everyone should be vigilant (e.g. Changing rooms, toilets)
- Inform/ask the Heads of School to inform both sets of parents calmly, clearly and concisely, reassure both sets of parents that the incident will not linger on or be held against anyone.

Final steps: do:

- Make sure the incident doesn't live on through reminders from you
- Try to think ahead to prevent a recurrence of the incident if you know what triggers it.
- Follow the stages set out in the policy

Avoid: don't:

- Be overprotective and refuse to allow the victim to help himself/herself
- Assume the bully is bad through and through; try to look objectively at the behaviour, with the bully
- Keep the whole incident a secret because you have dealt with it
- Try to hide the incident from the parents of the victim or of the bully

When working with parents or children, don't condone bullying by saying:

- Your child must have done something to deserve it
- Go and hit him back
- Don't be a wimp / they must learn to look after themselves
- Boys will be boys / he's got to take it like a man
- It will sort itself out / it is part of growing up
- Don't tell tales (if it proves to be a consistent complaint).