



Saint Aidan's Church of England High School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Aims:

With regard to the elimination of bullying, it is the aim of Saint Aidan's Church of England High School:

- to provide a secure environment for the physical safety of students;
- to provide emotional security where every student has intrinsic worth;
- to make sure students have a sense of identity and affiliation (belonging);
- to instil confidence and facilitate a healthy, happy social and learning environment in and around the school.

Definition of bullying:

Bullying is deliberate hurtful behaviour that is repeated, often over a period of time, and where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. Bullying is not, of course, restricted to relationships between students. Bullying can also be a problem in adult life and occur in the workplace. Teachers, therefore, are not immune from bullying within their professional life. Indeed, within a complex organisation, like a school, bullying may occur between any individuals, regardless of age or gender.

Bullying can take many forms but three main types are:

- Physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings;
- Verbal - name calling, insulting racist remarks;
- Indirect - exclusion from social groups, spreading nasty rumours, etc.
- Cyber Bullying – see below

Possible signs:

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour for instance becoming withdrawn, anxious, feigning illness. They may show changes in work patterns, may lack concentration or may even truant from school.

Who bullies?

Anyone has the capacity to bully. Those who perceive themselves as low status within a community, institution or group may use bullying in an attempt to artificially boost their status. Self-esteem is therefore a key factor in whether someone bullies or not. This puts equal opportunities and inclusion at the centre of all anti-bullying work in schools.

Who is bullied?

Anyone can be bullied – student, parent/carer/guardian or staff member. People who suffer bullying are often perceived by others to be different. Sometimes the perceived difference is individual to that person – shyness, academic ability, physical appearance, clothing and possessions, accent, perceived inappropriate behaviour. Frequently the perceived difference comes from labelling an individual as part of a group. Such bullying would then be designated as classist, disablist, homophobic, transphobic, racist and religious, or sexist. People can be a member of more than one group.

What is classist bullying?

In classist bullying, a person is targeted for representing a perceived class or socioeconomic group. This not only impacts on the individual person, but on their families and others perceived to be from that same group.

What is disablist bullying?

People with Special Educational Needs or disabled people may be less able or more reluctant to articulate experiences as well as others. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific difficulties or disability.

What is homophobic bullying?

In homophobic bullying, a person is targeted for being or being perceived as a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgendered (trans) person. People do not have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans to suffer homophobic bullying. This bullying not only impacts on the individual person, but on their families and others perceived to be from that same group. It may be based on gender stereotyping.

What is transphobic bullying?

In transphobic bullying a person is subject to behaviour or language that makes them feel marginalised because of their perceived or actual gender identity.

What is racist and religious bullying?

In racist and religious bullying, a person is targeted for being perceived as being a member of a different ethnic, cultural or religious, group. This bullying not only impacts on the individual person, but on their families and others perceived to be from that same or similar group. Inappropriate assumptions may be made about someone's religion or belief because of their ethnic origin.

What is sexist bullying?

In sexist bullying a person is targeted for being of a particular gender or indeed transgender. This form of bullying impacts on the individual person and can influence the views of other students.

What is cyberbullying?

- It can be anonymous.
- It can affect the target 24/7, every day; intrusion into safe and personal spaces.
- It can spread very quickly and resurface at a later date.
- It can be cross generational (teachers can be targeted).
- It can take the form of:-
 - a) Sending offensive texts/messages by mobile phone or via apps;
 - b) Picture/video bullying via mobile phone cameras;
 - c) Phone call bullying via mobile phone;

- d) Email bullying;
- e) Chat Room bullying;
- f) Bullying via Instant Messaging;
- g) Bullying via Websites;
- h) Bullying via social networking sites;
- i) Bullying via gaming sites (voice over);
- j) Uploading images to the Internet which may cause upset.

Beat the cyberbullies:

- Be careful as to who you 'add' or 'accept' as a friend.
- Tell an adult you know and trust;
- Tell the company that provides your internet access or mobile phone;
- Use the "report" or "report abuse" button on individual sites to report inappropriate content;
- Call the police;
- Note dates and times, messages and emails are received and sent;
- Save messages, screen-shots and any other useful evidence of bullying.

Procedures:

As a school we all should be vigilant and responsive to bullying behaviour. Staff supervision within the school environment should be consistent (before/after school, between lessons, breaks, lunchtimes, bus queues).

Procedures for dealing with both victims and bullies should be consistent with the school's discipline policy. All incidents should be entered onto Synergy. Accurate records are essential if the school has to provide information for legal proceedings (who, where, when, what happened, what action, follow up if any). This includes any incident that happens on school or public transport.

Form Tutors should be informed of any incidents involving students in their forms. Parents should always be informed. Strategies such as the no blame approach have proved to be effective when groups of friends have been involved in minor bullying (guidance sheets available).

Work undertaken in Personal Development, tutor time and worship can be valuable in raising awareness of the issue and reminding students that bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Guidelines for Staff:

- Watch for early signs of distress in students/deterioration of work, sudden change in attitude, spurious illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults, often being late for lessons and late for school, low self-esteem, bruises and cuts, avoidance of school. All of the above may be symptomatic of other problems but may be early signs of bullying.
- Be available and willing to listen. Treat the information seriously.

- Offer the victim immediate support and help by putting the school's procedures into operation.
- Involve the Form Tutor/Head of Year who would inform the parents/carers of both the victim and the student who is doing the bullying where appropriate.
- Record incidents of bullying precisely and be seen to do this (please liaise with the relevant Head of Year to enter any information into the school's Synergy).
- Avoid the 'bullying' model when applying sanctions. Do not bully the student who is bullying. Try to negotiate an agreed form of atonement.
- Ensure that areas of the school are patrolled before school, at break, lunchtime and at the end of the day.
- All observed incidents of bullying must be stopped immediately. They must then be dealt with, either immediately or at a later more appropriate time.
- Use students as a positive resource in encountering bullying. Set up discussion groups in form time.
- Help the student who is bullying to become aware that his/her actions are considered to be bullying and that these are hurtful to the victim. Ascertain wherever possible the reasons why she/he bullies others. Help/materials can be found in the Student Support Centre for this.
- Bullying is always wrong – a victim of bullying must not be made to feel guilty because she/he is bullied.
- If bullying is happening to students on the way home, inform the parents/carers of this.
- Use peer pressure against bullying behaviour.
- Help students think about strategies to use.
- Ensure that students know what to do when they are bullied.
- Engender a culture of 'Encouragement to tell'. Many students are not involved in bullying but they are likely to know if it is happening. They should be encouraged 'to tell'. We need to continue to create a supportive ethos and breakdown any culture of secrecy where bullying is concerned.

Guidelines for Students:

What to do if you think you are being bullied:

- Tell a teacher or any other adult in school you trust;
- Report what has been happening using the dedicated Mental Health email address in school - wellbeing@st-aidans.lancs.sch.uk.
- Tell a parent/carer;
- Tell them again if the bullying does not stop in school or if it continues outside school;
- Go around with a friend or two;
- Talk to your friends about it and say no to the bully;
- Report instances of cyberbullying which you see or hear about;
- Do not retaliate or respond to upsetting texts;
- Keep hurtful texts and other messages;

- Store hurtful messages;
- Block individuals who upset you;
- Ensure social networking sites are only accessible to invited friends;
- Tell an adult if you know that someone else is being bullied;
- Try not to show you are upset, which although difficult, will help discourage the bully;
- Try to appear confident;
- Just walk past if people call you unpleasant names;
- If you feel threatened walk away;
- Tell yourself you don't deserve to be bullied;
- Students should talk to any member of the school they feel comfortable with including Proctors, teachers, Associate Staff and other students;
- Students are encouraged to raise concerns with their Form Tutor or with a trusted student in their form group (who should then speak to the form tutor).

Guidelines for Parents/Carers:

What to do if you think your child is being bullied:

- Watch for signs – not wanting to go to school, minor illnesses, headaches, other pointers, avoiding friends, coming home with bruises or torn clothing, possessions disappearing, becoming upset after using the internet or mobile phone;
- Listen to what your child says; try to establish that the problem really is bullying and not something else;
- Discuss with your child what you can do;
- Contact the Form Tutor/Head of Year. Do this for as long as the bullying continues;
- Help your child to deal with the problem by him or herself. Be tactful;
- Try not to be over-anxious or over-protective. It may sometimes be helpful to talk with the bully's parents/carers, but before you do this, take advice from school;
- Do not encourage retaliation. This rarely helps and may only make things worse for your child;
- Reassure your child if problems occur;
- Learn how your child uses information and communication technology and familiarise yourself with safe practice;
- Parents are encouraged to contact their child's Form Tutor or Head of Year immediately if they have any concerns over bullying behaviour.

Important Websites and Organisations Offering Help and Support:

If you do not want to speak to someone you know but need help and advice, you can:

- Ring Childline free and confidentially on 0800 1111
- Contact Kidscape on 020 7730 3300

Websites offering help and advice:

- www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- www.kidscape.org.uk
- www.childline.org.uk
- www.nspcc.org.uk
- www.beyondbullying.com
- www.bullying.co.uk
- www.childnet-int.org
- www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Supplementary Information:

Our vertical pastoral system allows for Peer Mentoring to happen within Forms.

Speaking to older students can encourage bullying problems to be discussed and dealt with at the earliest opportunity. Students maybe more inclined to discuss issues with their peers within their form group. Form Tutors are therefore encouraged to promote this approach. However the Form Tutor can be pivotal worker in the handling and management of bullying issues so their involvement can be crucial. The use of peers as mentors will be a support to existing strategies not a replacement.

Limits of the Policy

Where bullying occurs in school and on school trips, this policy will be applied. If bullying takes place out of school but there is a school connection, the school will, if it is in our power, take action. If the bullying takes place out of school and there is no school connection, this policy cannot be invoked but the school may offer support where appropriate.