

ST SWITHUN'S JUNIOR SCHOOL INCLUDING EARLY YEARS
FOUNDATION STAGE

POLICY TO PREVENT BULLYING

This policy can be accessed on the school's website at www.stswithuns.com

General guidance

Aims

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils to enable them to learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell any member of staff and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Our school upholds Christian values and is sensitive to the ethnic backgrounds and beliefs of all children. We believe that all relationships should be based on mutual respect. We want the school to be a caring, supportive community which values each person as an individual. It is the responsibility of everyone in the school, Headmistress, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and children, to ensure that an appropriate person is informed in the event of any form of bullying. It is the responsibility of us all to be clear that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated at any level.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying, harassment and victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate this. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

This policy is available to all parents and pupils on the St Swithun's Junior School website and pupils regularly receive updates on the acceptable treatment of their peers from staff in a variety of forums.

Any pupil or parent with concerns is advised to come forward to speak to a member of staff, which will usually be that child's form teacher. All such concerns will be taken most seriously and will be investigated straight away. St Swithun's Junior School recognises the seriousness of any behaviour which is threatening or harassing,

particularly in causing psychological damage, and will always seek to protect its pupils and staff robustly from such behaviour.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim and in serious cases 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 may be defined as the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating 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 intimidating. Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, homophobic or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape).

Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time. We always treat it very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles.

Bullying is deliberate and hurtful behaviour, it is repeated, often over a period of time and it is difficult for the victims to defend themselves

To clarify bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Religious religious taunts, teasing
- Cultural cultural taunts
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Sexist discriminating behaviour, derogatory comments based on gender
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Disability because of, or focussing on disability
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber All areas of internet, such as email, social website and internet chat room misuse. Mobile telephone threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Cyberbullying – definition

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, such as Facebook, Bebo and Myspace, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

Cyberbullying – preventative measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above St Swithun’s Junior School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils’ use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- We do not allow pupils to bring mobile phones to school.

Bullying behaviour could take the form of:

- deliberate physical and/or verbal abuse. This can sometimes be aggressive and it can often be difficult for victims to defend themselves.
- behaviour which excludes an individual, or intimidates by gesture or expression.
- playing tricks on someone, and/or removing or spoiling belongings
- spreading nasty stories about someone,
- exclusion from a social group,
- being made the subject of malicious rumours and sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones (cyber bullying).

Young children do not always equate all these forms of behaviour with bullying, which they tend to define as physical in nature. We as a staff have a responsibility, therefore, to indicate a broader perception of the problem.

Bullying behaviour

- Is rarely spotted by teachers, but children are aware.
- Can reflect attitude learnt at home (racism, sexism, homophobia)
- Is not always confined to children, nor is it practised only on children.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

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. They should investigate if a child shows changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied these may include:

- Unwillingness to return 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 (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the office 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 nightmares
- Talking of suicide or running away
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

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

Procedures

ANY REPORT OF BULLYING MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY AND REPORTED

The outline procedure to be followed by staff in cases of bullying is as follows:

- Talk individually with the children concerned, and obtain as clear a picture as possible of what has occurred. Ask open questions, not leading questions. It may be helpful to ask the children to write down their accounts. Reassure the victim.
- Discuss the episode with the Headmistress, and decide who is to deal further with the matter.
- Bring together the children concerned to discuss what has happened. Listen carefully, and provide opportunities for the children to express views and opinions. Do not bully the bully! Make it clear that any form of bullying is unacceptable in the school community.
- Inform all staff so that everyone is aware and vigilant. Inform the parents what has occurred and the action which has been taken. Avoid taking sides and

making judgemental comments. Encourage the parents to contact the school immediately if there is any further concern.

- Record all meetings with children and parents concerned in the yellow class file. A record of bullying incidents enables any patterns to be identified.
- Use circle time and assemblies to resolve conflict, to raise awareness of racial prejudices, sexual bullying and pupils' understanding of use of homophobic language and to find solutions.
- Use PSHE, Assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events and current affairs to reinforce our policy.

Outcomes

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise.
- Other consequences may take place. In cases of severe and persistent bullying, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

- Watch for: Potential bullies and potential victims
- Watch for changes in behaviour that may indicate someone is being bullied
 - New pattern or arriving late
 - Refusal to come to school
 - Deteriorating of work
 - Unhappy, anxious, withdrawn manner which is not the normal behaviour of the child.
- Be aware of and visit the particular areas where bullying may occur (playground, corridors, lavatories, quieter parts of the school).
- Act promptly when bullying is brought to our attention.
- It must be made evident that action is being taken by feeding back to the person reporting the bullying.
- Make it clear that insensitive and demanding behaviour is not tolerated at this school nor is physical violence or retaliation.
- Frequently re-state the school's anti-bullying stance in assemblies, circle time and through setting an example in our own behaviour. We use the first Assemblies of the term to explain the school policy on bullying and our 'Golden Rules'. Where necessary this is repeated during the year.
- Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school.
- Other lessons, particularly RE, English and Drama highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- 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 recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur.

- We provide advice and guidance to our Head Girl and Deputy Head Girls which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils.

Above all, it is in the ethos of the school, in our attitudes and our relationships at every level that we have opportunities to teach children that everyone is valued, and no-one has the right to inflict fear.

Please also see the school's Behaviour Policy, Policy for Safeguarding and Welfare of Pupils and the Policy for Child Protection.

Staff training in Safeguarding and Welfare of Pupils/Child Protection includes training on prevention of bullying.

Reference

Anti-Bullying Resources:

The web based guidance from the DCSF is followed with the sources below being particularly helpful.

Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying work in schools, the new over-arching anti-bullying guidance for schools, launched, Sept. 2007

<http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/behaviour/tacklingbullying>

Don't Suffer in Silence DCSF website: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying/>

Other useful internet resources include:

Child Line offers a free 24-hour helpline and counselling service for pupils in distress or danger. Telephone: 0800 1111 - <http://www.childline.org.uk/>

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA)

<http://www.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/Page.asp>

Information on Cyber bullying

<http://www.antibullying.net/cyberbullying1.htm>

- Updated Annually
(Updated March 2010 PSG)

Document Reviewed September 2009