

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

St George's Junior School has long prided itself on the quality of teaching and pastoral care provided to its pupils. In line with our Mission Statement, we allow all pupils to learn and to develop their ethical, spiritual and moral values within an atmosphere of respect and compassion while always striving to promote our Josephite tradition of 'douceur' and 'politesse' which encourages a strong sense of all belonging to one family.

Statement of Intent

Ours is a diverse community, with pupils from a variety of cultural, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting our school in maintaining high standards of behaviour, and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils. It is essential that school and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they co-operate closely together.

Objectives of this Policy

In any situation where children interact, bullying can occur. Any form of bullying is unacceptable at St. George's. If it does occur, we aim to deal with it immediately in line with DCSF Guidance "Safe to Learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools". We also aim to avoid its occurrence through staff vigilance and promotion of an atmosphere of compassion and understanding amongst the children. Where necessary, we will apply the sanctions described in our behaviour policy for behaviour that constitutes bullying or harassment of any kind.

Definition

Bullying is **repeated** behaviour which makes others feel uncomfortable, hurt, threatened, even contemplating suicide, **whether this is intended or not**.

There are different sorts of bullying including racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, disability and a child with special educational needs, but the main types are:

PHYSICAL - hitting, kicking (beware of comments such as "it was only a game"), taking or hiding belongings, including money.

VERBAL - name calling, teasing, insulting, spiteful notes.

CYBER - chat room, email, mobile phones, e-photos and SMS messages.

EMOTIONAL - excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours.

Breaks, times when children move around corridors between lessons, in the playgrounds, the toilets and on the fields are times and places that victims are more vulnerable and bullying is not easily seen.

Anti-Bullying Culture: Why it is important to respond to bullying and take it seriously.

It is important that we promote an anti-bullying culture within the school. Repeated references to the Kindness and Junior School Codes aim to achieve this combined with formal and informal discussion with the children. “Kindness and Respect Fortnight” and “Kindness Counts Week” are two practical examples where these topics are tackled along with other organised events during the school year.

Our Aims are:

To recognise the right of every child to be safe and happy in school and to be protected when she/he is feeling vulnerable.

To inculcate an “anti-bullying culture.” It must be clear to all pupils and staff that bullying is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

To make sure that any incidence of bullying is reported promptly and dealt with immediately.

To create an atmosphere in the school where pupils who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed. Action should be swift but sensitive to the child’s concerns.

Signs of Bullying

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

- Unwillingness to return to school.
- Books, bags and other belongings go missing, or are damaged.
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons)
- Frequent visits to the Medical centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.

Preventative Measures

We take the following preventative measures:

- We use appropriate Assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to enforce the message about our school community and the “membership of our St. George’s family.”
- Other lessons e.g. drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and so on, highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce the message that bullying is totally unacceptable at our school.
- All our pupils are encouraged to **TELL** a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- Staff awareness is raised through training, taking action to reduce the risk of bullying at times and in places where it is most likely to occur.

- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of Group Tutors and Heads of Year who support the Pastoral Deputy Head in dealing with incidents as a matter of priority.
- Our pastoral team monitor and follow-up with both victims and bullies after incidents have taken place.
- Staff are always on duty when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language and behaviour in accordance with the school codes.
- We operate a “Buddies” system where year 6 pupils are encouraged to offer advice and support to year 3 pupils.
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips involving our pupils.

The Role of the Pupils

These are the steps that should be taken if they are bullied: (Tell someone!)

- Tell yourself that no-one deserves to be bullied and that it is wrong!
- Try to look confident and not show that you are upset.
- Walk away and join a group. Bullies are often cowards and will only pick on people when they are alone.
- Pupils are encouraged **TO TELL ANY ADULT** they trust. It could be your group tutor, your parents or any responsible person.
- Ask a friend to go with you when you tell if you are a bit nervous.

These are the steps that should be taken if they witness bullying:

- Ask the child if he/she is okay or if anyone is bothering them.
- Encourage the boy or girl to **TELL** a teacher or someone they trust.
- Go with them to get help or go yourself as soon as possible.
- Never just stand by and watch or join in with the bullying! Don't give the bully more power!

The Role of the Staff

All the staff in our school takes all forms of bullying seriously and seek to prevent it from taking place.

Upper Years

- Pupils, parents or members of staff suspecting bullying to have taken place should report the incident(s) to the Group Tutor immediately and he/she will investigate. A note should be recorded on file in the office where appropriate. The Head of Year should be informed.
- If incidents persist, the Head of Year should become more involved and the victim and alleged bully interviewed individually. These events need to be recorded on file and parents informed of this process. The Pastoral Deputy Head to be briefed of the findings.
- Bullies should be reprimanded and clear disapproval expressed to the child(ren) concerned. Appropriate sanctions enforced that includes a reflective piece of writing/apology about the incident. Staff to be briefed at Soapbox.

- For more serious incidents the Headmaster should be informed and a warning of temporary exclusion issued.
- The Headmaster may temporarily exclude a pupil.
- In extreme circumstances the Headmaster may permanently exclude a pupil.

After the incident(s) have been investigated the Group Tutor must continue to monitor the situation and feedback any observations to the Head of year at year group meetings.

Lower Years

- Listen to the recipient.
- Listen to the accused.
- If possible, get both parties to iron out differences.
- Report the incident to the Group Tutor.
- If this has no effect, refer to the Head of Year.
- Additional supervision may be required.
- If this has no effect, refer to the Head of Lower Years.
- Involve parents, Group Tutor and the Head of Lower Years.
- Withdraw the child from the activities or situations where bullying is reported to be taking place.
- If this fails, refer the child to the Pastoral Deputy Head or/and the Headmaster.
- If all else fails, a pupil may be suspended or permanently excluded.

The Role of the Headmaster

It is the responsibility of the Headmaster to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to enable patterns to be identified as well as knowing how to deal with incidents of bullying.

The Headmaster sets the school climate of mutual respect and compassion for all members of the school family, so making bullying less likely.

The Role of Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be bullied, or who suspect that their child might be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's Group Tutor immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Head of Year or Pastoral Deputy Head. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the schools complaints procedure.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school family.

The Role of Governors

The Board of Governors supports the Headmaster in all attempts to eliminate bullying at the Junior School.

The Governors require the Headmaster to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the School has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the Chair of Governors to look into the matter. The Governing Body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the Governing Body notifies the Headmaster, and asks him to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the Governing Body.