The Trinity Catholic Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

2021

Date: October 2021

To be reviewed annually

Anti-Bullying Policy

Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our children so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all children must **tell** and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, should have an understanding of what bullying is, know what the school's policy is and follow it when bullying is reported.

All children and parents should know what bullying is and what to do if bullying is suspected. We will work to achieve this through consultation, the sharing of information and a range of proactive preventative work detailed in this policy.

Under The Education Act 2002 we have a duty to "safeguard and promote the welfare" of all the children in our school and taking a strong stand against bullying is part of this duty.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Headteacher responsibility for "preventing all forms of bullying" and advice from the Department of Education states that this responsibility also applies to bullying behaviour outside of school. Reports of bullying outside of school will be investigated and acted upon.

Also this policy has been informed by "Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies" DfE July 2017.This policy reflects this guidance and the principles enshrined therein.

Aims and objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages children. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is properly understood and regarded as wholly unacceptable.

We foster and expect good behaviour from all children. This means children are expected to treat each other and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave.

Our behaviour management system underpins this ethos and helps children develop an understanding of how their actions affect others. Children who bully others are in breach of our golden rule and are not treating their peers with respect. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviours. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

(Taken from "Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies" DfE July 2017

Types of Bullying

- Emotional Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures).
- Physical Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, threatening or obscene gestures.
- Racial Using racial taunts, graffiti, gestures because of someone's colour and/or origin.
- Sexual/Sexist Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments because of gender.
- Verbal Insults, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing and name-calling including comments made against particular groups for example because of disability, Special Educational Needs or on grounds of religion, cultural background, gender, sexual
- orientation or transgender status.

- Cyber All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, social network sites, threats by text messaging & telephone calls, and misuse of photographic technology, e.g. cameras and videos. This includes sexting or threatening and/or blackmailing a person to share images of that person or purporting to be that person or connected with them in some way.
- Religious Unkind words or actions because of someone's religion.
- SEN/D Unkindness because of physical or mental disabilities or having Special Educational Needs.
- Homophobic Treating someone unkindly because people think that they are or might be homosexual.
- Family related Unkindness because a child is adopted, fostered or is a carer.

Cyber Bullying

The rapid development and widespread use of the internet and mobile phones means that a type of 'virtual' bullying can take place outside school.

Under no circumstances are children permitted to bring mobile phones to school.

Under the Education Act 2011, teachers have the power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

Bullying can take place by the internet, email, social network sites, text messages and chat rooms as well as by the misuse of associated technology such as camera and video facilities.

If an incident of cyber-bullying is reported to school, even where it has taken place outside school, it will still be investigated and appropriate action taken.

Homophobic Bullying

Incidents of homophobic name calling are taken very seriously at The Trinity Catholic Primary School and responded to in a similar way to other incidents. We recognise both indirect homophobic abuse e.g. 'your bag's gay' and direct homophobic abuse e.g. a boy is called a 'poof'.

It is illegal to discriminate against those who as lesbian, homosexual, or bisexual (2007 Equality Act. Under the Education and Inspections Act 2006), head teachers, with the advice and guidance of governors and the assistance of school staff, will identify and implement measures to promote good behaviour, respect for others, self discipline among pupils and to prevent all forms of bullying. This includes the prevention of homophobic bullying.

Staff are also protected under the Employment Equality (sexual orientation) Regulations 2003.

What does it look like?

Homophobic bullying/name calling occurs when bullying motivated by a prejudice against lesbians, gay or bisexual people.

It can include spreading rumours that someone is gay, suggesting that something or someone is inferior and so they are 'gay' – for example "you're such a gay boy" or "that's gay". Even when pupils may not know what the words mean, but use homophobic language against others, it is still a form of bullying/name calling.

We do not view homophobic name calling as "harmless banter". We recognise that if it is not challenged at primary school it is harder to address at secondary school. If a pupil is not explicitly told that homophobic bullying is wrong they may think it is OK to do this.

Responding to an Incident

If we hear a child using homophobic language **we will address it**, using the school's behaviour policy and guided by our knowledge of the individual pupil's maturity and personal circumstances.

Possible Signs and Symptoms of bullying.

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings

- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

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

Prevention of bullying

The School has a toolkit of strategies which can be used to prevent and minimise incidents of bullying as well as to support those involved in bullying.

- These strategies come within three categories:
- Whole School Strategies
- Classroom Strategies
- Playground Strategies

Whole School Strategies

At The Trinity there is a well-developed behaviour policy based on the principles of assertive discipline which is enforced across the school by all staff and which includes a range of positive and negative consequences of behaviour choices.

There is also a culture of support for the development of children's social and emotional skills, with five key skills being assessed annually and support offered where skills are below average.

Across the school a number of approaches are used to tackle and prevent bullying. These include:

- Being a "telling" school, encouraging reporting of bullying through easy to report and accessible methods
- Anti-bulling displays in prominent areas and toilets, including "What to do if you think someone is being bullied" leaflets.
- Always listening and taking reports seriously
- Always investigating suspected incidents of bullying
- Consistent application of the school's behaviour policy
- Encouraging parent/carer involvement with an open door policy
- Use of assemblies to underpin a clear anti-bullying message
- School Council bullying questionnaire to collect information on children's views about bullying, listen to and act upon the findings
- the use of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) in the curriculum

- Provision of small group support using SEAL or other targeted resources
- Annual 'Friendship Week' to coincide with Anti-bullying week to bring the issue into sharp focus
- Circle Time – a listening and problem solving system
- Annual refresher training for all staff on anti-bullying strategies and approaches
- The development of Peer Mediators to provide peer support
- The development of Peace Ambassadors (trained through Warrington Peace Foundation)
- Involving parents by providing information, e.g. assemblies, website, keeping parents informed if their child is involved in an incident of bullying

Classroom Strategies

Teachers must arrive at their classroom before the children and must not leave children alone. Children must not be left alone to clear up the hall or other specialist rooms.

Teachers must escort their class to the playground and supervise them when they come into school and take care when allowing more than one child to visit the toilets at the same time. Class teachers must escort their children to the playgrounds at the end of the day and monitor their behaviour as they leave school.

Teachers use curriculum work to embed anti-bullying work through Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), the embedding of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and through the creative arts such as drama, film making and art displays.

Playtime and Lunchtime Strategies

The school keeps under review the indoor and outdoor school environment to minimise areas where bullying may go undetected. Staff on supervision duty must be on time and vigilant, especially of potential 'blind spots' around the school building.

Staff rotas and positioning of staff during breaks and lunchtimes are made with the safety of children as a priority, including the prevention of bullying.

The Anti-bullying Policy, including the procedures to be followed if bullying is suspected or reported, is shared with lunchtime staff and training is given, including refresher training on an annual basis.

Children acting as 'Play Leaders' are carefully chosen, trained and closely supervised. They can be in a prime position to notice bullying but as they are in a position of privilege, they may also be in a position to engage in bullying behaviour.

Playground buddies work alongside lunchtime staff and act as play-leaders and friends to other children, they are often the 'eyes and ears' of the lunchtime staff and report any concerns to adults.

What to do if bullying happens

Children, parents or staff should report a suspected incident of bullying to the class teacher immediately. In addition, the Headteacher or any member of the school's leadership team is willing to discuss a bullying concern with a child , member of staff or parent.

What the school does

1. The school takes all reports of bullying seriously and all reports will be investigated thoroughly and the Headteacher informed.

2. Those engaging in bullying behaviour and those who are the target of that behaviour, are interviewed separately, **never together.**

3. During the investigation, information will be obtained from those directly involved in the incident as well as those who witnessed the incident.

4. The school will keep a written record of the incident, investigation and outcomes via the school's CPOMS system.

5. If the allegation is of bullying behaviour by a member of staff, the Headteacher must be informed.

6. The Headteacher will impose sanctions which will vary according to the seriousness of the incident. See below for details of possible sanctions

7. In serious cases, parents are informed and are asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the issue.

8. If necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted. Under the Children Act 1989 if there is reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, then the matter will be reported to the police.

9. If appropriate, the school can report its concerns to the Liverpool Social Care Team.

Reporting and Investigation Procedure

If a member of staff becomes aware of a potential bullying incident, either through observation or a report from a child then the following procedure should be followed:

1. Remain calm, separate the target and the suspected bully.

2. Offer reassurance and let the child know you are listening.

3. Confirm that something positive will happen and you will help to put a stop to the unacceptable behaviour.

4. Explain that the matter will be investigated by the Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher or other senior leader within the school who will report back to the child.

5. Make a note of the incident and any interviews with children and pass to the Deputy Headteacher, Headteacher or other senior member of staff who is investigating.

6. The person investigating will interview all children involved and may take immediate action as a precautionary measure whilst the investigation is taking place.

7. If it is determined that bullying has taken place, the Headteacher will take appropriate action as detailed below.

8. Records are kept of all incidents and outcomes via the school's CPOMS system.

Action in Response to bullying

Headteachers are able to discipline children for any poor behaviour, including bullying, whether that behaviour occurs in school or when the child is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff.

Where bullying has been found to have taken place, disciplinary action is taken and the action taken will vary according to the severity of the bullying. The sanctions applied also take into account any special educational needs or disabilities that a child may have as well as taking into account the needs of vulnerable children.

The Headteacher also considers the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether this reveals any concerns for the safety of the child engaging in bullying behaviour. Where this is the case, the child engaging in bullying behaviour may also need, and be offered, support.

Responses to the target of the bullying behaviour

Reassurance is offered to the child and a clear explanation of what is going to happen is given to the child and parents.

Support is offered to the target of the bullying behaviour which can include:

- The Learning Mentor or other member of staff will check how the target child is doing on a regular basis in the days and weeks following the incident. The child is also encouraged to seek help and support at any time s/he feels it is needed
- peer support
- the development of alternative friendship groups
- provision of assertiveness training
- group support or individual support from the Learning Mentor or other support staff
- Circle of Friends group work to build relationships around a vulnerable child
- provision of a safe haven for a child through attendance at lunchtime clubs or giving lunchtime responsibilities.

The school understands the need to ensure the child feels safe, but, at the same time will ensure that the child develops a sense that s/he has power to help themselves through the support offered.

Response to the child engaging in bullying behaviour

A range of actions are available depending on the seriousness of the incident and the circumstances of the children involved.

Actions can include:

- application of any of the consequences under the Behaviour Policy including loss of privilege time, loss of play time and/or lunchtime
- informing parents and/or meeting with parents
- temporary removal from class and/or playground
- withdrawal of privileges, including attendance at clubs or on school trips
- the use of Individual Behaviour Plans, Pastoral Support Plans and referral to external agencies for support
- fixed term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

It is also recognised that the child engaging in bullying behaviour may also need support to make improved behaviour choices. Support can be offered by way of group work, one to one mentor support, Circle of Friends or from external agencies.

Agreed by Governing Body

Signed …………………………... Chair of Governors

Date ……………………………...

To be reviewed annually

Date to be reviewed Autumn 2022