

Bishop Vaughan Catholic School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy



AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1. To support Bishop Vaughan's broader aims of providing all pupils with equal opportunities to achieve their potential, within a safe and caring environment, identifiable by its commitment to Christian principles of love and respect for each other.
2. Ultimately, to achieve a school community which is free from all forms of bullying and distinguished by its anti-bullying culture.
3. The promotion of co-operative behaviour and improvement in pupils' personal and social skills so as to reduce the likelihood of bullying.
4. To involve the whole school in the development and implementation of the policy.
5. The provision of guidelines for preventative and responsive action, coupled with clearly defined roles, responsibilities and procedures.
6. Communication of the message that bullying is unacceptable, will not be tolerated and must be reported.
7. To provide support for individuals who are bullied.
8. To teach bullies how to change their attitudes and behaviour. 9. To monitor, evaluate and, when necessary modify or refine policy.

A WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO COMBAT BULLYING

A policy featuring cross-curricular and extra-curricular approaches.

A policy involving the whole school:

- Pupils and Parents
- Governors and Senior Leadership Team
- Teaching and Ancillary Staff
- Outside Agencies

A policy with clear messages:

- Bullying is inexcusable and will not be tolerated.
- If you are bullied, tell an adult whom you trust.

- If you witness bullying REPORT IT.
- Reporting procedures for instances of bullying must be adhered to.
- Action will be taken in all cases of reported bullying.

A policy with strategies for preventing and dealing with bullying:

- Guidelines for pupils and parents.
- Guidelines for teachers and other staff.
- Pastoral initiatives.
- Departmental initiatives.
- Extra-curricular procedures.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON BULLYING

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person, and which results in pain and distress to the victim.

In order to be considered bullying the behaviour must include:

- An imbalance of power: People that bully use their power- such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- Repetition: Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Who are Bullies?

- Bullies are not easily recognised (beware of stereotyping).
- Boys and girls can be bullies (traditional stereotype is a boy).
- Bullies can also be victims.
- Bully gangs:
 - a) Some bullies demonstrate their leadership of gangs by bullying.
 - b) Some bullies persuade other gang members to join them in bullying.

- c) Usually gangs are more likely to become VISIBLE than individual bullies.
- d) Bully gangs are difficult to deal with en bloc – a punitive response can sometimes trigger group solidarity/resistance.
- e) Research recommends tackling each group member individually.

Bullies tend to be:-

1. AGGRESSIVE

- a) With little control over their aggression.
- b) Aggressive to peers, parents, teachers.
- c) Impulsive with a strong need to DOMINATE.
- d) Easily provoked – see insults where none are intended.
- e) Get pleasure from other pupils' pain, fear, humiliation.

2. LACKING IN EMPATHY FOR VICTIMS

- a) Unable to imagine how a victim feels.
- b) Bullies rationalise that the victim deserves to be bullied.

3. ASSOCIATED WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

- a) In school and the community.

4. UNDER-ACHIEVERS IN SCHOOL

FORMS OF BULLYING

1. Physical Bullying Ranging from messing about (pushing, barging) to full assault

2. Verbal Bullying Teasing, taunting, abusive remarks regarding - Appearance Family Intelligence Disability Religion Gender Race Sexuality (Research has indicated that remarks about family are particularly provocative in school)
3. Gesture Bullying Includes 'playing the heavy' – making implied threats of physical violence to follow and gestures of a sexual nature.
4. Extortion Bullying Demands relating to money, dinner tokens, bus tickets, school work, equipment, clothing, sweets, cigarettes etc.
5. Exclusion Bullying 'Sending to Coventry' – isolating from group, victim is often targeted. (This practice is most common amongst girls)
6. 'Cyber' Bullying. Bullying using social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, the internet or text messaging.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

Teachers are asked to be ACTIVE, VIGILANT and SENSITIVE in their classroom and wider supervisory duties and are reminded:-

- a) the damaging effects of bullying can be reduced by spotting incidents in their initial stages.
- b) bullies are unlikely to operate if they know the risks of being caught are high.
- c) to ignore incidents can be interpreted by pupils as condoning and giving tacit approval to bullying behaviour.

Good professional practices have been identified as the most efficient and successful preventative strategies which schools can employ to combat bullying. These include:-

Teachers being punctual and present for all lessons etc.

Unsupervised classes are breeding grounds for misbehaviour and instances of bullying have emerged, or escalated, as a result of staff being unpunctual or leaving groups unsupervised.

The supervision by teachers of corridors, at lesson and tutorial changeovers

Prompt and controlled pupil movement is a disincentive to unruly behaviour.

Visibility and vigilance in carrying out supervision duties in all areas of the school.

This is particularly important since bullying is most likely to occur in these places at break, lunch times and before and after school. Duty teachers can play a vital role by identifying and patrolling danger spots where bullying may be taking place.

Lesson time spot checks

Spot checks on toilets, corridors, dining hall and other high risk places are also a powerful deterrent.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

Advice to teachers dealing with bullying

1. TREAT SERIOUSLY AND ACT in ALL INCIDENTS or REPORTS of bullying.
2. Reassure the victim – offer immediate support and/or practical help as appropriate.
3. Quickly determine what action to take after due consideration of the circumstances.
4. Show the bully your disapproval.
 - Be careful not to over-react emotionally or aggressively.
 - Point out the effect of bullying on the victim.
 - Reinforce the message that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and will not be tolerated in this school.
5. Put school's reporting procedures into operation using SIMS.
6. Restorative Practice Sessions can be arranged via behaviour support staff.

Listening to victims of bullying

If a victim approaches you to talk about bullying –

1. Try to arrange a meeting place where the pupil can talk in confidence.
2. Listen carefully and keep a record.

3. Make the pupil feel VALUED.
4. TREAT ALL CONCERNS SENSITIVELY – be it a general problem which desperately needs sorting out or an imaginary one but, nevertheless, a worrying concern which simply needs reassurance.
5. CONFIDENTIALITY – explain that whilst you respect the confidential nature of the matter, you may need to refer it to Senior Staff for further consideration.

ANTI-BULLYING RECORDING AND REPORTING PROCEDURES

A. Recording & Reporting - Staff

- i. Teachers and other staff MUST keep a record, of all incidents they deal with. Whenever possible teachers are asked to inform the Form Tutor of the pupils involved.
- ii. Reporting to the SLT – Heads of Year and individual members of the SLT will determine which incidents to refer to the SLT.
- iii. Informing colleagues – Heads of Year and SLT will judge which serious and/or repetitive cases ought to be made known to other members of staff.

B. Recording and Reporting – Pupils and Parents

- i. WHEN DEALING WITH SERIOUS INCIDENTS the bullied pupil should make a statement in writing.
- ii. The alleged bully also records the incident(s) in writing.
- iii. Parents are informed of all serious incidents.
- iv. Copies of reports and correspondence are kept on school behaviour files (Room 19).

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Action choices in confirmed incidents of bullying

When incidents of bullying are reported to Heads of Year they should determine which course of action to employ after first giving careful consideration to such factors as –

- The seriousness and / or repetitive nature of the offence(s)
- The circumstances surrounding the incident(s)
- Knowledge of the pupils involved.

Sanctions

The following sanctions, procedures and corrective measures are not exclusive or definitive, but should provide a selection from which Heads of Year can choose a single response, or a combination of responses, which appear most appropriate.

1. Bully given formal verbal warning by Head of Year with a letter sent or a phone call to parents.
2. Parents of bully requested to attend a formal interview with Head of Year.
3. Place bully on a fortnightly behaviour report.
4. Isolating bully at break and lunch times.
5. Withdrawing privileges, such as participation in school trips, fun days etc.
6. Place bully in detention (lunch, break or after school)
7. Requiring bully to make a written apology and to provide appropriate restitution for any costs, or damages, resulting from the bullying.
8. Referring bully to SLT for isolation.
9. Referring bully to Headteacher for exclusion.

Corrective Measures Action plans negotiated with bully –

- a) Aimed at behaviour modification.
- b) Use of report system to monitor behaviour of bully.
- c) Monitoring of bully (and victim) for a period after bullying has apparently stopped.
- d) Coupled to recognition (rewards) for successful completion of rehabilitation programme.
- e) Restorative Practice / Reconciliation meeting to resolve conflict and develop empathy.

- f) Peer mentoring/ student buddy.
- g) Engagement with external agencies, such as Evolve, Barnardo's and the Police.
- h) After school education session on the impact of bullying

Bully Groups

It is recommended that when dealing with groups of bullies, Heads of Year/ Behaviour Support Staff should tackle each member of the group individually and attempt to get each individual to accept responsibility for his / her behaviour.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES

Advice to pupils who are bullied

1. Tell an ADULT you can trust – Parent, Tutor, Head of Year, Supervisor etc.
2. Tell your friends and ask for their support (but do not get involved in physical retaliation).
3. DO NOT GIVE IN to a bully's demands for money, dinner-tickets, clothing etc. Say "NO" strongly and say you will REPORT it if the bullying continues. NEVER TRY TO "BUY OFF A BULLY".
4. Initially try to IGNORE minor bullying, but if it persists TELL an ADULT.
5. AVOID BEING ALONE WITH A BULLY IN PLACES WHERE BULLYING CAN OCCUR.
6. Remember FIGHTING BACK MAY MAKE IT WORSE, so tell an ADULT.

ADVICE TO PUPILS WHO WITNESS OR KNOW ABOUT INCIDENTS OF BULLYING DO NOT CONDONE BULLYING BY DOING NOTHING.

BE RESPONSIBLE AND HELP TO STOP IT BY REPORTING ANY INCIDENTS TO AN ADULT YOU TRUST - TEACHER, TUTOR, SUPERVISOR, PARENT, ETC.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES – GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

A. Advice to give your children

1. ADVISE your child always to TELL an ADULT
2. ADVISE your child NEVER to GIVE IN TO A BULLY'S DEMANDS
3. ADVISE your child NOT TO PHYSICALLY FIGHT BACK

B. If parents suspect bullying

1. Reassure your child.
2. Inform the school immediately. Seek an interview with the Head of Year
3. Keep a detailed written record (e.g. time, date, names etc.).

C. What parents should look out for in their children.

Be alert to the following signs of distress which could be indicative of bullying:-

1. Absenteeism – unwillingness to attend school, coupled with unconvincing excuses. Truancy.
2. Injuries – bruises, cuts etc. Causes are not obvious and explanations are unsatisfactory. Note also any damage to clothing and equipment which is suspicious.
3. Depression – moody, irritable, off food and/or other things normally enjoyed. In extreme cases threatening or attempting to run away or even suicide.
4. Money problems – requests for extra pocket money or money for lost dinner or bus tickets. Note also money missing from home.
5. Underachievement – school work / homework standard slowly, or suddenly, reduced.
6. Worries about the journey to and from school, on the school bus or walking.

Taken individually these may not be due to bullying, but a combination of some of these could be significant and provide reason for further investigation.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGIES WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE PASTORAL PROGRAMME

A. Specially concerned with bullying

1. Induction programme for Year 7
2. Guidelines on prevention issued to all forms.
3. What to do if you are bullied?
4. Support for victims: coping strategies including assertiveness training.
5. Provision of counselling and behavioural training for bullies including: aggression controls, changing attitudes.
6. Anti-bullying message re-enforced during Assemblies.
7. Advice to pupils on display in classrooms and Year Bases.

B. Indirectly linked to bullying

1. Making and keeping friends.
2. Awareness and importance of relationships e.g. young pupils relating to older pupils and vice versa.
3. Boy / girl relationships – sexual harassment.
4. Self-esteem: developing a positive image.
5. Various forms of discrimination.
6. Managing moods, feelings, self-discipline.
7. Coping with problems, loneliness, rejection, name-calling and other teenage difficulties.
8. Resilient learners' workshop.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR CROSS-CURRICULAR ANTI-BULLYING INITIATIVES

All departments and teaching staff are encouraged to look at ways in which they can participate in promotion of an anti-bullying culture. The following examples are not exclusive but might form a starting point for developing a departmental approach.

English- Discussion groups, prose, poetry, questionnaires

Geography/Maths/ Technology Surveys/questions e.g.

- i. Places where bullying occurs in school.
- ii. Have you been bullied? When, how, where?

Religious Education- Exploring the Christian, moral, social dimension – ‘Love Thy Neighbour’ Drama Role playing, liaising with Pastoral Team in preparation of assemblies.

Art Poster work – supporting Pastoral and other initiatives.

Special Needs Dept- Various, as above.

PUPIL INVOLVEMENT IN ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Fundamental to the success of the policy is the involvement of pupils and the cultivation of an anti-bullying culture – this can be achieved through:-

Pastoral Initiatives- Assemblies, tutorials, meetings etc., which involve pupils in the preparation and implementation of anti-bullying measures.

Encouraging pupils to REPORT ALL INCIDENTS OF BULLYING i.e. those they are directly involved in and those which they witness. The message “to tell” should be repeatedly communicated by all staff and will be reinforced by handouts for every pupil and notices placed throughout the school. (Research indicates pupils will report incidents if they believe their reports will be acted up on positively and directly.)

Cross-Curricular Initiatives

School Council – this provides a forum for pupil-representatives to be involved in policy preparation, implementation and evaluation.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY DELIVERY OF POLICY

A. Inset training for:-

- i. Permanent teaching staff.

- ii. Ancillary staff.
 - iii. Supply, part-time and trainee teachers.
- B. Communication to pupils via –
- i. Guidance handouts for every pupil.
 - ii. Notices in classrooms and on corridors.
 - iii. Tutorial programme.
 - iv. School Council.
- C. Communication to parents via –
- i. Guidance handouts
 - ii. Newsletter
 - iii. Prospectus for new pupils
- D. Communication with outside agencies:-
- e.g.
- i. Social Services
 - ii. Childline
 - iii. NSPCC etc.
- E. Involvement of School Governors in on-going review of policy and practice.
- F. Liaison within the school with relevant staff:-
- e.g.
- i. Heads of Year
 - ii. Heads of Department
 - iii. ALNCo
 - iv. Teachers
 - v. Support Staff

Policy Development

This policy has been drawn up following extensive background reading, examination of relevant materials, consultation with other educational institutions and discussion by numerous groups within the school (including pupils) and wider community.

Implementation

Following an initial awareness raising period, it is hoped that the principles and procedures from within this policy document become embedded in the day-to-day life of Bishop Vaughan Catholic School.

Review

As with all other policies operating within the school, this anti-bullying policy will be the subject of continuous review and evaluation. Comments and contributions from all interested parties will be welcome and will be considered if there is a perceived need to adapt this policy. This will take place as part of the policy review process.

Copies of this policy are available on our website, in policy folders on the school network and can be made available on request.

Date: November 2015

Reviewed: November 2017

Reviewed: November 2019

Reviewed: November 2021

Reviewed: November 2023

Reviewed: November 2025

Policy Next Review Date: November 2027