

ST. HILDA'S C.E. HIGH SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The governing body and staff of the school are totally opposed to bullying. Bullying is wrong and damages children. The aim of this policy is to provide pupils with a safe and secure working environment.

It is recognised that all schools are likely to have a problem with bullying at some time. This school regards bullying as particularly serious and firm action will always be taken against it.

This policy aims to produce a consistent response by the school to any bullying incidents that may take place.

A section on cyberbullying is included within this policy; this is to ensure that we take into account the fact that bullying via the use of technology is an increasing problem within society and so specific guidance is provided for pupils, parents and staff if/when cyberbullying takes place.

Procedure

1. Recognising the Signs of Bullying

Bullying is deliberately harmful behaviour over a period of time. Staff will watch out for the signs and symptoms of the following forms of bullying:

1. Physical
2. Verbal Abuse
 - Name calling, the use of unkind remarks and suggestions, all of which may be spoken or written in notes to the victim and friends.
 - Verbal violence i.e. shouting, screaming, chanting, accompanied by stamping, clapping, booing, hissing, drumming and/or threatening gestures.
 - Ridicule: Laughter, sniggering, giggling to undermine confidence.
 - Actual spoken or written threats of specific intentions.
 - Mimicking of behaviour, appearance, etc.
3. Isolation
 - Enticing friends away, leaving the victim out of social groups or partnerships in school activities, thus creating low self-esteem.
 - Singling the victim out by staring, pointing.
 - Physical isolation achieved by leaving the victim alone in the playground, in a room or class.
4. Misuse of mobile phones or Internet message boards and chat rooms – see section of policy on cyberbullying for further details.

The school recognises that any pupil can be bullied but certain factors that can make bullying more likely are:

1. A lack of close friends in the school
2. Shyness
3. Race, religion, sexual orientation or social class
4. A disability or some other obvious difference, e.g. stammering or acne

Staff will suspect bullying is occurring if a pupil:

1. Becomes withdrawn and anxious
2. Shows a deterioration in his or her work
3. Starts to attend school erratically
4. Has serious illnesses
5. Persistently arrives late at school
6. Prefers to stay with adults

2. Preventing Bullying

The school will take every opportunity to demonstrate to pupils, through the curriculum and by example, that it is totally opposed to bullying.

Staff will not ignore bullying or suspected bullying. All school staff will, whenever possible, intervene to prevent bullying incidents from taking place.

The school will ensure that all staff, pupils and parents are aware of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Staff will praise and encourage pupils when they show kindness and consideration to others.

3. Dealing with Bullying Incidents

Any incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible. Staff will do all they can to support the victims of bullying and make it clear to the bully that this behaviour is not acceptable.

In dealing with bullying, school staff will:

1. Not ignore it
2. Not make premature assumptions
3. Listen to all accounts of the incidents
4. Adopt a problem-solving approach that encourages pupils to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves
5. Make regular follow-up checks to ensure that bullying has not resumed.

4. If a pupil is Bullied

Staff who receive a report of a bullying incident from a pupil will:

1. Listen to the pupils account of the incident
2. Reassure the pupil that reporting the bullying incident was the right thing to do
3. Make it clear to the pupil that he or she is not to blame for what has happened
4. Make a note of what the pupil says
5. Explain that the pupil should report any further incidents to a teacher or other member of staff immediately
6. Refer pupils involved in bullying incidents to the learning mentor as deemed necessary.

Staff will ask the pupil:

1. What has happened
2. How often it has happened
3. Who was involved
4. Where it happened

5. Who saw what happened
6. What he or she has done about it already
7. To write an account of any incidents of bullying/keep a diary of any incidents
8. Talk to the pupils involved and explain that bullying is wrong and makes others unhappy

9. Discuss with the pupil how to join in with others without bullying
10. Talk to the pupil about how things are going at school, his or her progress and friends

5. Advice to pupils

The school will advise pupils who are caught up in bullying incidents to:

1. Stay calm and look as confident as possible
2. Be firm and clear, look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop
3. Get away from the situation as quickly as possible
4. Immediately tell an adult what has happened

6. Dealing with Serious Bullying

If the preventative measures do not succeed, serious bullying will be dealt with under school's discipline policy. If you would like to see a copy of this policy please contact the school.

7. Recording incidents

All incidents of bullying and discussions with the pupils involved will be recorded, along with the school's response.

8. Co-operating with Parents and Carers

The school will work with parents in dealing with bullying. Bullying in school is everyone's problem. All staff, pupils and parents should be aware that bullying exists and share a commitment to combat it to make the school a happier place for everyone.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Parents, carers and families are often the first to detect signs of bullying. Common physical symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability.

The school will encourage parents who suspect that a child is bullying or being bullied to immediately contact the school and make an appointment to see/speak to the child's form tutor or Head of Year as soon as is possible.

Parents and carers will be informed of incidents and involved in discussions. The school will discuss with parents how they can work together to stop the bullying.

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy is regularly monitored by the Head and governing body to ensure that it is working as effectively as possible.

10. Cyberbullying

The possibilities of the Internet and mobile phones are endless. Young people benefit from having opportunities to access one another and communicate in a variety of different forms. However, not all aspects of ICT are positive and it can enable additional routes for those

intent on bullying.

Definition of Cyberbullying

Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools – Cyberbullying (DCSF, 2007) provides the following definition: “Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the Internet, deliberately to upset someone else.”

It has been agreed to adopt this definition as the school’s.

Cyberbullying includes:

- Text message bullying
- Picture/video-clip bullying via mobile phone cameras
- Phone call bullying via mobile phones
- Email bullying
- Chat room bullying
- Bullying through instant messaging
- Bullying via websites

Although similar in many respects to other forms of bullying, cyberbullying also has some very specific features.

- It invades both home and personal space
- The size of the audience can be vast
- Electronically circulated messages can be difficult to control
- The bully can feel relatively anonymous
- It can have a large number of “bystanders” or “accessories”
- Much (if not all) of the bullying may take place out of school

Within school we aim to:

- Provide a safe learning environment in which preventative measures are in place to deter cyberbullying
- Ensure systems are in place to deal with cyberbullying should it occur
- Explain how we will deal with cyberbullying incidents

There is usually some visual evidence after cyberbullying has taken place. Pupils should be encouraged to pass this on to a member of staff or their parents. In some cases, it will be necessary to contact mobile phone companies, Internet service providers or social networking sites. Messages of a bullying nature should be saved rather than deleted wherever possible.

The following advice should be given to those experiencing cyberbullying.

- Do not retaliate or reply
- Block or remove offenders from buddy lists
- Review the information you are giving out
- Make sure you tell an adult
- Try to keep calm and do not let the bully see a reaction
- Ensure that your privacy settings are at the highest level on social networking websites

If the person responsible for the bullying is identified, sanctions will be applied under the school's behaviour policy. In addition, the following sanctions might be implemented, depending upon the nature and severity of the bullying:

- Withdrawing access to the Internet for a set period of time
- Limiting use of the Internet for a set period of time
- Contacting the police, if necessary
- Informing external agencies such as social networking or email member sites

Support will be provided for the victim. This may include meeting the bully to discuss what has happened and agree a way forward.

It is important that all children and staff recognise that when an incident of cyberbullying takes place it is dealt with swiftly. Parents should be told, in the early stages of any bullying, what actions have been taken to remedy it.

11. Bystanders

The issue of being a bystander or accessory is addressed with all children regularly. Pupils are encouraged to respect other people on – and offline and to recognise how sharing a secret and passing on numbers and passwords can cause harm and distress to others.

Being a bystander can include:

- Forwarding messages
- Contributing to discussions
- Taking part in an online poll

12. Recording and Reporting

The whole school community is made aware of ways of reporting incidents of bullying. Bullying is reported to a member of school staff who will then report it to his or her line manager, and the appropriate action will be taken.

13. Special Needs

Children with special needs are particularly vulnerable to all forms of bullying. Members of school staff are alert to changes in behaviour and ensure that there are opportunities and established methods for children with SEN to communicate should the need arise.

14. Equal Opportunities

As with other forms of bullying, cyberbullying is prone to being driven by prejudice. Staff are alert to the possibilities of sexist, racist and homophobic cyberbullying. Although all victims of bullying can be reluctant to discuss their experiences, victims of homophobic bullying may be particularly so.

A copy of this policy is to be made available to all parents/staff and a copy is also held in the staffroom. Its formation was discussed by the Governors, Heads of Year, Deputy Heads and the Headteacher.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on the date below by Mrs C O'Neill.

Signed _____ Date _____

Chair of Governors

Signed _____ Date _____

Headteacher