



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The aims of the St Richard's School anti-bullying policy are to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment with the right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure without fear of being bullied and/or intimidated. All members of the community, including Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the school policy on bullying. Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it will not be tolerated. Everyone in the community understands that bullying is too important not to report and has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention. Any report will always be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

St Richard's recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside School which spills over into the School and will, where necessary, take action to deal with any such incidents.

The school will raise awareness of all the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on School notice boards and will be discussed with pupils during PHSE sessions and Form periods. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the school's actions to prevent bullying.

Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by the Headmaster, Form Tutors and the Matrons, to monitor that the problem has been resolved. The record of bullying incidents will be reviewed by the Headmaster and the Senior Leadership Team regularly to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour include:

- physical (including sexual) assault
- verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks
- cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites,

mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail (*see Cyber-bullying Policy*)

- indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.
- Initiation ceremonies intended to cause pain, anxiety or humiliation.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle. It includes actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape).

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from school. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self esteem; and destroys their sense of security. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at school, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour.

The majority of cases of so-called bullying are of children getting cross with one another, having a dispute – sometimes physical – or teasing. Everyone should be aware that St Richard's is a *telling and talking* school. It may not be popular to tell but it means that every person can respond in the appropriate manner as set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lack of concentration or truancy from school.

All members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with school policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, *most* people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

WHAT TO DO

IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF BULLYING

- Share your feelings with someone else.
- If possible talk to a member of Staff: your Form Teacher, the Matrons or the Headmaster, about the incident. If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends and/or to senior pupils, or any trusted adult. They may be able to advise on an appropriate course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can. There are also people outside the School who would be willing to help. (Childline: 0800 1111)

IF YOU ARE A PUPIL AND WITNESS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Support the victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong
- Accompany the victim to a member of staff or trusted adult
- If the victim of bullying is unwilling or unable to speak to a trusted adult or member of staff, suggest that you do so on their behalf
- Understand that St Richard's is a **talking and telling** school and that, whilst it may not be popular to tell, telling means that everyone can respond to, and deal with, bullying in an appropriate manner

IF YOU ARE A MEMBER OF STAFF AND WITNESS AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING OR AN INCIDENT IS REPORTED TO YOU

- Reassure and support the pupil(s) involved
- Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the Headmaster, and, if appropriate, their Form Teacher and/or the Matrons
- Accompany them to see the Headmaster, their Form Teacher and/or the Matrons
- Inform the Headmaster as soon as possible so that the incident can be investigated and appropriate action taken
- Record details of the incident in the Welfare Book, which is kept in the School Office, stating times and details of those involved and the action taken. This must be signed by the relevant member of staff and countersigned by the Headmaster.

IF YOU ARE A PARENT WHOSE CHILD IS SUFFERING FROM BULLYING OR IF YOU HAVE WITNESSED AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING (INCLUDING DURING THE SCHOOL HOLIDAYS)

- Reassure and support the pupil(s) involved
- Advise them that you intend to report the incident to the Headmaster, and if appropriate, their Form Teacher and the Matrons, and/or any member of staff of your choice you wish to speak to

ACTION PLAN FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

For the Victim or Bullying:

- The victim of bullying will be listened to, reassured and offered continuous support to help restore self-esteem and confidence
- The victim of bullying will be encouraged to discuss what has happened and given time to talk
- The victim of bullying will be advised what steps are to be taken against the perpetrator(s) of bullying
- Where appropriate, the victim of bullying will be advised of developments with regard to the incident
- If appropriate, the victim of bullying will be asked to make a written record of the incident
- The victim of bullying may request that their parents/guardian are/is asked to come to school to discuss the incident
- In any event, the parents/guardian of the victim of bullying will be advised of the incident and what steps have been taken to resolve the issue

For the Perpetrator(s) of Bullying:

- The perpetrator(s) of any incident of bullying will be interviewed by the Headmaster; other members of staff may be involved/included, as appropriate
- The perpetrator(s) will be given every opportunity to state their case
- The perpetrator(s) will be encouraged to identify unacceptable behaviour and the need to change such behaviour

- The perpetrator(s) will be advised of the actions to be taken as a result of the incident, such actions, at the discretion of the Headmaster, may include detention, suspension or, in extreme cases, exclusion.
- The perpetrator(s) will be advised that their parents/guardian will be informed of the incident and the actions to be taken as a result. Where appropriate, the Headmaster will invite the parents/guardian to attend a meeting to discuss the incident and maintain dialogue with the parents/guardian to address bullying
- The school will support the perpetrator(s) to encourage acceptable behaviour and deal with any issues which may arise as a result of unacceptable behaviour or have been at the root of such behaviour

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For Members of Staff:

- All members of staff must listen to the victim of bullying and act accordingly
- All incidents of bullying must be reported to the Headmaster for action
- Members of staff must offer support to both the victim of bullying and the perpetrator(s) of bullying to ensure that there is a change of attitude and that the need to adopt acceptable behaviour is understood
- Meetings between members of staff, pupils and parents/guardian concerning issues related to bullying can only be arranged with the permission of the Headmaster
- All members of staff must record details of any incidents of bullying in the Welfare Book, which is kept in the School Office. Any such record must give times and details of those involved and the action taken. This must be signed by the relevant member of staff and countersigned by the Headmaster.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions may include detention, suspension and, in extreme cases, expulsion. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, it is the policy of the school to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

REFERENCES

DCSF Safe to Learn, *Embedding anti-bullying work in schools*