



## Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School Anti- Bullying Policy

### Rationale / Statement of Intent

At Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Primary School we recognise that bullying **can** occur. When it does it can be harmful both physically and emotionally for the victim. It can also be a sign that the child carrying out the bullying has underlying issues that need to be addressed. The purpose of this policy is to enable adults in the school to recognise bullying when it takes place and to deal with it effectively.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a **TELLING** school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

### What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour. It is usually repeated, often over a period of time and when it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

We believe that there are a number of types of bullying including:

- Emotional: excluding from a group, tormenting, ridiculing, humiliating
- Physical: hitting, punching, pinching kicking or taking someone's belongings.
- Verbal: name-calling, insulting, Indirect bullying, through spreading stories about someone, threats, making fun of someone
- Racist: racial taunts, gestures, making fun of someone's culture or religion
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Homophobic: because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Cyber: setting up hate websites, comments on facebook, offensive e-mails and texts

### Bullying is not:

It is important to understand that bullying is not odd occasional falling out with friends / other children, name-calling, arguments or when the occasional 'joke' is played on someone. Children do sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of a child's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name- calling or

childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships (these incidents are dealt with through the behaviour policy).

**It is bullying:** if it is done repeatedly and on purpose.

Whenever the opportunity arises it must be made profoundly clear that we will not tolerate bullying at Our Lady of Fatima School. We are a Christ-centred school, where we believe in and follow the Gospel Values and therefore we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can grow and learn in a relaxed and safe environment.

### **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

### **This is why we tackle bullying**

We tackle bullying as an issue because we are an effective, caring school and we believe that:

- bullying makes people unhappy and leads to low self-esteem.
- pupils who are being bullied are unlikely to concentrate fully on their schoolwork.
- some pupils avoid being bullied by not attending school.
- pupils who observe unchallenged bullying behaviour may copy this anti-social behaviour.
- we wish to build the self-esteem of all pupils, including those who adopt bullying behaviour and victims.

### **Role of Parents**

Parents have an important part to play in our anti bullying policy. We ask parents:

- To look out for unusual behaviour in their child — for example not wanting to attend school, feeling ill regularly, or not completing work to their usual standard.
- To always take an active role in your child's education, enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent time with etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- If you feel a child has bullied your child, please do not approach that child in the playground or on their way home. Please inform the school immediately. It is important that you do not advise your child to fight back or to repeat the bullies' behaviour. This will only make the situation worse.
- To tell your child it is not their fault they are being bullied.
- To reinforce the school policy on bullying and ensure your child is not afraid to ask for help.

- If you know your child is involved in bullying, please discuss the issues with them and inform the school. The matter will be dealt with appropriately.

## Signs and Symptoms

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

- is frightened / unwilling to come to school
- begins to truant (parents who allow a child to stay at home when they are well can be considered to condone 'truancy' and this does not resolve the underlying issue)
- feels ill in the morning
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens self harm or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- 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 secretive, 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

## Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

- Bullying incidents must be reported to staff.
- Allegations and incidents of bullying will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All of those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. The Classteacher / teacher or appropriate adult dealing with an incident will speak to all children involved about the incident separately or if appropriate as a group. This will be reported to the Principal or Vice Principal.
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested. Staff will attempt to adopt a problem solving approach through circle times and/or drama activities which will move children on from having them to justify their behaviour.
- Appropriate action will be taken to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied i.e. loss of privileges, spending playtime and lunchtimes with an adult, be withdrawn from class, be withdrawn from participation in a school visit, club or event not essential to the curriculum.
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

- An attempt will be made and support given to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her behaviour.
- Incidents will be recorded by staff. In serious cases incidents will be recorded and kept on file.
- If the bullying continues or in more serious cases of bullying parents will be informed and invited into the school for a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, support agencies including the police, will be consulted
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.
- Mediation meetings, with both parents and pupils present may be used to resolve the issues. In repeated or serious cases, when the bully / bullies refuse to change behaviour, the school may follow the following sanctions: lunch time exclusion, fixed term exclusion, permanent exclusion.

### **Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying:**

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. These include (relevant to age group):

- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another.
- Regular PSHE teaching following the agreed scheme of work
- Taking part in national anti-bullying week (Autumn Term)
- Awareness through anti bullying assemblies
- Circle time
- Drama/role play activities
- Implementation of playground mentors
- Playground buddies for children who are experiences difficulties settling into school. The following of the whole school behaviour policy which includes using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour.
- writing a set of school rules
- signing a behaviour contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying
- having discussions about bullying and why it matters

### **Monitoring of Policy**

This policy will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team and through staff meetings and will be reviewed **annually**. Following an annual review, suggestions for amendments will be presented to the Academy Committee.