

Vita et Pax Preparatory School Anti-Bullying Policy

At this school we seek to create a culture in which bullying of any kind, either against pupils or adults is not accepted by any member of the school community. As an organisation that is serious about child protection, we will also be serious about preventing and tackling bullying of any kind including cyber-bullying, which is often repeated over time, can threaten both the mental health and educational progress of our pupils while also posing threat to their emotional wellbeing.

The school enables all members of the school community to understand what constitutes bullying; making it clear to pupils, staff, parents and guardians that bullying is completely unacceptable.

We strongly believe that our pupils have the right to study in a safe, supportive and secure environment, free from physical threats, verbal taunts and any form of harassment. Incidents of bullying threaten this and cause enormous stress to victims. We are therefore strongly committed to the avoidance of bullying in all its forms. We provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying, ensuring that bullies are dealt with swiftly and firmly.

Our aim is to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the school community and to develop a culture in which individuals are listened to and their concerns taken seriously. Hence staff training includes building an awareness of bullying and cyber-bullying, of our legal responsibilities and how as a school community we may effectively minimise the risks and dangers posed especially but not only for children identified as particularly vulnerable, e.g. those with SEND.

We believe that the principle means of prevention is through the maintenance of conditions where bullying is less likely to flourish and is more easily detected. As we are a relatively small school, all pupils are known to us personally and it is therefore easier for us to detect signs of possible distress. Moreover, we feel that it is important that pupils have free and informal access to the Head and other staff. Even so, we also believe that it is important to set down clear sanctions to be applied against those who are bullies, thereby signaling the seriousness with which the school regards this.

This policy applies to all school activities both on and away from the school site. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified. As part of our Behaviour Policy our school believes that all children and adults have the right to live in a supportive, caring environment in which pupils feel safe and free from bullying and harassment.

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils achieve their very best. In our school, the term 'staff', in the context of safeguarding,

is inclusive of all staff and is also inclusive of students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers, and proprietor.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups. For example, this may include cyber-bullying and prejudice-based bullying on the grounds of race, culture, sex, sexual orientation, homophobia, gender reassignment, SEND (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), the use of discriminatory language, religion and belief, or because a child is adopted or is a carer.

This policy is made available on the school's website and on request through the school's main reception desk. It is subject to continual review by the leadership and management and the directors of the school. It is formally reviewed at least annually. An appendix provides details of guidance made available for schools and parents by the DfE.

Agreed by

Gillian Chumbley
Headteacher
May 2017

Simon Payne
Chairman of the Board of Directors

1 Bullying

Child Protection Related Issues

1.1 A bullying incident is treated as a potential child protection concern and particularly so when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm. In such cases the school reports its concerns to the local safeguarding children board. The school understands that bullying is potentially emotional and/or physical abuse. See our safeguarding policy.

1.2 Any kind of bullying is unacceptable.

1.3 Members of staff are especially vigilant with those children identified as more vulnerable, for example, looked after children or those with SEND.

2 Definition of Bullying

2.1 Bullying may be defined as a deliberate, unprovoked and a repeated (over time) action to intentionally hurt, humiliate, threaten, frighten or hurt an individual or group physically or emotionally.

2.2 It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email. A feature of bullying in schools is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority.

2.3 The school recognises the seriousness of both physical and emotional bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide. The term 'bullying' is commonly associated with acts of violence but some form of non-physical bullying is experienced by most pupils at some period during their school career.

2.4 Additionally, as noted in the school's safeguarding policy, bullying is potentially abuse and therefore may be subject to the school's safeguarding procedures involving external agencies including if a criminal offence is involved the police.

2.5 Although most bullying is repeated and deliberate, in some cases bullies act just once against a given victim, for example, when sending or posting attacks online: something which is 'out there' potentially for all time and may be read and re-read by the victim as well as others. Hence, we are vigilant not just against repeated actions but also against any single action which has a similar impact.

3 Forms of Bullying

3.1 Bullying may occur in many ways and can take many forms including:

a) Emotional (indirect bullying) including isolation of others by a refusal to co-operate with them and exclusion - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding from social groups or an activity by refusal to sit next to/ talk to/ work/ cooperate with others and refusal to follow staff instructions to do the above, or malicious rumours, e-mails or text messages, and also exclusion from play/discussions etc. with those whom they believe to be their friends.

b) Physical harm or its threat including the abuse of personal property – jostling, serious fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence; deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing personal property, use of weapons/threatening use of weapon (or any object which could be used as a weapon), intimidation through physical gestures and actions.

c) Cyber – not occurring face to face but rather through electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, internet and intranet sites, email, instant messaging, by mobile phone including through text messages and phone calls, photographs both real and manipulated and so on.

d) Racist - Bullying directed at individuals of a certain race, culture, ethnicity, language, faith, community, national origin or national status. The distinctive feature of racist bullying is that the victim is attacked not as an individual but as the representative of a family, community or group. This is an area where schools are required to keep statistics about incidents.

e) Cultural – focusing on and/or playing off perceived cultural differences or similar.

f) Sexist – covers a wide range of behaviour from name calling to physical sexual assault. It is the use of sexual language or negative stereotyping on the basis of gender.

g) Sexual - is unwanted or inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo.

h) Homophobic - This is bullying which is directed towards people who are openly gay, bisexual, are perceived as gay, or show characteristics. Heterosexual young people subject to homophobic bullying are less reluctant to report it as this may enforce the stereotypical way that they are already viewed by others so sensitivity and positive support is required for victims.

i) Religious – Attacking faith, belief, religious practice or custom.

j) Special Educational Needs and Disability – remarking upon, drawing attention to, or discriminating against persons with physical disabilities or learning difficulties or other identified special educational needs such as emotional and behavioural disabilities (EBD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) - (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia).

k) Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making snide comments, teasing, humiliating others, threatening others, inciting others to humiliate and threaten others and

l) Written – spreading rumours, writing or printing unkind or malicious on paper.

3.2 Bullying can take place between pupil and pupil, staff and staff and staff and pupil. We consider the pastoral care of the pupils and staff to be of prime importance. In class, this role largely rests with the class teacher. It is school policy that any misdemeanour will be dealt with by the member of staff present when it occurs, whether in the playground, classroom, cloakroom or any part of the school.

3.3 A common code of behaviour is expected from everyone at the school (please refer to our Behaviour Policy). All staff and volunteers are expected to treat each other with a professional level of respect.

4 Signs of Bullying

4.1 All members staff must be alert to the signs of bullying. Noting that this list is not exhaustive of all possibilities, these may include:

a) unwillingness to return to school;

- b) displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet;
- c) failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others;
- d) books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged;
- e) a change in established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- f) psychological damage and diminished levels of self-confidence;
- g) frequent visits to first aiders with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches and so on;
- h) unexplained cuts and bruises;
- i) frequent absences, erratic attendance and late arrivals to class;
- j) nervousness and jumpy when a cyber-message is received;
- k) asking for extra pocket money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- l) choosing the company of adults
- m) displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact, difficulty in sleeping, experiences nightmares;
- n) verbal taunts;
- o) pupils sitting on their own and pupils left out of activity groups during lessons or play activities; and
- p) talking of suicide or running away.

4.2 Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, any significant indications and/or a repetition or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers whenever possible working together.

5 Strategies

5.1 We will work to prevent and eliminate any form of bullying by:

- a) promoting good behaviour and positive relationships based on mutual respect;
- b) making pupils fully aware of the school's policy through, for example, a list of expectations outlined in the pupil planner;

c) ensuring pupils understand that if they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying, they should tell a member of staff, their parents or any helpful adult or friend;

d) promoting anti-bullying through educational elements such as assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, and using the curriculum, tutorial and circle time and, in particular, the Personal, Social, Health Education (PSHE) programme to raise awareness of issues relating to bullying, whilst developing Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, with discussion of differences between people, and the importance of avoidance of prejudice-based language;

e) actively promoting fundamental Catholic Gospel values through planned and coherent opportunities often within the context of PSHE (please refer to both the PSHE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development;

f) informing parents by various means of the school's anti-bullying policy whilst encouraging them to support it;

g) providing counselling and help for victims of bullies and for bullies themselves ;

h) ensuring that the perpetrator and his/her parents, are fully aware of the unacceptable nature of the behaviour and the consequences of any repetition;

i) giving support to those involved in bullying to enable them to change their behaviour;

j) imposing reasonable, proportionate and consistent sanctions as and when necessary;

k) seeking the support of outside professional agencies as appropriate;

l) developing initiatives to raise awareness of the negative impact of bullying by any member of our community such as an anti-bullying week and peer mentoring and

m) familiarising all staff at the school with the anti-bullying policy through In-Service training and Professional Development to ensure it is applied consistently and fairly and by showing respect for all members of the school community, they act as good role models for pupils.

5.2 This Anti-bullying Policy is dovetailed with the Behaviour Policy and makes it clear what the sanctions are for bullying. We implement disciplinary sanctions that reflect the seriousness of an incident and convey a deterrent effect. If necessary, strong sanctions, such as exclusion, would be used in cases of severe and persistent bullying.

5.3 It is incumbent on the school to have clear policies that are communicated to parents, pupils and staff, along with creating an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils. Integral to our policy is involving parents and making sure pupils are clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

5.4 Handling of a bullying incident is given much thought to ensure that the facts are fully known, agreed and understood by the bully or bullies and the victim or victims. Bullying instances are reported and recorded so that patterns can be identified. Records are also kept to evaluate the effectiveness of our approach. As always, our management of personal data is in line with statutory requirements.

6 Classroom Management

6.1 Teachers' classroom management will link strongly to our Behaviour Policy. This includes a positive ethos with emphasis on the dignity of each pupil, on praise and reward, rather than punishment. The skills of self-discipline must be learnt early in life. All pupils will know that their teacher is a person to whom they can talk.

6.2 Pupils will be given the opportunity in class to discuss bullying and how to deal with it. Pupils will be encouraged to discuss how they get on with others and how to form positive attitudes towards them. This includes a review of what friendship really is and how to treat everyone with dignity and respect. Teachers will be aware that they can radically affect the incidence of bullying and that it must always be taken seriously.

7 Playground Management

7.1 The staff on duty should be patrolling the playground areas and constantly monitoring the behaviour of pupils. In the case of minor misbehaviour – a pupil will be given the chance to apologise to the person against whom the misbehaviour has been directed – this may stop the situation getting out of hand.

7.2 The supervisors will report bullying to the teacher on duty, who in turn will act in accordance with the agreed policy. Teachers will be aware that they can radically affect the incidence of bullying and that it must always be taken seriously.

8 E-safety and Cyber-Bullying

8.1 In accordance with legislative requirements we have a whole school approach to e-safety. This includes annual update training for staff regarding e-safety. The school also organises annually an awareness session for parents with regards to e-safety. We expect all pupils to adhere to the safe use of the internet as detailed in our ICT-Based Forms of Abuse (including Cyber- Bullying) Policy.

8.2 The active management of hardware, software and connectivity and vigilance of teachers and parents has an active part to play in the protection of pupils from Cyber-Bullying incidents. Pupils will have access to technologies that have both positive and negative potential. Our policy of the use of technology within the school setting and beyond is understood and respected by staff and it is important the students and the wider school community also respect this policy.

8.3 Within our e-safety policy, we have clearly defined roles and responsibilities for online safety as part of the school's wider safeguarding strategy and how this links with other safeguarding policy (please refer to safeguarding policy cited in related documents). There is clear guidance on the use of technology in the classroom and beyond for all users within the school's e-safety policy that references permissions/restrictions and agreed sanctions.

8.4 The policy also details how the school builds resilience in its pupils to protect themselves and their peers through education and information. Our staff receive training into the professional development of safeguarding techniques that include online safety (please refer to e-safety and safeguarding policies). There are reporting mechanisms available for all users to report issues and concerns to the school and how they are managed and/or escalated. The management of all personal data is in line with statutory requirements.

9 Procedures

It is important that all staff be alert to early signs of distress in pupils. If a member of staff witnesses a bullying incident, in any form (within, or outside school), or is approached by a pupil about bullying, they should investigate the incident without delay according to the agreed procedures that are as follows:

a) Minor cases of verbal or physical unpleasantness should be dealt with on the spot by the teacher

b) Pupils should be reminded of the standards of behaviour expected.

c) Where an incident gives greater cause for concern, teaching or support staff who witness or are told of the bullying should take a detailed record of the incident and names of those involved. The record of bullying should be passed to the Class Teacher of the pupils involved.

d) The class teacher will investigate the incident and see the pupil involved. The relevant Senior Leader should be kept informed of any instances of bullying.

e) Parents will always be informed if their child has been found to be either a victim or a perpetrator of a bullying incident.

f) Victims, alleged bullies and witnesses should be interviewed separately by the teacher first involved and are required to write down independent accounts of the incidents/situations. In the course of this procedure enquiries should be made to ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or other pupils, thus enabling patterns of behaviour to be established, and evaluate the effectiveness of any approach adopted.

g) If a first offence is of a serious nature, the Deputy Head should be informed as a matter of urgency.

h) Bullying which has been recurrent or persistent, should be referred to a member of the senior leadership.

i) The school will continue to monitor the wellbeing of the victim and the behaviour of the bully. Meet with the victim on the review date to determine whether the bully/ies have stopped their behaviour. If the bullying has stopped comment favourably to the bully, inform staff that the problem has stopped. Inform the Head if the bullying has continued. The Head will then take appropriate action.

j) their action is totally unacceptable;

k) it is meant as a deterrent to enabling repeat behaviour and

l) it is a signal to other members of the community that bullying is not tolerated

m) the threshold for dealing with an issue of pupil behaviour or bullying is subject to local specifics as in any other case: when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm'. Our response will include that any such abuse will be referred to local agencies. In the event of disclosures about pupil-on-pupil abuse that all children involved, whether perpetrator or victim, are treated as being 'at risk'.

9.2 Action should then be taken with regard to each of the following:

a) Advice and support for the victim in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy.

b) Sanctions imposed will be relative to the age of the pupil. The bully must understand what he/she has done and why the sanctions are being applied. Sanctions and support for the bully are used in accordance with the Behaviour Management Policy.

c) Informing the parent of the victim, the bully and possibly others involved.

d) Formally recording the incident on the pupil(s)' files.

e) Giving general information to all staff, through staff briefing and staff meetings, of incidents of bullying, mentioning the type of incident and the individuals involved.

f) Giving relevant feedback and reminders about appropriate behaviour to pupils.

9.3 Accusations of bullying of a pupil or pupils by any member of staff will be dealt with as a safeguarding matter and will be governed by the procedures set down in the school's safeguarding policy.

10 Good Practice for Staff

10.1 Be continually aware, watchful and available promoting good behaviour and encourage the care of others.

10.2 Ensure pupils are appropriately supervised.

10.3 Report all cases of bullying by other pupils to the relevant Senior Leader.

10.4 Parents' involvement and cooperation can be sought and parents of pupils involved will be kept informed.

11 Staff Training

11.1 We raise awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the anti-bullying policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available.

11.2 Where appropriate we invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

11.3 We also emphasise to staff the importance of working in partnership with parents.

Appendix

Useful guidance is provided by the DfE:

General guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444862/Preventing_and_tackling_bullying_advice.pdf

Support of bullied children:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444864/Supporting_bullied_children.pdf

Advice on cyber-bullying for schools:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/374850/Cyberbullying_Advice_for_Headteachers_and_School_Staff_121114.pdf

Advice on cyber-bullying for parents:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444865/Advice_for_parents_on_cyberbullying.pdf

The school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all pupils achieve their very best.