

St Peter's Catholic College of Maths & Computing

Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2009

Ratified by Governors: 6th May 2010
Next Review: May 2013

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

In keeping with the school mission statement, Saint Peter's aims to create a *happy and productive learning environment for each child*. Anti-social behaviour which jeopardises the well being of students is of direct concern to the school and will not be tolerated.

We recognise that the attitudes and actions of certain individuals or groups, can have a serious and profoundly damaging affect upon the self esteem and development of those who are the victims of bullying.

Definition

Bullying can take numerous forms, the victim may feel threatened: physically, psychologically, socially or verbally. For a student's actions to be defined as bullying:

the intention of the behaviour must be to exercise power over an individual, who is powerless to effectively defend himself/herself in the actual situation. In most instances (though not all) such behaviour will persist over time, will be repeated, and will be a conscious attempt to cause distress.

Some individuals may be bullied in ways which are impossible to observe (gesture, threatening looks, isolation); these forms of bullying can only be defined by the victim and can be easily dismissed as imaginary by adults. For the victims concerned, this type of intimidation can be every bit as damaging in its consequences and will be dealt with by the school.

Principles

The following principles underlie our approach to bullying and are consistent with the school code of conduct and the *Every Child Matters* agenda.

- There is no such thing as acceptable bullying. We accept that as adults in school we serve as role models for children, therefore, through our speech and actions, we have a responsibility to promote non-bullying behaviour.
- All students have the right to a safe, caring and protective environment in school.
- Responses to bullying should aim at control and prevention.
- In responding to bullying, it is the behaviour and not the individual that is the subject of the school's disapproval.
- In attempting to deal with bullying behaviour, it is important that the perpetrator is brought to an understanding of the consequences of his/her actions.
- Openness and frank discussion are to be encouraged if students are to feel confident that the school can deal effectively with incidents of bullying behaviour. We aim to become a telling school.
- All members of our community have a responsibility to prevent bullying occurring: teachers, students, support staff, technicians and lunch time supervisors need to be aware of the school procedures in the event of a bullying incident.

Procedures

- Students who report bullying must be listened to and their concerns taken seriously.
- All incidents of bullying must be recorded using the Breach of Discipline forms and a copy sent to the HOH. The information to be recorded should include: the date and time of the incident; the name of the person or persons involved; an account of what has occurred and the names of any witnesses.
- Wherever possible, the member of staff witnessing a bullying incident or who receives a report of bullying should investigate. Investigations should be thorough and bystanders interviewed as well as those directly involved. If thought necessary the FT or the HOH will investigate further.
- Action taken as a result of an investigation should be made known to all those concerned. This will reassure students that bullying in whatever form is not condoned.
- Depending on the nature of the bullying, appropriate action will be taken to modify the behaviour of children who bully. This may include the use of routine school sanctions, counselling, student contracts or action plans, parental interviews and the use of outside agencies.
- In circumstances where a child is bullied by a number of students, group counselling using a “no blame” approach may be appropriate as a means of promoting empathy with the victim.
- Students can be offered the support of a learning mentor to help with strategies to build self-esteem

The Role of the Form Tutor

Bullying can often go unobserved for long periods of time and children who are being bullied are often afraid to discuss the situation with teachers unprompted. The FT should be alert to any changes in a child’s general attitude, mood or pattern of behaviour as these can be symptoms that the student is being bullied. If the FT suspects that a particular student is being bullied, then it is essential that he/she talks without delay and in private with the student. Such interviews need to be sensitively handled and the student needs to feel reassured that something will be done. The FT also has a crucial role to play in supporting and advising the child while the bullying is being dealt with.

The FT should note down what the child has to say and a copy sent to the HOH.

The Role of the Head of House

When bullying is identified the HOH must be informed to enable him/her to co ordinate the school’s response to deal with the problem and the support needed for the victim. Depending on circumstances, this might involve interviewing the students involved, contacting parents and liaison with other members of staff. Implicit in this process will be the need for the HOH to monitor the situation, in order to determine the effectiveness of any action taken to prevent further bullying.

The Role of Senior Management

The SMT will oversee, review and develop the procedures outlined. In serious cases of bullying the SMT will be directly involved with the student or students involved.

Whole School Strategies

Raising Awareness

- School expectations of good conduct and the right of each student to be safe and happy will be made explicit through the Positive Behaviour Programme . The expectations will be displayed in the classroom.
- Classroom based activities play an important part in allowing students to explore their response to bullying and in bringing the essential issues to the surface. Class discussions, role plays and written work are useful in this context, such work serves to underpin the school ethos and reaffirm good behaviour.
- Specific work on bullying and relationships will be covered in PSCHE tutor periods, RE and English
- The school will also seek to raise awareness through assemblies, newsletters, school newspapers and displays.
- Bullying as a topic will be a standing issue on the Upper and Lower School House Councils. The school will seek to act upon any recommendations or concerns raised by students.

Prevention

- Staff will deal with bullying in their professional role as teachers; in this context, thought should be given to styles of teaching which involve cooperation, group work and which help build relationships between children.
- Class teachers may need to review seating arrangements and general classroom procedures where bullying is perceived to be a problem.
- Staff on duty need to maintain a high profile. Areas where students can hide are the areas where bullying is likely to occur - toilets and areas not immediately visible from the duty locations need to be checked
- All new staff, including auxiliary staff and lunch time supervisors will be briefed about the procedures for dealing with a bullying incident.
- A termly meeting with lunch time supervisors will be arranged to review strategies and discuss concerns.
- As part of the School Development Plan consideration will be given to making the physical environment more attractive and safer for students. Attention will be given to external seating, lunch time activities and the creation of sheltered areas
- The Induction Programme for Y7 students will introduce students to the school Code of Conduct and deal with concerns about bullying.
- In liaison with our Primary Partnership Schools, consideration will given to the grouping of specific students in order to prevent incidents of bullying occurring.
- Y9 and Y10 students will be trained to act as peer mentors under the B.E.S.T. (Bettering Everyone's Secondary Transition) programme. They will be "on duty" in the Y7 areas at break and lunch time.
- Identified Y7 students will be paired up with trained peer mentors and meetings will be held once a half - term to allow students to talk about their concerns.
- ***In certain circumstances the school may seek to empower the victims of bullying through buddying arrangements with an older student or through the support of a group.***
- Work on Transition from Primary to Secondary school through "Circle Time" will be part of the PSCHE programme for Y7.

- Email will be monitored in school through the use of filters and user logs. Where it is found that a student is using the school's email system to bully or intimidate another student, his/her account will be suspended and parents contacted. It is the policy of the school for all students to sign an acceptable use policy prior to a school IT account being allocated.
- Where a student is subject to bullying through the use of an Internet messenger service, the school will attempt to resolve the situation. Bullying through a chat room TM service invariably takes place out of school and often involves several students acting together to intimidate a victim. In such circumstances, the school will seek to advise the student and parents as to the best course of action. Where the perpetrators are students in the school, action will be taken and sanctions applied. In extreme circumstances, the school will undertake to liaise with the Police Community Officers and Internet providers to protect the victim and stop further on-line intimidation.
- Bullying by mobile phone, either by text or by photograph (though less easy to detect), will not be tolerated in school. Where it is proved to have occurred the mobile phone of the student concerned will be confiscated and parents informed.

Rewards

Positive behaviour and caring attitudes by children, will be acknowledged and promoted within departments and at Form and House level. ***Students who actively support the victims of bullying will be eligible to receive a Community Award at the annual ACES presentation evening.*** Nominations for such rewards will come through Tutor Groups and The Upper and Lower House Councils.

Monitoring

- Bullying will form part of regular agenda at each weekly Pastoral Meeting.
- Teachers will be informed of specific bullying problems at the daily staff briefing.
- Discussion with student representatives at House Council meetings will help to determine the bullying climate (positive or negative) within school.

Evaluation

While recognising that much of the evidence will be subjective, the school will evaluate the effectiveness of the measures outlined by:

- reviewing the incidence of recorded bullying in the school (data will be in the form of the Attendance Meeting minutes, Breach of Discipline Reports etc). The Emotional Health Survey Oct 2005 indicates that 4% of students feel unsafe in school. A recent training inspection (Jan 2007) carried out by a member of the HMI, also concluded that St Peter's provides a safe and caring environment and that most students feel safe and secure. Redcar & Cleveland LA awarded Anti-Bullying status to school in July 2009. This has been further developed in Tutor groups. The majority of the groups have been internally assessed and have gained Anti-Bully group status.
- The school's Serious Incident Log and Detention Database will be used to monitor bullying incidents in school.