

Bishop Ridley CE Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy

Statement of intent

At Bishop Ridley Primary School we are committed to providing a warm, caring and safe Christian setting for all our children so that they can learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.

At Bishop Ridley we acknowledge that bullying can happen from time to time; it would be unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. Anyone who knows that bullying is happening should report it to a member of staff.

Aims and objectives of this policy

The aim of this policy is to try to prevent and deal with any behaviour recognised as bullying. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and to take appropriate action in accordance with school policy. The school meets the requirement to have an anti-bullying policy and works closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in the Children Act of 1989, the SEN and Disability Act of 2001, the Government Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' and the Children Act of 2004.

All staff, governors, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and is not, and what they can do if it occurs. All staff should be aware of this policy and be consistent in its application. Parents and pupils are assured that reports of bullying are taken seriously. Whole school initiatives and strategies (eg. staff training, assemblies, PSHE lessons, circle time etc.) are used to reduce opportunities for bullying to occur. A positive, caring ethos is fostered within the school environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group with the intention of asserting control over and to the detriment of another, physically and/or emotionally. There is an imbalance of power between the bully and their victim (eg. the bully may be older, bigger, be more than one or have some hold over the target). Bullying is deliberate repeated or regular behaviour (STOP – Several Times On Purpose) designed to hurt, humiliate or harm the target, resulting in worry, fear, pain and distress for the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding others, tormenting, ridiculing or humiliating

- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making threats, teasing, making rude remarks or making fun of someone
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, biting, spitting, throwing stones, punching and other forms of violence
- Racist – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures and ridicule
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Homophobic – using a person’s apparent sexuality as a means of abuse
- Cyber – sending offensive text messages, emails, MSMs, phone calls, chat rooms etc.

What *isn't* bullying?

Friends and acquaintances falling out, disagreeing, calling each other names, arguing or playing a practical joke on someone are not examples of bullying. Children often fall out or say things when they are upset. It is an important part of a child’s development to learn how to deal with the bumpier aspects of relationships. Similarly the fact that two children do not get on with each other does not mean that one will bully the other. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and to develop social skills to repair relationships, get on with those we find ‘difficult’ and to show respect and tolerate others.

Where does bullying happen?

Bullying can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the hall, in the playground, on the way to and from school. We are primarily concerned with bullying that happens on the school premises. Where it happens outside school then other agencies may need to become involved eg. the local community police. Where it impinges on school life then the school has the responsibility to investigate and deal with it.

Signs and symptoms of bullying

A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied. Such indications may include when a child

- Is frightened of walking to and from school
- Asks to be driven to school
- Changes their usual route/routine to school
- Says they feel ill in the morning before school
- Begins to refuse to come to school and/or truants
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering or develops nervous symptoms
- Threatens or attempts to self harm or run away
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Begins to fall behind with their school work
- Comes home with clothes or belongings damaged
- Has possessions go missing
- Asks for or starts to steal money (to pay the bully)
- Continually says they have lost money
- Has unexplained cuts and bruises
- Comes home hungry (food has been taken from them by the bully)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- Is bullying other children or siblings

- Stops eating
- Is afraid to say what is wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above.

These signs can indicate other problems but the possibility that the child is being bullied needs to be considered and the matter investigated.

How children can help themselves

Everyone has the right to feel safe in school. Our children discussed how they might deal with being bullied and came up with some suggestions:

- Try not to let the bully know that they are making you upset
- Try to ignore them or laugh off their comments etc.
- Use 'fogging' by trying to show that you're not bothered by what they say or do
- Be assertive – stand up to them, look them directly in the eye, tell them to stop it and mean it
- Stay in a group – bullies usually pick on individuals; try not to be alone
- Ask friends for help
- Get away as quickly as you can from bullying situations
- Avoid situations where bullying might occur (eg. being alone with the bully)
- Tell someone you trust – a teacher, a teaching assistant, a midday supervisor, a friend, parent, brother, sister or relative
- If you are scared, ask a friend to go with you when you tell someone
- Praying to God for the courage, wisdom and strength to be able to face the bullies and sort out the problem
- When you tell an adult about the bullying give them as many facts as you can (what, who, when, where, how, why?)
- If all else fails, call a helpline for advice.

How children can help someone who is being bullied

Staying silent when someone is being bullied means that the bully wins. There are ways in which children can help a victim without putting themselves in danger:

- Don't smile or laugh at the situation
- Don't rush over and take on the bully yourself
- Don't be made to join in
- If it is safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop
- If you can, let the bully know that their behaviour is not acceptable
- Shout/go for help
- Let the victim know that you are going to get help
- Tell a member of staff as soon as you can
- Try and befriend the person being bullied
- Encourage the victim to talk to someone who can help (eg. an adult)
- Ask someone you trust for advice about what to do
- If all else fails, call a helpline for advice

Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

All staff should respond calmly and consistently to allegations and incidents of bullying. These allegations should be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and

incidents are investigated and resolved. The following step-by-step procedure is used for reporting and responding to allegations or incidents of bullying:

- Report all allegations or incidents of bullying to a member of staff.
- Staff will make sure that the victim is and feels safe.
- Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim.
- Staff will speak to and listen to all children involved separately (where possible) and record responses in writing.
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.
- Appropriate action will be taken quickly to stop the bullying.
- Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- The bully will be expected to apologise properly and repair the damage that has been done. Other consequences may take place and sanctions applied (see below).
- If possible, the children will be reconciled; at the very least the victim should feel reassured that the bullying will stop. A degree of forgiveness should also be encouraged.
- An attempt will be made to help the bully understand the consequences of his/her behaviour and to change it accordingly.
- Cases of serious bullying will be recorded on the relevant documentation and kept on file.
- In serious cases parents will be informed and invited to come to school to discuss the problem.
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, the case will be monitored to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Where bullying is serious and repeated external agencies may be involved (eg. Social Services or the police).

Sanctions

The School Council has contributed by suggesting sanctions to be used against the bully:

- Apologise to the victim verbally and/or in writing.
- Lose privileges.
- Lose playtimes.
- Stand outside the Head's office.
- Spend playtimes with an adult.
- Call parents into school to highlight the unacceptable nature of the behaviour.
- Be put on a report card.
- Be removed from class and work in isolation.
- Report to the Head or Deputy Head regularly.
- Be withdrawn from a special activity (eg. a visit, clubs and other extra-curricular activities).
- Be internally excluded (ie. not work with the rest of the class).
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion.

Strategies to prevent bullying

As a Christian school we teach respect and forgiveness, and whole school initiatives and strategies are used to develop an environment and ethos where the likelihood of bullying occurring is minimised. These include:

- Involving the whole school community in writing and reviewing this policy.

- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying and the effectiveness of the policy.
- Each class agreeing on their own set of class rules that encourage respect for one another.
- Giving national anti-bullying week a high profile each year.
- Raising awareness through assemblies.
- Using collective worship and RE lessons to reinforce the teachings of Jesus and other religious teachers.
- Incorporating anti-bullying in the PSHE scheme of work.
- Using circle time and class discussions to address bullying issues.
- Setting up a circle of friends to support victims of bullying.
- Involving the bully in social skills groups to help them to modify their behaviour and attitude.
- Using drama and role play to help children to become more assertive and to teach them strategies for dealing with bullying situations.
- Displaying posters against bullying and advertising helplines (eg. Childline).
- Introducing playtime improvements and initiatives.
- Using the school discipline policy to reward and reinforce good behaviour.
- Encourage the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards each other.
- Arrange staff Inset on anti-bullying where needed.

Equality of opportunity

As a school we strive to ensure that all members of the school community are treated equally, regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation or religious belief.

Monitoring and evaluating the policy

We monitor the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy in a variety of ways, including informal discussions and observations, questionnaires to parents and children, and recording incidents of bullying or allegations of bullying that occur from day to day, and the action taken. This policy is reviewed regularly and amendments are approved by staff and governors.