

Anti-Bullying Policy

A previous St. Edmund's Anti-Bullying Policy contained the following introductory statement that is still pertinent today:

“At St. Edmund's, we genuinely believe that happiness and self-esteem are the basic starting-points for learning; if a child is being bullied, then it is inevitable that it will be affecting their education. We must do our utmost to pick up the earliest signs of a potential bullying situation and then do all that we can to ensure that the situation is resolved in a sensitive and satisfactory manner. Children know that the School's policy on bullying is very strong, and the overwhelming majority are very supportive of each other. However, any Headmaster who says that there is absolutely no bullying in his school is likely to be deluding himself and others – children always have the potential to be cruel to each other, and there is a very thin line between teasing and bullying; that the line is inevitably crossed on occasions. When this happens, prompt and effective action is required. The fact that things are much better now than in the “good old days” is simply not enough.”

This updated policy seeks to add further detail for the benefit of the whole school community and is linked to the school's policies for ‘Safeguarding, ‘Exclusion’ and ‘Behaviour’.

What Is Bullying?

DfE publication ‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying’, July 2017 defines bullying as:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.’

Bullying is different to other forms of aggressive behaviour in that it is ongoing and repeated behaviour over time with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber All areas of internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse
Mobile threats by text messaging and calls
Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Bullying may be verbal, physical or psychological. In fact any action which makes a child feel uncomfortable, insecure or threatened may be defined as bullying.

Bullying may occur in school or outside of school. The Education and Inspections Act, 2006 states that the Headmaster may 'include measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the school and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school.'

Should a case of bullying outside school come to the Headmaster's attention, the school will investigate it and deal with it in line with the guidelines set out in this policy and the school's 'Behaviour' and 'Exclusions' policies.

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.

The school disapproves of bullying in all its forms and considers it a most serious offence. The pupils know that bullying is completely unacceptable and that they must "tell a teacher" if it happens to them or if they see it happening to anyone else. The Headmaster and staff take the lead in creating a climate in which pupils will report immediately any bullying incident in the expectation that it will be dealt with urgently and firmly. All staff are required to report incidents of suspected bullying to the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

Reporting incidents of bullying

- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying to their teachers or to any adult as promoted on the "If you have problem ..." sheet displayed in every classroom and generally around the school. They may also report incidents of bullying by using the 'worry box' near the bell and star tubes.
- Parents are encouraged to bring any reports of bullying to the Headmaster or Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will then investigate and respond accordingly.
- Staff must deal immediately with any incident they witness, either in their own classroom or around the school.
- All incidence of bullying MUST be reported to the Headmaster or the Deputy Head (Pastoral) at the earliest possible opportunity.

Responding to incidents of bullying

Each case will be treated individually and depending on circumstances and in line with the school 'Rewards and Sanctions Policy' and/or 'Exclusions Policy'. A range of strategies may be employed by the school:

- Interviews/counselling of bully/victim by the Deputy Head (Pastoral) or other delegated member of staff (this may be done individually or together).
- In the case of serious incidents, informing the parents of both the bully and the victim of the incident by telephone and/or letter.
- Requesting interviews with the parents of the bully and/or the victim.
- When appropriate, involve outside agencies on behalf of the victim or bully.

- Regular follow up to bullying incidents may be dealt with or instigated by the Deputy Head (Pastoral). This will be by letter or telephone to parents and by interview with bully or victim. Daily reporting to Deputy Head (Pastoral) by the victim and/or bully may be used.
- Requesting interviews with the parents of the bully and/or the victim.

Sanctions that may be imposed:

A range of sanctions may be made in the case of bullying. These may include any (combination) of the following, depending upon the severity of the incident:

- a) Minus point(s)
- b) A written apology
- c) Detention and/or loss of free/break times
- d) Reflective writing about the incident and how it has affected others to be countersigned by the perpetrator's parents. This may be linked to an invitation for the parents to come in and discuss the issue with the Headmaster or the Deputy Head (Pastoral)
- e) Report card for behaviour
- f) Temporary exclusion
- g) Permanent exclusion

In any case where bullying is found, a support system will be put in place to assist the victim who may be invited to attend a regular meeting with the Deputy Head (Pastoral) to ensure that all is well. Tutors and other staff will be informed and asked to keep a particular eye on the child concerned. Peer monitoring may also be used as a strategy to assist the victim.

Recording incidents of bullying

Any incident of bullying will be recorded on the school's database under the pupil profile of both the bully and the victim. A regular review of all incidents entered onto the database is made in order to identify any trends by individuals, either as victim or bully. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) has responsibility for completing this regular review.

Strategies for preventing bullying

Children at St. Edmund's learn during their time here, to understand the importance of community and that we all, irrespective of creed, colour, race, sexuality and gender have an important role to play within it. Children are encouraged to always do the 'right thing' in response to situations that may or may not include others being unkind to them or those around them; the culture that we encourage is one of telling someone who can help.

- Pupils and parents will be encouraged to report bullying to their teachers or to any adult as promoted on the "If you have problem ..." sheet displayed in every classroom and generally around the school.
- Opportunities will be taken to use the curriculum to promote good standards of behaviour by emphasizing right actions and respect for every individual, e.g. PSHE, drama, history, English lessons all provide such opportunities.
- Issues relating to positive and negative behaviours will be explored during the year in assemblies and Chapel services.

STAFF MUST DEAL IMMEDIATELY WITH ANY INCIDENT THEY WITNESS, EITHER IN THEIR OWN CLASSROOM OR AROUND THE SCHOOL.

Guidelines for staff on the prevention of bullying

- Bullying of any sort is to be deplored and will not be tolerated at St. Edmund's.
- It is up to everyone to be aware and work together to prevent bullying from happening.
- It is important to institute peer pressure against bullying with the involvement of all staff and to develop positive strategies for children to cope with this type of situation.

Signs that might indicate bullying is occurring include:

- change of friendship groups
- lack of friends
- school rejection
- 'illness' at certain times or on certain days
- change in standard of work
- withdrawal/sudden lack of confidence
- severe cases of depression

Although the above list is most likely to apply to victims, changes in behaviour could indicate that someone has developed anti-social traits and may be bullying.

This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated.

Updated (TSW) October 2017