

# St Alban's Catholic High School



## Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by Student Committee on: 01 June 2020

Recommission Date: June 2021

## Section 1 Aims

1.1 Every individual member of the St Alban's School Community has the right to feel safe, secure and supported as detailed in our Mission Statement.

Every individual has the right to work in peace, without being the victim of bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is unacceptable in a Christian school and will not be tolerated at St Alban's. Every individual must be made aware of the possible consequences if they are found to be guilty of bullying.

1.2 Whilst the prime aim of this policy is to protect the victim, as a Catholic school we appreciate that the bully may need help also. The Governors acknowledge that punishment alone may not prevent bullying. They support a "Restorative Shared Concern" method that may be used to bring bully and victim together in an attempt to resolve the situation.

1.3 What is bullying?

Bullying is the use of actions and behaviours that intend to hurt another person. Bullying can result in pain, discomfort or emotional distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional      being unfriendly, excluding and isolating, tormenting (e.g. hiding property, threatening gestures, talking about someone);
- Physical        pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist          racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual          unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Homophobic    focusing on the issue of sexuality;
- Verbal          name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;
- Online          All areas of electronic, such as social media misuse,
- Mobile threats by text messaging & calls,  
Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities.

## Section 2 Online Bullying

2.1 Online Bullying is an established form of bullying, from which it can be very difficult to identify perpetrators. Often the bullying manifests itself through 'public' social media sites and can be accessed by a large number of people. To help tackle this:

- Students will be specifically educated about online-bullying as part of any Anti-Bullying education activities, such as: assemblies, conferences, Anti-Bullying Week, projects (ICT, PYF, Drama, etc) and specific Anti-Bullying training;
- All students are required to sign an Acceptable Use Agreement for school ICT equipment and educated about how to keep themselves safe online;
- The school will endeavour to promote the positive use of technology across the curriculum. This includes ensuring all staff and children understand the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.

2.2 Responding to Online bullying: Most cases of online-bullying will be dealt with through the school's existing processes. Some features of online-bullying differ from other forms of bullying and as such may require a different response. Some of the key differences are:

- the 24/7 and anywhere nature of online-bullying;
- the person being bullied will not always know who is bullying them;
- some students may not be aware that what they are doing is bullying;
- unlike other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying is likely to have evidence of its occurrence.

2.3 Responses may include (but are not limited to) confiscation of devices (phones etc), detentions, sanctions for breaches of the Acceptable Use Agreement, requesting students to reveal contents of specific messages, fixed term (or even Permanent) exclusion and involvement of the Police and other agencies.

### **Section 3 What Preventative Steps Will the School Take?**

3.1 Awareness will be raised through curriculum opportunities. All departments follow the school Anti-Bullying policy.

3.2 Education on developing healthy relationships is covered through the PYF programme and students are encouraged to become Anti-Bullying ambassadors. An annual Anti-Bullying survey helps to identify trends and problem areas to help develop out Anti-Bullying work

3.3 School will make every effort to ensure that students, regardless of ability or age, feel valued by their achievements being recognised. Praise postcards, house points and Well Done letters for Interims are available for all students. Departments may also have their own internal system of rewards. There is the possibility that disaffected students might turn to bullying as a means of gaining the attention/respect they would like.

3.4 When group work is appropriate staff will give consideration to the make-up of the group in order to ensure that no student is made to feel inferior or under-valued.

3.5 Visits to the quiet corners of the building are an essential part of the duty rota. This will reduce opportunities for bullying.

3.6 Staff will be vigilant in lessons. Bullying can take place in the classroom and observation skills will be essential in order to detect any incidents.

3.7 Sanctions may be used at the discretion of staff in response to a bullying incident to change behaviour. Bullying is a complex issue, and therefore there is no one size fits all response. The context with how the issue has occurred needs to be taken into account before considering the appropriate response. There are a variety of ways to deal with bullying such as the use of restorative meetings/conferences. However, in more serious or persistent circumstances the school will not hesitate to use fixed term exclusions, involve the police or potentially permanent exclusion depending on the seriousness of the situation. Bullying instances are low, but are dealt with quickly and effectively.

3.8 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 of walking to or from school;
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus;
- begs to be driven to school;
- changes their usual routine;
- is unwilling to go to school;
- begins to truant;
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence;
- starts stammering;

- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning
- 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;
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- comes home hungry;
- 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 nervous & jumpy when an online message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## Section 4      Protocols

4.1      When an instance of bullying is reported or discovered staff need to bear in mind:

- When dealing with a victim it is appropriate to offer immediate support and help;
- Avoid jumping to conclusions when you first become aware of an incident;
- Allow both sides to briefly state their point of view; it is important to have statements written by the students themselves. If you do not have the time to do this refer immediately to another colleague e.g. Form Tutor, Heads of Year, Student Support Manager or Senior Leadership Team;
- Record the incident in the 'Bullying Log' in the pastoral office;
- Incidents of bullying should always be reported to the Form Tutor, Student Support Manager/Head of Year or a member of the Senior Leadership Team when and where appropriate;
- Heads of Year or Student Support Managers may adopt a variety of approaches. In all cases the victim will be supported but sanction for the bully may, or may not, be the best way forward. In some cases the "Shared Concern" approach might be used to bring bully and victim together. (Appendix 1)
- Heads of Year, Student Support Managers or members of the Senior Leadership Team will use their discretion over whether parents need to be contacted. Allowing students an opportunity to change their behaviour can be very productive;
- Extreme or persistent cases of bullying will always be reported to the Headteacher.

4.2      Students Who Witness a Bullying Incident:

- If appropriate ask for help from another student to fetch assistance from a member of staff;
- Report the incident to the nearest adult. This may be a teacher or a member of the support staff;
- Try to persuade the person being bullied to report the problem. Encourage them to confide in an adult. It might be a parent, a teacher or a friend;
- Do not take the matter into their own hands. It could make the situation worse;
- Be alert to online-bullying and report anything that troubles them.

4.3 Students Who Are Being Bullied:

- Try not to retaliate;
  - Report the incident to the nearest member of staff. This may be any adult, not just the teaching staff;
  - If you do not feel able to tell a member of staff tell your friends, your parents or any adult you feel able to talk to;
  - Do not suffer in silence. Unless you tell someone about the problem it is not likely to go away;
  - Keep a log of incidents
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Signed by J McCall, Chair of Governors: Date:

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## Appendix 1

### The "Shared Concern" Approach to Bullying

This is a brief outline of the method used.

- (1) Obtain information from the victim. Make sure that they realise you will be talking to the bully (bullies).
  
- (2) Discussion with the bully (bullies) at which you share your concern for the victim. Care is taken not to apportion blame.
  
- (3) Report back to the victim and if agreeable arrange a joint meeting of bully and victim. This may be chaired by the Heads of Year, Students Support Managers or by other suitable adults eg. Form Tutor, Chaplain.
  
- (4) At the meeting all parties are invited to express their opinions in a calm and considerate manner. If the victim feels unable to do this the adult will speak on their behalf. Discussion takes place and the aim is to devise a course of action which parties involved agree to support. A date and time is set for a follow-up meeting if it is felt appropriate.
  
- (5) Heads of Year, Student Support Managers or Form Tutor will, independently of the meeting, monitor the behaviour of parties involved.
  
- (6) If the "Shared Concern" method is not working other strategies will have to be devised.