

St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School

Anti-bullying Policy

Introduction

This policy works alongside the behaviour management policy. We regard bullying as totally unacceptable at St Lawrence School and we will do our utmost to prevent bullying. If bullying does occur, all pupils should feel able to tell an adult and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are very fortunate that incidents of bullying are extremely rare.

What is bullying?

Bullying is the repeated use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. This is not to be confused with, for example, having an argument with your best friend, or someone taking your pencil without asking. Bullying goes on and on.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding someone, 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
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber – using electronic devices or emails, apps and other software to torment others
- Homophobic – speaking about someone's sexuality in a derogatory way
- Disability related – upsetting people who may have a physical or mental disability

No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullies need to learn different ways of behaving.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Parents or carers should be aware of these possible signs and should inform a member of the teaching staff as soon as possible if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school alone
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering

- runs away – talks about ‘wishing they were dead’
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- often 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 (to pay bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- 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

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

Aims

We aim to promote a safe and secure environment within our school where children have the freedom to come to learn and develop as individuals without fear or anxiety of any sort.

Bullying damages individual children and is against the ethos of our school where everyone is valued and recognised for their individuality. We strive to promote an atmosphere within the school where bullying is seen as totally unacceptable.

All members of staff within the school will treat allegations of bullying seriously and will respond by involving parents whenever there is a case of one child bullying another.

We aim to empower all children to deal with any threatening behaviour from others, whether inside or outside the school community, by teaching them to be assertive towards others, thus preserving their own rights.

Circle time is used effectively and pro-actively within the school and we aim to help children to understand what it feels like to be bullied and what it feels like to be a bully. Through such discussions we have discovered that this forum gives children the freedom to express their thoughts and their fears and gives them greater insight into the thoughts and feelings of the victim and the perpetrator. Such sessions should be held at least once every year before an incidence of bullying occurs in the class.

Dealing with bullying incidents

Any complaint made by a child that s/he is being bullied will be treated seriously. The child will be asked to explain what has been happening and notes will be taken. The alleged offenders will be asked to explain their side of the story and notes will be kept of this. It will be made clear that bullying can be either verbal or physical and, in some cases, the ignoring of another child. All the children involved, including the victim will be brought together to discuss the situation. It will be made very clear to the offenders (if guilty) that any further incidents will be reported to the Headteacher/Deputy Head and sanctions put in place. The offenders will be reminded that the victim has 'permission' to tell an adult about the situation immediately. Incident sheets will be completed by all concerned, including witnesses. Reports of any prejudice related incidents are sent to the local authority.

In serious cases parents will be informed and will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the problem.

Role of the Headteacher and Governors

The Headteacher will ensure that all members of staff are aware of the anti-bullying policy and that they know how to implement this. The Headteacher will ensure that the children know that bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated. This may occur during an assembly or through the teaching staff during circle time sessions. The behaviour management policy focuses on reward and if the self-esteem of each child is good in the school then bullying incidents will be less likely to happen.

When a parent makes an allegation of bullying the Headteacher will investigate the matter immediately, seeing all the children concerned and reporting back to the parents/carers within two days wherever possible. If the matter requires further investigation then the Head will notify the parents/carers of this.

Any parent who is not satisfied with the investigation can go to the Chair of Governors who will then discuss the matter with the Headteacher. The Chair may wish to call a meeting to discuss the issues further with the parents/carers and Headteacher.

The governors will ensure that the anti-bullying policy is implemented and will ask the Headteacher to report termly to the full governing body meeting.

Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Teachers and teaching assistants will follow the school policy and will investigate all complaints of bullying. It is important for the child making the complaint to know that they are being taken seriously even when the case is not proven. It could be that there is an underlying problem of social relationships which can be addressed as a separate issue.

Parents / Carers

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to notify the school at the earliest opportunity if they consider that their child is being bullied or is a perpetrator of bullying. They are also expected to support the school if their child is found to be 'bullying' another child.

Monitoring and review

The effectiveness of the policy will be reported annually to governors.

The members of School Council will discuss the effectiveness of the policy and will put forward any recommendations they have to amend the policy. If there is a case of bullying, members of the council will discuss this in each class and report suggestions to the full council meeting.

Reviewed: September 2022

Next review date: September 2025