

# St Joseph's Catholic High School



## Anti-bullying Policy

*"Living, loving, and learning – through Christ"*



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## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Our Policy Statement:**

St Joseph's Catholic High School is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe establishment for all our students so they can learn in a positive and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our school. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to inform staff and be confident that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

### **The aims are:**

- To assist in creating an ethos in which attending school is a positive experience for all members of the school community.
- To make it clear that all forms of bullying are unacceptable at school.
- To enable everyone to feel safe while at school and encourage pupils to report incidences of bullying.
- To deal effectively with bullying.
- To support and protect victims of bullying and ensure they are listened to.
- To help and support bullies to change their attitudes as well as their behaviour and understand why it needs to change.
- To liaise with parents and other appropriate members of the school community.
- To ensure all members of the school community feel responsible for combating bullying.

### **Furthermore:**

- All members of the school share an understanding of what is defined by bullying
- All staff share a consistent response
- Staff and students recognize the benefit of taking a stand against bullying
- A high level of awareness of the Anti-Bullying Policy and its aims is maintained through INSET, assemblies and the wider curriculum.

### **How this Policy was developed:**

The school has a 'duty of care' towards its pupils with regard to bullying in that the Headteacher and staff stand in loco parentis (in place of the parents). This duty of care includes protecting pupils from harm from bullying.

This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations under the School's Standards and Framework Act and the Human Rights Act of 1998 to:

- have a policy to prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils
- to make a written copy of the anti-bullying statement available on request
- to set out the strategies to be followed with a system to implement them and a mechanism for monitoring and reviewing their effectiveness.

### **Definition of Bullying**

There is no legal definition of bullying, however it is usually defined as 'behaviour that is repeated, intending to hurt someone either physically or emotionally, often involving an imbalance of power'.

Bullying can be:

**Physical Harm:** Pushing, kicking, punching, pinching, any form of violence.

**Verbal Abuse:** Name-calling, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.

**Cyber Bullying:** Cyber bullying involves the use of information and communication technologies such as e-mail, text messages, instant messaging, defamatory personal Web sites, and social media, to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group, that is intended to harm others.

**Emotional Abuse:** Tormenting, teasing, humiliation, destroying work or property, dirty looks, spreading rumours.

**Sexual Abuse:** abusive name calling, looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty, inappropriate and uninvited touching, sexual innuendos and propositions, pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content, in its most extreme form, sexual assault or rape.

**Racist Abuse:** an incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person. This can be in the form of: verbal abuse, name calling, racist jokes, offensive mimicry, physical threats or attacks, wearing of provocative badges or insignia, bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines, inciting others to behave in a racist way, racist graffiti or other written insults, even against food, music, dress or customs, refusing to co-operate in work or play.

**Sexual orientation/Homophobic/Identity:** an incident defined as any form of bullying related to characteristics considered part of a person's identity or perceived identity group, particularly sexual orientation and/or gender identity. Just being different may be enough. This can be in the form of homophobic language, looks and comments about sexual orientation, gender identity or appearance.

**SEN or disability:** These pupils are often at greater risk of bullying. This can be characterised by name calling, comments on appearance, comments with regard to perceived ability and achievement levels.

### **School Statement of Intent (with regard to its position on bullying)**

This school believes that:

- Bullying is undesirable and unacceptable.
- Bullying is a problem to which solutions can be found.

- Seeking help and openness are regarded as signs of strength not weakness.
- All members of the school community will be listened to and taken seriously.
- Everyone has the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from fear.
- All of us have a responsibility to ensure that we do not abuse or bully others.
- Young people should talk to an adult if they are worried about bullying and have a right to expect that their concerns will be listened to and treated seriously.
- Young people should be involved in decision making about matters that concern them.
- We all have a duty to work together to protect vulnerable individuals from bullying and other forms of abuse.

**Code of Conduct (with regard to school behaviour and relationships within the school community)**

We recognise that all adults in the school are, in effect, role models for the students. The way in which we behave towards each other and to students is particularly important in terms of providing positive role models. Therefore, as adults we must:

- show respect for every student and other colleagues within the school community as individuals
- be aware of vulnerable students
- criticise the behaviour rather than the student
- avoid favouritism
- be seen to be fair
- avoid labelling
- have high expectations of students
- never give students ammunition to use against each other
- actively seek to develop a praise culture within the school.

Young people also have a responsibility to role model appropriate behaviour for their peers.

We, therefore, believe that all students must:

- show respect for their fellow students and adults working within the school Community.
- support and be sensitive to others when they may be feeling vulnerable
- actively seek to develop a praise culture within the school
- actively support the school anti-bullying policy
- take responsibility for their own behaviour.

## **Equal Opportunities**

Every member of the school community is entitled to expect equality of protection from bullying as well as protection and support from school policies and procedures designed to ensure that the school remains a safe environment in which to teach and learn.

## **Signs and Symptoms**

**There are a number of possible signs and behaviours which may indicate a student is being bullied:**

- Is frightened of walking to and from school
- Doesn't want to go on the school 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
- 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
- Is bullying other students or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

Of course these signs could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and be investigated.

## **Procedures and Dealing with Incidents – A Whole School Approach**

a) Role of pupils in recording a bullying incident

If you are being bullied:

- try to stay calm and look as confident as you can;
- be firm and clear - look them in the eye and tell them to stop;
- get away from the situation as quickly as possible;
- tell an adult what has happened straight away;

b) Guidance for parents:

If your child has been bullied:

- Calmly talk with your child about his/ her experiences.
- Make a note of what your child says including who was involved, how often the bullying has occurred, where it happened and what happened.
- Reassure your child that he/ she has done the right thing to tell you about the bullying.
- Explain to your child that should any further incidents occur he/she should report them to a teacher immediately.
- Make an appointment to see your child's tutor.
- Explain to the tutor the problems your child is experiencing.

When talking with teachers about bullying:

- Try to stay calm and bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of an incident.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened, give dates, places and names of other children involved.
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take.
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school.
- Stay in touch with the school and let them know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

If you are not satisfied:

- Check with the school anti-bullying policy to see if agreed procedures are being followed.
- Make an appointment to discuss the matter with the child's Head of Year and keep a record of the meeting.
- If this does not help, contact Mr. Kinsella, Assistant Headteacher and express your concerns.
- If you are still unhappy, then you have the right to follow the complaints procedure set out in the School Complaints Policy.

If your child is bullying others:

- Talk with your child and explain that what s/he is doing is unacceptable and makes other children unhappy.
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.
- Show your child how he/ she can join in with other children without bullying.

- Make an appointment to see your child's tutor and explain the problems your child is experiencing as well as discussing how you can work together to stop him/her bullying others.
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school.
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when s/ he is co-operative or kind to other people.

If your child is experiencing any form of electronic bullying:

- Ensure your child is careful whom they give their mobile phone number and e-mail address to.
- Check exactly when a threatening message was sent.
- Where necessary report incidents to the police.

c) Role of staff

- Talk privately with the offending individual(s)
- Attempt to include an excluded pupil in lessons, perhaps by controlling the groupings.
- Intervene to diffuse a blatant act of bullying.
- On discovering the details, deal sympathetically with all the pupils involved.
- Do not bully the bully or humiliate him/her. Try to look objectively at the incident.
- Listen to what is being said and take notes if necessary.
- Reassure the pupil but do not promise confidentiality. (Refer to child protection policy procedures)
- Take witness statements, and review SIMS or Classcharts for further information
- If necessary refer to Head of Year or assistant headteacher.

### **Strategies to Reduce Bullying**

The school will adopt a range of strategies to prevent and reduce bullying, to raise awareness of bullying and support victims and bullies. Including:

- Co-operative group work.
- Through teaching in all subjects but directly in for example Religious Education, ICT.
- Assemblies and Form Time used as a direct vehicle for promoting the school's anti-bullying policy and to create an anti-bullying climate in the college community.
- Anti-bullying week and posters will be used annually to promote our policy
- The support group approach/No Blame Approach.
- Peer mediation.

- Peer counselling.
- Buddy systems.
- PSME programmes.
- Restorative justice.

### **Sanctions**

Depending on the severity of the bullying (or if repeated offence, previous sanctions will be taken into consideration) a range of sanctions are available:

- Where possible, reconciliation will take place
- Apology given to the victim from the bully
- Bullies parents informed
- Removal from class and/or social time
- Withholding participation in school events, trips or school teams
- In serious cases, fixed term and/or permanent exclusion will be considered
- Police involvement

### **Bullying Outside of School Premises**

The headteacher has the statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behavior outside of school. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or at home.

Where bullying outside the school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. The school will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police of action taken against a pupil. If the misbehavior could be deemed criminal or pose a serious threat to the public, the police will always be informed.

### **Safe Havens**

Students must be aware of where they can go during non-teaching time where they feel safe. Students can go to any member of staff on social time duty, Pastoral area, the library, the main school office or seek out the nearest member of staff – either in the corridor, the classroom or their office.

### **Confidentiality**

School staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality if approached by a pupil for help. Staff must make this clear to pupils. Child protection procedures must be followed when any disclosures are made.

It is very rare for a pupil to request absolute confidentiality. If they do, in situations other than those involving child protection issues, staff must make a careful judgement whether or not a third party needs to be informed. This judgement will be based upon:

- The seriousness of the situation and the degree of harm that the pupil may be experiencing.
- The pupil's age, maturity and competence to make their own decisions.

Where it is clear that a pupil would benefit from the involvement of a third party, staff should seek consent of the pupil to do so. If appropriate, staff might inform the third party together with the pupil. Unless clearly inappropriate, pupils will always be encouraged to talk to their parent/ guardian.

**An underlying principle in supporting pupils in our school is that all children are listened to sensitively and objectively and all incidences of bullying will be taken seriously.**

Although the school cannot guarantee confidentiality pupils will be informed of national and local help lines, if appropriate, where confidentiality can be maintained.

### **Support for Pupils who Experience Bullying**

If you are being bullied

- Tell an adult or somebody you trust what has happened straight away.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can.
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and, if possible, tell them to stop and tell them how you feel.

After you have been bullied

- Tell a teacher or another adult you trust within school.
- Tell your family - your parents, guardians or brothers and sisters, anyone you feel able to talk to.
- If you are scared to tell a teacher or adult on your own, ask a friend to go with you.
- Keep on speaking until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying.
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened

When you are talking to an adult about bullying be clear about

- What has happened to you.
- How often it has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Who saw what was happening.
- Where it happened.
- What you have done about it already.

If you experience bullying by mobile phone text messages or e-mail

- Tell a friend, parent or teacher.
- Be careful who you give your mobile phone number or e-mail address to.
- Make a note of exactly when a threatening message was sent.

For contacts and details of where to seek help outside school see appendix.

### **Policy Review**

This policy will be evaluated and updated where necessary annually by the whole school. The views of pupils and staff will be used to make changes and improvements to the policy on an ongoing basis.

### **Appendix 1**

#### **Information for Parents on what to do if your child is experiencing Cyberbullying.**

**(From DfES Don't Suffer in Silence)**

**Cyberbullying in all its forms should be stopped. No one should be subjected to it, least of all your child.**

- Don't wait for something to happen before you act. Make sure your child understands how to use these technologies safely and knows about the risks and consequences of misusing them.
- Make sure they know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyberbullied.
- Encourage your child to talk to you if they have any problems with cyberbullying. If they do have a problem, contact the school, the mobile network or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it.
- Parental control software can limit who your child sends emails to and who he or she receives them from. It can also block access to some chat rooms.
- Moderated chat rooms are supervised by trained adults. Your Internet service provider will tell you whether they provide moderated chat services.

#### **Cyber Bullying/Social Media**

- Don't reply to text messaging (also known as *SMS* or *EMS*) or video messaging (also known as *MMS*) that is abusive or obscene. Your mobile service provider e.g. Orange, T-Mobile, Vodaphone etc. should have a number that you can ring to report abusive messaging. Try their web sites for details.
- Be careful who you give phone numbers to and don't leave your mobile lying around when you are not there
- Do not give out personal information
- Give yourself a false name that doesn't give out anything about your age, gender or location
- Don't respond to abusive posting - ignore them or log off. If you don't take time off and calm down, you'll end up writing something you'll regret which will only make the situation worse

- Think about what you write - it is very easy for people to get the wrong idea about what you write or how you write it
- If you receive a nasty or abusive email (known as being *flamed*), **don't reply**. If it's from someone you think you know, like someone at school, they'll want some kind of reaction, just like they would if they were standing in front of you and bullying you. Don't give them the satisfaction of replying, and they'll probably stop
- The email can also come from people that you don't know, (known as *spamming*) - email addresses are fairly easy for companies to obtain on the internet, using software called email harvesters. They are also surprisingly easy for specialist computer programs to guess. **Under no circumstances should you reply to these types of email, even if they have a *Click here and stop receiving this email* link - this will just confirm your email address as a real one.** The individual sending it can then sell or pass it on to other people and you'll be flooded with even more junk and abusive emails
- You can delete the emails, but if the situation becomes serious, you should save them or print them off so that, if you do need to take action, you have some evidence
- If the cyberbullying is on a school or community website, do as you would do if the bullying was face to face - tell someone like your parents or teachers

## **Appendix 2**

**Childline** Telephone number 0800 1111 (Open 24 hours a day)

For children who are deaf or hard of hearing textphone service 0800 400222

**NSPCC** Telephone number 0808 800 5000

A registered charity dedicated to stopping cruelty to children

**Kidscape** Telephone number 020 7730 3300

(Bullying councilor available Monday – Friday 10.00am-4.00pm)

**Bullying.co.uk** Telephone number 0808 800 222

(Advice line for parents and children 9.30am-5.00pm)

**Advisory Centre for Education** Telephone number 0300 0115 142

(Advice line for parents on all school matters open Monday – Friday 2.00pm-5.00pm)

**Parentline Plus** Telephone number 0808 800 2222

(National helpline for parents Monday – Friday 9.00am-9.00pm, Saturday 9.30am-5.00pm, Sunday 10.00am-3.00pm)

### **Useful websites regarding bullying in schools:**

BBC Bullying Survival Guide [www.bbc.co.uk/education/bully/index.htm](http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/bully/index.htm)

Provides information, guidelines for dealing with all aspects of bullying, a help and resources list and accounts of celebrities who were bullied when they were at school

Childline <http://www.childline.org.uk/>

Gives details on the CHIPS initiative and other information regarding bullying

Kidscape <http://www.kidscape.org.uk/>

Gives advice and support for victims, schools and parents

Bullying Online <http://www.bullying.co.uk/>

A registered charity, which contains advice for both parents and pupils

NSPCC <http://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

A registered charity dedicated to stopping cruelty to children

Bullyweb [www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/science/psychol/bully/bully.htm](http://www.uclan.ac.uk/facs/science/psychol/bully/bully.htm)

A research site with links to other sites on bullying

Peer Support Networker [www.peersupport.co.uk](http://www.peersupport.co.uk)

Newsletter linked to Peer Support Forum