

# **ST VINCENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**



## **ANTI BULLYING POLICY**

**Review Date: May 2027**

## **Mission Statement**

### **Caritas Christi Urget Nos**

***The love of Christ urges us to care for each other and strive for excellence in everything we do.***

## **ANTI BULLYING POLICY**

### **Rationale**

*Our Mission Statement states that. The love of Christ urges us to care for each other and strive for excellence in everything we do.* This caring atmosphere is essential for everyone's well being.

It is an entitlement of all children that they receive their education in an atmosphere that is caring and protective, safe and secure, and where they are happy and relaxed enough to take advantage of all the educational opportunities being offered.

An anti-bullying policy helps to create a positive and caring ethos where individuals are respected and feel secure in a way that enhances their social and academic development.

At St Vincent's we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to let someone know so that the bullying will stop.

### **Purpose**

1. All governors, teaching, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
2. All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
3. All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
4. When instances of bullying occur victims and bullies need to know that action will be taken

5. Silence and secrecy nurture bullying. Children need to realise that their concerns will always be recognised and dealt with appropriately. Bullying will not be tolerated.
6. Bullies create an atmosphere which can put at risk the values that we seek to instill in our pupils

## **What is bullying?**

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten or frighten someone. It *can* be:-

1. physical – pushing, pinching, biting, hitting, kicking or taking belongings
2. verbal – name calling, insults, spreading rumours, teasing taunting
3. emotional – spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups, faith groups, tormenting (eg hiding books) threatening gestures or facial expressions
4. sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
5. homophobic-because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
6. racist – racial taunts, names, graffiti, gestures
7. Religious intolerance – exclusion of in any form
8. cyber – all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse; mobile threats by text messaging & calls; misuse of associated technology i.e. camera & video facilities

All bullying is aggression, whether physical, verbal or psychological, although not all aggression is necessarily bullying.

### **In lessons your child will learn that bullying:**

1. ...goes on for a while, or happens regularly.
2. ...is deliberate. The other person wants to hurt, humiliate or harm the target.
3. ...involves someone (or several people) who are stronger in some way than the other person being bullied. The person doing the bullying has more power; they are possibly older, stronger, there are more of them or they have some 'hold' over the target (e.g. they know a secret about them)

### **Because these three things have to happen together for something to be called 'bullying', they will learn that bullying is not:**

- a one-off fight or argument
- a friend sometimes being nasty
- an argument with a friend

## **Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur all children should feel able to tell staff about it and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Evidence shows that the more children tell about any bullying they see happening, the less it happens. However children often feel reluctant to do this due to worrying about becoming a target themselves and feeling unable to go against 'the crowd'. Within the framework of the Restorative approach and through the continued focus on the Gospel values central to our school, we encourage children to realise that anyone watching bullying happening and doing nothing to prevent it puts themselves into the position of being an accomplice to the bully.

## **Signs And Symptoms**

There are many changes in behaviour that can indicate that a child is being bullied. As bullying does not necessarily involve physical injuries, it may be uncharacteristic changes in mood, attitude or behaviours that alert us to concerns.

Children may:

Be unwilling to go to school and develop unidentifiable illnesses like a stomach ache

Beg you to drive or walk with them to school

Begin doing poorly in their school work or drop out of activities and clubs

Come home regularly with clothes or books damaged or destroyed

Become withdrawn, start stammering

Become distressed

Change eating habits

Cry themselves to sleep

Have nightmares or even call out 'leave me alone'

Have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts

Have their possessions go 'missing'

Refuse to say what's wrong

Body language becomes more closed

*This is not an exhaustive list, and nor does presenting with one of these signs always mean that a child is being bullied. The signs presented must be put into the correct context to provide the appropriate support.*

## **Procedures**

1. All bullying incidents should be reported to staff.
2. All allegations of bullying will be investigated.
3. When a case of serious bullying is observed or reported it will be recorded. Immediate action should be taken to stop the bullying happening.
4. Serious incidents of bullying will be reported to the parents of both the victim and the bully and a meeting arranged to discuss the problem.
5. If necessary and appropriate the police will be consulted.

## **Outcomes**

- The child who feels victimised needs to feel that their voice is heard by -
  - regular opportunities for discussion with class teacher, trusted adult or sometimes a child mentor eg Rights Respecting Ambassador
  - emotional literacy development in building resilience and strategies for moving forward
  - involvement in discussions where appropriate with the other child to ensure they feel they have been heard
  - regular communication with the parents to ensure that they feel their own child's needs are being met (supporting parents to understand the strategies in place)
  - involvement in social skills groups where appropriate
- The bully needs to have a firm approach in line with the behaviour policy
  - clear boundaries and expectations (Behaviour Plan)
  - careful monitoring of the child by a named adult (especially in unstructured times)
  - regular communication with parents (positive and negative feedback) to ensure they feel that their child's needs are being met but also understand the impact their actions are having on others

- regular discussions and opportunities for developing emotional literacy (voicing own emotions, and showing empathy towards others feelings)
  - involvement in social skills groups where appropriate
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place.
  - In serious cases, internal suspension or even exclusion will be considered in line with our behaviour policy.
  - If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
  - After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. The victim will be offered help, advice and support by a designated member of staff.

## **Prevention**

In line with our Behaviour Policy at St Vincent's we operate within a Restorative approach framework which is supported by our Catholic ethos and Vincentian values. This involves working with both parties to see each other's point of view and how to mend relationships through reparation and forgiveness. It encourages those who have caused harm to acknowledge the impact of what they have done and gives them an opportunity to make reparation. It offers the victims the opportunity to have their harm acknowledged and amends made.

It will always be the intention of the school to stop the bullying behaviour for good by helping the bully to develop empathy, stand up to peer pressure and support them to manage the problems they are facing in their own lives. **At St Vincent's we recognise that people who are happy with themselves do not need to bully other people.**

- The issue of bullying will be openly discussed in school assemblies, during Anti-Bullying Weeks, through Circle Time and during lessons where appropriate. Empathy will be increased through role-play and relevant stories. Language work and religious education will explore how people feel.
- Cyber bullying will be focused on each year with age-appropriate activities and discussions as well as opportunities for parents to attend workshops.
- Co-operative work and non-aggressive behaviour will be praised.
- All adults will be watchful and observe the social relationships between pupils.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

In making decisions about bullying and behaviour, all staff will take into account any special educational needs, disabilities, gender, and cultural differences that may be relevant to the case and ensure that the physical environment of the school enables all students to have equal access to continuity of education.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THIS POLICY**

The Curriculum Committee will, in consultation with the Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy. It will be reviewed at least every 2 years to ensure it reflects current practice.

Member of staff with Lead Responsibility for this policy:	Liz Wolfenden + Wellbeing Group
Date for Review:	May 2027