



TRINITY CATHOLIC COLLEGE & SIXTH FORM

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Adopted by: Trinity Catholic College & Sixth Form
Date Approved by Governors: January 2018
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"An inclusive learning community living out Gospel values"

POLICY AGAINST BULLYING

Rationale

“An inclusive learning community living out gospel values”

(Mission statement)

We wish to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear. Every student has the right to be safe and happy in school, and be protected if s/he is feeling vulnerable.

Aim

Our main aim is to raise levels of consciousness and awareness so that:

- a) there is an agreed definition of bullying
- b) everyone in the school community feels responsible for combating bullying and realises that bullying is always unacceptable
- c) victims feel protected and supported
- d) those engaged in bullying change their attitudes as well as their actual behaviour

Guidelines

A) Definition of Bullying

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.

It may be verbal, physical or psychological.

It is necessarily a repetitive action, which causes distress not only at the time of each ‘attack’ but also by the threat of future ‘attacks’.

It is characterised by the dominance of the powerful over the powerless in whatever context.

It can be short-term or continue over time.

It can be overt or subtle.

It can be perpetrated by an individual or a group.

Bullying can take many forms:

- name calling
- cyberbullying
- excluding from groups
- pushing / shoving, hitting / kicking
- making fun of people, being rude, spreading rumours
- saying unpleasant things about people’s family and friends
- taking and breaking property
- blackmail
- threatening
- demanding money
- following people
- unwanted physical contact
- nasty gestures
- sending to ‘Coventry’
- Texting
- E-Mailing

B) All are Responsible for the Prevention of Bullying and the Promotion of Non-bullying behaviour

1. we recognise that all adults in the school are role models for the students in the way we behave towards each other and to students is particularly important in terms of providing non-bullying role models. Therefore, as adults we must:
 - ◆ Show respect for every student as an individual
 - ◆ 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
 - ◆ Avoid reference to another members of the family ('just like your sister')
 - ◆ Never give students ammunition to use against each other.
2. Student awareness about bullying is raised by:
 - a. the PSHE/Citizenship programme which incorporates topics relevant to the issues surrounding bullying. The programme ranges from work on friendships, relationships, stereotyping and increasing self-esteem to the explicit exploration of the nature of the bully and bullying, advice on what to do if bullied, and promoting collective responsibility in facing the bullies.
 - b. Workshops organised for the new Year 7 intake
 - c. Administering confidential questionnaires to establish the extent of bullying in the school and to gauge the students' attitudes to the problem
 - d. Using the forum of the School Council to discuss draft anti-bullying policy statements and any other relevant issues suggested by the students. Use of anti-bullying student council group to support pupils.
 - e. Organise one-off external groups/visitors to present on anti-bullying to whole year groups

C) Victims Should Feel Protected and Supported

It is important not to think in stereotypes as it is then possible to miss incidents. Bullies and victims do not come in standard shapes and sizes.

Some children may become temporary bullies after a traumatic event in their life. Others become '**chronic**' bullies because they:

- ◆ Like the feeling of power
- ◆ Are 'spoilt' and expect everyone to do what they say
- ◆ Feel insecure, inadequate, humiliated
- ◆ Have been abused in some way
- ◆ Are scapegoats or are bullied at home
- ◆ Are under pressure to succeed at all times
- ◆ Don't fit in with other students
- ◆ Feel no sense of accomplishments.

Bullies tend to:

- ◆ Have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control
- ◆ Lack empathy; they cannot imagine what the victim feels
- ◆ Lack guilt; they rationalise that the victim somehow 'deserves' the bullying treatment

Bullies pick on vulnerable students, but it is difficult to judge in advance who might be seen as vulnerable. Some victims may seem no different to other students. The 'difference' may be a notional one used by the bully to justify the bullying.

However, **victims may be students who**

- ◆ Are new to the class or school
- ◆ Are different in appearance, speech or background from other students
- ◆ Suffer from low self-esteem (this may be a cause or an effect of bullying)
- ◆ Demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when bullied e.g. tantrums, loss of control
- ◆ Are more nervous or anxious

All of these are only possibilities, not predictions of victimisation. The victim may be the student who is in the wrong place at the wrong time, and who reacts wrongly.

We must be alert to the behaviour of all students. It is important to be watchful and observe the social relationships between the students in the classroom during lessons as well as outside the classroom, especially during breaks and lunchtime.

Students that are being bullied may show changes in behaviour. They may

- ◆ Become shy, nervous and withdrawn
- ◆ Feign illness or cling to adults
- ◆ Be frequently absent
- ◆ Have damaged clothes or property
- ◆ Show changes in their work patterns
- ◆ Lack concentration and do poorly in school work
- ◆ Truant
- ◆ Give improbable excuses for any of the above

Speaking out. Victims don't want to tell that they are being bullied because:

- ◆ Of the fear of reprisals
- ◆ Of the shame and humiliation suffered
- ◆ They don't want to publicise their unpopularity
- ◆ They are too confused or upset
- ◆ Seeking help might confirm the taunts of being a baby / stupid etc
- ◆ Of low self-esteem and therefore the belief "it's my lot in life"
- ◆ Of no confidence in adults' ability to help
- ◆ Of the unwritten code about telling tales among the peer group

Consequently, it is vital that at Trinity, the ethos prevails that anyone who is being bullied or who has witnessed bullying taking place needs to tell and not to think that s/he is telling tales. Not telling protects the bully and gives the message that it can continue, perhaps bullying others too. **Secrecy and silence nurture bullying.** It is, therefore, important that students who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action taken will be swift but sensitive to their concerns.

Who to tell. There are many people that students can tell if bullying occurs. This ensures that everyone should be able to choose someone s/he can relate to: parents, a friend, Form Tutor, subject teacher, Pastoral Team Leaders, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, lunchtime supervisor, the school nurse. The school makes use of Toooot online recording for bullying incidents

Tootoot.

Students can use tootoot to report anything ranging from issues of bullying and cyber bullying, to questions about homework or worries about a friend.

Staff can respond and manage this report easily using our powerful case-management features, building up a chronology from start to finish.

PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH INCIDENTS

Do not ignore any incident of bullying that you have witnessed or that has been reported to you. Bullying which is unchecked, and which teachers seem to condone by ignoring, affects not only those immediately involved but the school on general.

If a student tells you that s/he is being bullied, take him/her seriously. Ask him/her to tell you as much as possible about what is happening and ask him/her to write it down if s/he can. Reassure him/her that something will be done, but that it is necessary to tell either his/her form tutor, his/her Pastoral Team Leader, the Deputy or the Head. If you can, take him/her to see the appropriate person yourself who will investigate further and follow the procedures outlined below.

If a student reports that he or she knows of someone being bullied, take them seriously. Praise him/her for acting responsibly and then follow the same procedures as above.

If you witness an incident you should:

- ◆ Remember to avoid a confrontational approach yourself
- ◆ Establish the identity of those involved
- ◆ If a particularly aggressive situation has taken place, separate those involved. At this stage you may not always know who is the victim and who the bully. (you may need to take them to the main reception from where Pastoral Team Leader/Leadership team link can be contacted)
- ◆ Reassure the victim – don't make him/her feel inadequate or foolish
- ◆ Make it plain to the bully that bullying is unacceptable
- ◆ Report the incident immediately to:
 - The form tutor (if all involved are in the same class);
 - The Pastoral Team Leader (if those involved are in the same year)
 - A senior member of staff if the severity of the case warrants attention at this level

STAGE 1 - Getting the facts straight

Apart from the written statements that may already exist, all involved will be interviewed individually.

STAGE 2 - Making amends

The bully needs to be encouraged to see things from the victim's point of view and to carry out corrective action to improve relationships.

Making a contract not to engage in this behaviour or setting particular targets may be appropriate.

If the victim is in agreement, a meeting with the teacher or counsellor victim and bully should take place where the bully apologises to the victim and a modus vivendi is agreed.

STAGE 3 - Contacting parents

Contact parents of both victim and bully as quickly as possible and tell them what happened and the steps taken so far. Parents of victims are likely to be upset and anxious to protect their child. Working together to identify ways of tackling the bully is the goal. Parents of bullies may likewise be upset, anxious and defensive. Here it is important to try and establish a clear picture of events and to stress the unacceptability of the behaviour. A meeting in school may be appropriate at this stage and certainly if the incident was particularly serious or was a repeat.

It should be made very clear to parents and students that there is no place at school for those who bully repeatedly.

STAGE 4 - Keeping records

Full records must be kept in pastoral files.

- Record on Tootoot if applicable

STAGE 5 - Follow up

Action taken may differ according to circumstances. For example:

- The victim may need support through sessions with the school counsellor, or if his/her academic progress has been affected, s/he may need the intervention of the Pastoral Leaders.
- The bully may need to be punished but also he or she may need to see the counsellor to help modify the behaviour. He or she may need to be encouraged to take part in positive activities.
- Record on Tootoot

Both bully and victim will need to be monitored over a period of time.

CONCLUSION

This Policy Against Bullying should always be considered in close association with the School Mission Statement, and the Behaviour Policy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Action Against Bullying: Drawing from Experience – the Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1992

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