

## Introduction

Bullying is rarely an issue in the school but the staff is aware that children can easily be hurt (both mentally and physically) and are always vigilant in their supervision. This policy should ensure that bullying never becomes a problem at St. Christopher's and should be read in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding policy and Behaviours and Sanctions Policy.

It is the policy of the school that circumstances and behaviour which may lead to, or encourage, bullies or bullying be actively and consistently monitored and that an atmosphere should exist which allows all members of the school community to live at ease together. Our aim is that every child should feel safe, can lean and play freely and enjoy being with other children. The foundations of mutual respect, fairness and dignity are laid down by the Religious ethos of the school, the Religious education in our curriculum and the pastoral care provided by the school. Every child has a voice and any emotional concerns are considered fully. Children are made aware of how to recognise bullying, knowing they can pass on any concerns and be confident that the matter will be dealt with fairly and appropriately

## Definition and Types of Bullying

There are many definitions of bullying, e.g bullying is behaviour that is generally repeated making others feel uncomfortable or threatened and can be intentional or unintentional but most consider it to be: deliberately hurtful (including aggression); repeated often over a period of time and difficult for victims to defend themselves against. Bullying can be emotional, physical, verbal, religious, cultural, racial, sexual/sexist, homophobic, special educational needs, disability and cyber (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and e-mail). However, as our children are not allowed to bring in mobile phones to school or allowed access to the internet without close supervision and only within lesson times, there is little if any opportunity for cyber bullying at our school. The dangers of Cyber bullying are addressed through the ICT curriculum and the PSHE program. However, as a school we wish to make parents aware that cyber bullying can take place off the school premises, through internet chat rooms, the use of e-mails, text messages and mobile telephones (phone calls, photos and video recording). We relay useful resources to parents through our regular school newsletter. It is important that both children and staff are made aware of the deep psychological damage that bullying can cause.

## Teachers Responsibilities

All teachers have a responsibility to make sure that bullying does not exist in the school. Academic staff, not support staff, are responsible for all playground supervision and pastoral care.

It is intended to ensure, by every means possible that:

- Every child in our care has the chance of peace, happiness and fulfilment at school;
- No child suffers mental or physical abuse from another child;
- No child threatens another with a wilful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten them;
- No child becomes lonely or withdrawn because of isolation due to other children's behaviour towards them.
- Staff have training from the school nurse and outside agencies (e.g. police who deal in On-line child protection safety)

Children's behaviour to each other is monitored by:

- Ensuring adequate supervision at all times;
- Making sure that all hidden corners and toilets are visited frequently;
- Encouraging the children to be non-aggressive and to reward good behaviour;
- Making sure that all children will have confidence that every teacher will listen and take notice; children need to know that something is being done about their concerns;
- Ensuring that everyone knows that "bullying" is taken seriously and that it is not acceptable in any form in school.
- Ensuring that everyone knows that there are certain procedures which are immediately put into operation when and if bullying takes place.
- Informing and involving the bully's and victim's parents if bullying is repeated.

All incidents will be recorded and sympathy, support, care and attention offered.

### **Procedure**

1. The child, who is feeling bullied, should first approach the duty teacher to state the problem; most complaints can be solved at this level.
2. If the complaint is a serious one, or a repeated incident, the form tutor will be informed and involved; in cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff – see Behaviour Policy. There should be few incidents which go beyond this stage; however, the complaint will be investigated, action taken and the parents informed as appropriate. Parents may be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem. In extreme cases, if necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted. Any bullying will be investigated and must be stopped without delay. Support will be provided to make the bully aware of his/her unacceptable behaviour

and encouragement given to change their behaviour by involvement of the form tutor. Any children experiencing bullying will be supported by staff, including the form tutor, to rebuild confidence and self-esteem.

3. Ultimately, for persistent breaches of the bullying code, the Headmistress will become involved and parents of all children affected will be included in discussions to overcome the problem. At this stage the school will determine whether the incidents are serious and persistent enough to warrant reporting the bullying to the local SCB.
4. If, despite all efforts, including discussions with parents, the problem cannot be overcome, the School reserves the right to invoke the appropriate sanctions in accordance with the School Policy on Warnings, Temporary and Permanent Exclusion of Pupils, including the Financial Implications.

### Signs of Bullying

There are signs to look out for when a child is being bullied and each member of staff should be aware of these signs and if they are apparent, the duty teacher and form tutor should be advised and the above procedure initiated.

Signs to look out for amongst children;

- (a) Sudden stuttering or stammering
- (b) They request to be driven to School and are frightened to walk
- (c) A sudden change of routine becomes apparent e.g they stop eating
- (d) Truancy/ Do not want to go to School
- (e) Cry themselves to sleep/have nightmares
- (f) Run away from home
- (g) Attempts or threatens suicide
- (h) They feel ill in the morning
- (i) School and homework deteriorate
- (j) Return home with clothes or books damaged/ Possessions go missing
- (k) They become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- (l) Injuries, e.g. bruising not easy to explain
- (m) Afraid to use mobile phone (at home) or the internet (at home or school)
- (n) They bully other children or their sisters/brothers
- (o) Lack confidence and become anxious
- (p) Start stealing or asking for money
- (q) Won't say what's wrong
- (r) They give unlikely excuses for any (a) to (q) above

Whilst the above signs may be a result of other issues, potential bullying should be considered and looked into.

### **Aims of Anti-Bullying Policy**

A positive approach is taken to prevent bullying through our Behaviour and PSHE Policies.

We have zero tolerance towards bullying and a major aim is to ensure the school is free of bullying.

Pupils and parents are made aware of St Christopher's expectations and by working together we aim to maintain a bully-free environment.

Parents and pupils are made fully aware of St Christopher's approach towards bullying and should know what action to take if it arises.

Pupils and parents will be supported when bullying is reported

The Advisory Board and all staff should know the St Christopher's policy towards bullying, and follow the Procedure, if any form of bullying needs reporting.

### **Final Outcomes**

Bullies will be asked to apologise genuinely and if possible the pupils will be reconciled.

Since other consequences may arise, the positive behaviour policy will be explained along with the sanctions that may be applied, as stated in the school policy on Warnings, Suspensions and Expulsions.

Once incidents have been investigated and appropriate action taken, they will be monitored to ensure the bullying has stopped.

### **Prevention**

St Christopher's ethos helps to maintain the atmosphere to prevent bullying through high expectations on standards of behaviour.

As our Behaviour Policy states, we encourage and support children to treat one another with respect and kindness. We widely acknowledge good behaviour towards others and where appropriate reward it. The Christian values embedded in the school's ethos do much to create the family atmosphere and friendly climate within St Christopher's. Children are encouraged to be responsible citizens and learn from any mistakes made, if their behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable.

The Behaviour Policy makes it clear how we record and monitor inappropriate behaviour.

The School's aims to fulfil all the outcomes expected within 'Every Child Matters' and aims to support children to resolve conflicts between each other, wherever we can.

Targeted support is given for bullies to help them understand the impact of their behaviour on others, and to raise the self-esteem in such children.

Children are able to report bullying, anonymously if they wish by leaving a note in the confidential message box.

St Christopher's recognises the UK national Anti-Bullying Week to raise awareness of Bullying and how to deal with it. The theme is raised in Assemblies, through PSHE and during Circle and Form times at regular intervals.

Guidance :*Preventing and tackling Bullying October 2014*