

ST VINCENT DE PAUL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

“We are all here to learn and experience the love and teachings of Jesus
through the traditions of the Catholic Church”

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What is bullying?

“Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over time. Researchers define it as cruelty that occurs at least two or three times a month. It is not simply a confrontation between equals; there is always an imbalance of power between the bully and the bullied. Nor is it just physical aggression. Hitting, kicking, pushing or extortion, may be bullying at its most obvious, but it can be verbal, such as name calling and teasing, or more subtle and indirect, such as spreading rumours and excluding someone from social groups. Young people find mental and emotional bullying more hurtful and more difficult to deal with than direct physical assaults – name calling can have more damaging long term impact on a young person’s self esteem.” Times Educational Supplement – 18.10.02

In this document the terms “bullying” and “harassment” are considered to be interchangeable and equally as serious as each other.

In all cases of suspected bullying it is vital that staff act promptly and report incidents as soon as possible. Children have short memories and if they have witnessed an incident need to be questioned by the Headteacher or class teacher as soon as possible.

It is acknowledged that in a primary school many minor disagreements will take place between pupils on a daily basis. Our responsibility is to make sure that we can tell the difference between bullying and normal social interaction.

At St Vincent de Paul Catholic School we endeavour to:

- Develop positive relationships between all members of the community and a culture of respect and care.
- Identify at an early stage, pupils, who by their vulnerability may become victims of bullying.
- Give appropriate support to such pupils involving parents in any support plan.
- Identify at an early stage, any pupil whose behaviour suggests he/she may become a bully.
- Give appropriate support to such pupils involving parents in any support plan.
- Ensure that all members of staff are fully aware of vulnerable pupils and that appropriate strategies are in place to monitor and support these pupils.
- Work with appropriate outside agencies e.g. staff from the Behaviour Support Team, Educational Psychologists etc.

- Adhere to school guidelines to deal with incidents of bullying.

General Principles

The ultimate objective of this policy is to make sure that children feel able to tell someone and understand that they will be listened to sensitively when they have problems. Pupils need to know how a teacher or a member of the support team will react to their complaints; that they will be dealt with sympathetically and fairly. The message that being bullied is not their fault must also be reinforced. Parents must also feel able to approach the Headteacher if they think there is a problem and feel confident that their concerns will be addressed.

All disclosures of or suspicions of bullying behaviour must be treated seriously and

- be recorded in the behaviour management log (kept by the Headteacher)
- be reported to the class teacher (if the incident was witnessed by or reported to a member of the support team)
- be brought to the attention of the Headteacher or, in her absence, her Deputy as soon as possible after the alleged incident.

The person responsible for this reporting is the first witness (e.g. if an incident happens at lunchtime on the playground it will be an MSA or TA) whereas incidents which are noticed during lesson time will be reported by the class teacher or support assistant.

School Action

- Headteacher will consider the incident in the light of present circumstances and knowledge of previous incidents.
- Pupils may be interviewed to gain more information about the incident.
- Staff may be interviewed to gain more information about the incident.
- Parents of the victim will be contacted if the Headteacher believes that an act of bullying has taken place and/or the incident is of a serious nature.
- Parents of the child found to be showing bullying behaviour will be contacted and will be asked to support the school with any punitive action to be taken – loss of privileges etc
- ‘The way forward’ will be decided. This will include appropriate sanctions and a support programme for both the victim and the perpetrator.
- In cases of proven repeated incidents of bullying the Headteacher will consult the LEA/Diocese for advice regarding temporary and permanent exclusions.

Homophobic and Racist Bullying

Schools face a particular challenge in responding to homophobic and racist language which can be used casually and without thought for the hurt it may cause. Staff will work to ensure that pupils are aware that such language is offensive and will not be tolerated. Any pupil who fails to take heed of such direction will be challenged and appropriate sanctions will be implemented, including the recording of the incident. The school reinforces the stance taken by the leaders of all branches of the Christian faith and other faiths, that all forms of bullying are unacceptable.