

Anti-Bullying Policy

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy



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Bullying

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy every effort is made to ensure that bullying is dealt with quickly and efficiently. The following information sets out the school's attitude to bullying and ways in which we work to prevent it happening.

We believe that every pupil has the right not to be bullied, the right to tell an adult if someone or something is making them unhappy, the right to say "no" and mean it and the right to walk or run away without being seen as cowardly.

What is bullying?

Bullying behaviour is difficult to define, after some deliberation we have decided that the following definition effectively describes bullying.

Bullying behaviour causes distress to one or more persons, involves an imbalance of power, is persistent, targeted and is deliberately hostile or violent.

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy allegations of bullying are measured against this definition and, if the criteria for bullying are met, the incident is dealt with in accordance with this policy.

Bullying behaviour can consist of: verbal and non-verbal threats of violence, name calling, teasing, ignoring and shunning, incitement by others to commit an act of bullying, sexually or racially offensive remarks or behaviour, interfering with property, fighting, demanding money, property or favours with menace, vandalism, damaging another's effort or possessions, borrowing equipment without permission, invading someone else's privacy.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else.

Some features of cyberbullying are different from other forms of bullying: Cyberbullying can take place at any time and can intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe or personal. The audience can be very large and reached rapidly. The difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages means the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying. People who cyberbully may attempt to remain anonymous. This can be extremely distressing for those being bullied. The person cyberbullying may never be in the same physical space as their target.

Cyberbullying can take place both between peers and across generations; teachers have also been targets. Age or size are not important. Bystanders can also become accessories to the bullying; for example, by passing on a humiliating image. Some instances of cyberbullying are known to be unintentional. It can be the result of not thinking (something sent as a joke may be deeply upsetting or offensive to the recipient) or a lack of awareness of the consequences – for example saying something negative online about another pupil, or friend that they don't expect to be forwarded or viewed outside their immediate group.

The ICT coordinator is responsible for the co-ordination and implementation of cyberbullying prevention and response strategies in school and the PSHE coordinator for other types of bullying. A yearly antibullying event will be held and will address the following issues:-

1. Understanding and talking about bullying and cyberbullying
2. Updating existing policies and practices
3. Making reporting all types of bullying easier
4. Promoting the positive use of technology
5. Evaluating the impact of prevention activities

Generative artificial intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, pupils and

parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard.

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy recognises that AI has many uses to help pupils learn, but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real.

St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy will treat any use of AI to bully pupils in line with our Behaviour policy.

Signs and symptoms that may indicate bullying

At St Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Academy we encourage parents and staff to be aware that the following behaviours may indicate that there is a problem: unwillingness to go to school, requests to be taken to and/or collected from school, school work deteriorates, lost or damaged property, withdrawn behaviour, bed wetting, having nightmares, unexplained minor injuries, losing pocket money, giving unlikely and unreasonable excuses for any of the above.

Parents and anti-bullying

We believe that good communication between school and home is extremely important, whether it be in person, by letter or telephone. We endeavour to reassure parents that something is being done, that they will be kept informed and that there are ways they can help their child.

School Response to Bullying

- It is important that all children know we listen and will provide immediate support
- All incidents are investigated as soon as possible by the staff member they are reported to.
- When an incident occurs the child is allowed to talk about their problems
- Allegations of bullying are measured against this policy's definition of bullying
- Where bullying is identified, a written report is made as soon as possible in the school welfare book, located in the headteacher's office.
- The long term needs of all the children involved in an incident are identified and where necessary appropriate positive strategies and support programmes are put in place by member of staff. The headteacher decides the person best placed to provide support.
- The headteacher monitors and evaluates the process so that emerging problems and patterns are identified.
- We strive to ensure that staff responses are positive and we work to encourage positive models of behaviour.
- Following up an incident takes place at an agreed time. The follow up is designed to be reassuring and purposeful and is used to identify further actions and changes in strategy.

Responding to Cyberbullying

As well as using the existing antibullying policy and procedure the following steps need to be taken

- Make sure the person knows not to retaliate or return the message
- Ask the person to think about what they have in the public domain
- Keep relevant evidence for investigation
- Take steps for prevention
- Take action to contain the incident when content has been circulated

Pupil's response to bullying

"What can I do if I'm being bullied?"

Try these suggestions

- Tell an adult (parent, teacher, friend) someone you can trust
- Try not to appear upset however hard that is
- Tell yourself you don't deserve to be bullied
- Fighting back is never the answer
- Get together with friends and say NO to the bully
- If you're in danger get away, don't worry about your possessions, your safety is more

- important
- Try to keep away, don't worry about your possessions, your safety is more important
- Try to keep away from places where bullying happens
- Remember there's safety in numbers – stay with other people whenever you can
- Practise walking quickly and confidently (even if you don't feel it)
- Practise being assertive (in front of the mirror is a good place to start)

“What can I do if I see someone being bullied?”

“What if someone I know is a bully?”

- Don't **just** stand by and watch
- Help if you can
- Show your disapproval – don't be afraid of letting others know you think bullying is wrong
- Tell a teacher or another trusted adult. Don't worry if you think you're “telling tales”, some children are too frightened to tell
- Be supportive and offer help to someone you think is being bullied
- Remember we're not all the same – try to find out more about what makes people different
- Be careful about teasing – your “teasing” may be “hurting” someone else
- If you think you may be doing something that might be bullying, ask someone about it
- Remember to treat others as you would like them to treat you

Suggested guidelines for parents

If your child is being bullied:

- Encourage them to talk, but be patient as they may be distressed, so you can find out all the facts
- Listen and try to avoid interrupting
- Be sympathetic
- Stay calm
- Don't dwell on sensitive issues
- Reassure them that you will do something about it
- Tell them it happens to most people at some point
- Try to help them to see the difficulty as a problem that can be solved peacefully
- Ask them for ways they would like to make changes
- Help them to develop ways to cope e.g. walking away, saying no, ignoring, talking and picking them up from school
- Talk about nicknames and name calling and why it is often upsetting
- Talk to the school
- Take an interest in your child's school life and friends
- Keep a written record of bullying
- Try to keep everything in perspective

If your child is being a bully:

- Encourage them to talk, find out what is happening and why
- Stay calm
- Let them know that bullying is wrong
- Help them to understand the hurt they are causing
- Explain to them how they should be behaving
- A child who is bullying is often having difficulties forming appropriate friendships – help them to find ways to make friends
- Tell the school