

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School



Anti -Bullying Policy

The Local Governing Committee of St Oswald's Catholic Primary School adopted this Policy

Autumn 2023 and it will be reviewed Autumn 2024

Signed  (Chair)

Anti-bullying

Definition

Bullying can be described as being 'a deliberate act done to cause distress solely in order to give a feeling of power, status or other gratification to the bully. Bullying can range from ostracising, name calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical intimidation, assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident that casts a shadow over a child's life, or a series of such incidents.'

Staff, parents and children at St Oswald's work together to create a happy, caring and safe learning environment. Bullying, whether verbal, physical or indirect, is not tolerated. It is everyone's responsibility to try to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents quickly and effectively.

Research has shown, repeatedly, that the extent of bullying in schools is greatly underestimated.

Bullying may be brought to the attention of any member of staff by the victim(s), their friend(s), their parent(s) or other interested people.

Aims

- To provide a safe, caring environment for the whole school community, especially the children in our care.
- To instil in children that bullying is unacceptable and that reports of bullying will be taken seriously, recorded and acted upon.
- To reassure children that they will be listened to and will know that it is alright to tell.
- To heed parents and keep them informed of actions taken in response to a complaint.
- A full investigation will follow any report of bullying with detailed records kept of incidents, reports and complaints.
- To take appropriate action, including exclusion in cases of severe bullying.
- To monitor incidents of bullying.

Strategy for dealing with bullying

In dealing with bullying, staff at St Oswald's follow these fundamental guidelines.

- Never ignore suspected bullying.
- Do not make premature assumptions.
- Listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils with the same version does not mean they are telling the truth
- Adopt a problem-solving approach that moves pupils forward from self-justification
- Follow up proven cases to check bullying has not returned
- Keep detailed records.

Strategies have been introduced at St Oswald's to reduce bullying. These strategies cover raising awareness about bullying and the Anti-bullying policy, increased understanding for victims and teaching pupils to manage relationships in a constructive way.

Staff should apply one or more of the strategies below, depending on the perceived seriousness of the situation. The emphasis should always be one of showing a caring and listening approach.

In response to a complaint of bullying, the discipline procedures of St Oswald's should be followed, with staff making a full investigation, keeping detailed records and applying sanctions as necessary.

The procedures should be followed by the Headteacher and the special needs co-ordinator.

1. Discuss the nature of the bullying with the 'victim' at length, recording all the facts. This will require patience and understanding.
2. Identify the bully/bullies and any witnesses.
3. Interview witnesses
4. Discuss the incident(s) with the alleged bully/ies. Confront them with the allegations and ask them to tell the truth about the situation/incident. Make it clear that this is only an investigation at this stage.
5. If the bully owns up, make it understood that bullying is not accepted in St Oswald's and what effect it has on the education of the victim and the rest of the children in the class/school. Apply sanctions relevant to the type of bullying.
6. If the allegation of bullying is denied, investigate further. If there is sufficient evidence that the bullying occurred apply relevant sanctions.
7. Hold separate discussions with parents of the bully and victim.
8. Sanctions for bullying include:
 - Warning given and parents informedIf bullying behaviour reoccurs:
 - Withdrawal from favoured activities, for example school visit
 - Loss of break time
 - Barred from school during lunchtimes
 - Fixed period of exclusion from school
9. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the victim with a mentor/named person monitoring and observing at break times and lunchtimes, and through discussion to make sure there is no repetition.
10. Provide a Pastoral Support Programme for the bully. This will include a Behaviour Support Programme and opportunities in circle time or groups for the child/ren to discuss relationships, feelings and the effect bullying can have on individuals.

In order to reduce incidents of bullying and recognise bullies, at St Oswald's, all staff watch for early signs of distress in pupils. We listen, believe, act.

School councillors are there as a contact point, if they feel they cannot tell an adult. These are children from Y2 –Y6 who sit on the Children's Council.

There are posters on notice boards advertising how children can report bullying and dissuading children from bullying.

Where possible, St Oswald's will support pupils who have been bullied, especially on their way to or from school, by pupils from another school or by other persons.

The following steps should be taken.

- Talk to pupil(s) and parents involved from the other school
- Talk to the Head Teacher of the other school whose pupils are bullying off school premises.
- Talk to the police about problems on the local streets.
- Talk to the local transport company, if bullying is occurring on school buses.
- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle bullying situations.

Bullying directed towards race, gender, sexual orientation or disability

St Oswald's will not tolerate bullying against anyone because of his/her race, gender, sexual orientation or disability. The school will take preventative action to reduce the likelihood of bullying incidents of this nature occurring. Stereotypical views are challenged and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others, whether arising from race, gender, ability or disability.

Racial Bullying / Harassment

Racial bullying will not be tolerated in St Oswald's and will be treated severely. If a child receives verbal abuse, physical threats or attacks, or if a pupil brings racist literature into school, incites others to behave in a racist way or writes racist insults, the strategies in the Policy for Education for Ethnic Diversity will be implemented.

A full investigation will be carried out, recording incidents in an incident file and on LA forms. St Oswald's has a duty to develop children's understanding of ethnic diversity issues and explore racial tolerance in PSHE and Citizenship lessons and in Religious Education lessons. St Oswald's guarantees confidentiality and support for those being bullied. Racial incidents are reported to the LA as required.

Sexual Bullying

Sexual bullying has an impact on both genders. A sexual assault will lead to the exclusion of the perpetrator from St Oswald's. Sexual bullying is characterised by abusive name-calling, comments about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty, inappropriate and uninvited touching, sexual innuendoes and propositions (i.e. sexual harassment) and, in its extreme form, sexual assault or rape.

St Oswald's strategies to deal with sexual bullying include:

- Recording incidents in an incident file
- Developing understanding of gender relations
- Exploring sexism and sexual bullying in PSHE lessons
- Using single sex groups to discuss sensitive issues
- Ensuring the school site is well supervised, especially in areas where children might be vulnerable.
- Implementing appropriate discipline procedures as appropriate

Sexual Orientation

Sexual bullying can also be related to sexual orientation. Children do not have to be homosexual or bi-sexual to experience such bullying.

Strategies to deal with such bullying include:

- Recording incidents in an incident file
- Awareness by staff that homophobic bullying can occur
- Challenging homophobic language and explore pupils' understanding – they might not understand the impact
- Guaranteeing confidentiality and support for those being bullied
- Implement discipline procedures if the bullying warrants it

Cyberbullying

Cyber bullying includes sending or posting harmful or cruel text or images using the internet or other digital communication devices.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

1. Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified and provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied, and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
2. Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation. Discuss this with parents and DSL.
3. Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. Where cyberbullying has taken place in school this may include looking at use of the school systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses.
4. Work with the individuals to assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation.
5. Where an individual can be identified and the bullying has taken place in school, the school will ensure that appropriate sanctions are implemented to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help or support they may need. Where the cyberbullying has taken place outside of school, staff will work with the parents to encourage sanctions and support. Cyberbullying outside of school is the responsibility of the parents while schools endeavour to educate the children about their actions online.
6. Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
7. Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online.

Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities might not be able to articulate experiences as fluently as other children. However, they are often at greater risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, and usually about their specific disability.

St Oswald's makes sure the behaviour of staff does not trigger bullying unintentionally. They should avoid undue attention towards SEN children compared with others, and should not make comments based on pupils' appearance or perceived character e.g boys playing football poorly should not be told they play like girls.

We try to make classroom activities and lessons sensitive to such children's needs. We teach assertiveness and other social skills and teach victims to say 'No' or to get help.

If the bullying is serious. St Oswald's undertakes a full investigation, including a full discussion with witnesses, recording incidents in the incident book and contacting parents. Discipline procedures are implemented.

High attainers, gifted and talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Teachers should treat this as seriously as any other type of bullying.