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St Mary's RC Primary School: Anti Bullying Policy

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## **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

City of Edinburgh Council is strongly committed to providing a safe environment for all people in its educational establishments. We are committed to ensuring positive relationships. Bullying, prejudice and discrimination are never acceptable and children, young people and staff have the right to learn and work in a safe, fair and secure environment.

This school procedure follows the City of Edinburgh Council's Communities and Families Procedure on 'Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice amongst Children and Young People' (2020) which is based on '*Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*'. It has been written with reference to the Scottish Catholic Education Service Equality Policy for schools and in consultation with representatives of the Archdiocese of St. Andrew's and Edinburgh.

As a Catholic school, the values of the Gospel permeate all aspects of school life. The children / young people grow to recognise that every person is unique, made in God's image and likeness. God's message of love, tolerance and respect for the individual is reinforced within our teaching and is central to collective acts of worship.

The emotional health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff is essential for our children to have the best start to life and to have successful life chances. We are committed to developing positive relationships between all in the school community, children, young people, staff and parents. Our core practices are the 4 Rs: Relationships, Rights Respecting, Resilience, Restorative.

We are a Rights Respecting School. This procedure covers the following articles of the UNCRC:

- Article 2 – You have the right to protection against discrimination.
- Article 19 – You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- Article 29 – You have the right to an education which develops your personality and your respect for other's rights and the environment.

This procedure has been revised and updated in consultation with staff, parent and pupil groups, including our Pupil Council, Parent Council and Equalities Working Group.

**\*Please also read our school's Equalities Policy\***

## **Our values and beliefs**

We are a Catholic school. Our school has the life and teaching of Jesus Christ as its foundation. Through the ethos of the school we will endeavour to work with the children so that they will come to know Jesus Christ as a person and a friend who guides them through life. We work towards helping each person in the school community to grow in fullness to develop, mature and fulfil their potential.

- All people are made in the image and likeness of God, and are deserving of dignity and respect
- All learners are of equal value.
- We recognise and respect difference.
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.
- All pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included. St Mary's supports every young person to achieve and attain their very best.
- We actively foster good relations between diverse groups and individuals, respect individuality and celebrate diversity.
- We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying, prejudice and discrimination. We challenge inequality and promote inclusive, nurturing environments.
- We recognise the effects that bullying, prejudice and discrimination can have on a child or young person's feelings of worth, on their health and wellbeing and on their school-work.
- We provide opportunities for success through a variety of curricular and extra-curricular options and pathways.

- We emphasise the importance of forgiveness
- We encourage creativity and support our young people to build the skills and resilience they need for the future.
- We have the courage to aspire to the very best we can be. We belong to our school and we are very proud of our school and learning community.
- We use restorative approaches to repair and strengthen relationships between staff and pupils within our whole school community

### What do we mean by bullying?

Bullying behaviours can take many forms. Examples of bullying behaviours include:

- Name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening.
- Ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours.
- Hitting, tripping, kicking.
- Taking and damaging belongings
- Sending an abusive text, email or instant message, or posting an abusive comment on a social networking site (online or cyber-bullying).
- Targeting someone because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.

## DEFINITIONS

**Bullying.** The Council has adopted the definition in Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (Scottish Government, 2017):

"Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online".  
(Respect for All, 2017)

**Bullying behaviour** is a more useful phrase than 'bully'. The term bully labels an individual with a fixed trait, whereas bullying behaviour can be transient and temporary and can be changed/corrected.

**Person being bullied/picked on/isolated or person on the receiving end of bullying behaviour** are more useful phrases than 'victim'. The label victim can be disempowering. The term victim labels an individual with a fixed trait whereas bullying experiences can be temporary. There can also be a complex interplay between those involved and there may not be a clear beginning and end.

**Online bullying or cyberbullying** is bullying behaviour that takes place via mobile phone or over the internet through email, messaging, social networking websites or online gaming and should be taken as seriously as any other form of bullying

### What is not bullying behaviour?

*"You don't have to like me...agree with me...or enjoy the same things I do. But you do have to respect me."* (respectme, 2018). In order to work effectively, positively and diligently to prevent and respond to all forms of bullying and allegations of bullying behaviour, it is important to distinguish between what is and is not bullying behaviour.

Anyone can make a mistake or behave in a way that is inappropriate but not every action that has a negative impact on someone else is 'bullying behaviour'. Part of our responsibility and duty is to support our children and young people to develop resilience. We cannot condone the overuse or misuse of the term 'bullying' or react disproportionately to children and young people's behaviours. To do so would be counterproductive.

We know that children and young people will fall out and disagree with each other as they form and build relationships. This is a normal part of development and most children and young people have the ability to bounce back from these experiences. It is important to discuss how they feel and help them to develop resilience to manage their relationships. This is in line with guidance from respectme. *"We should always remember that children will tease each other, fall in and out with each other, have arguments, stop talking to each other and disagree about what they like and*

*don't like. This is a normal part of growing up and should be distinguished from bullying. However, in an environment where this behaviour is left unchecked, it can lead to bullying, making those being bullied feel afraid, uncomfortable and unsafe in their environment.” (respectme, 2018).*

Furthermore, bullying behaviour can sometimes be unsuccessful as bullying behaviours can sometimes have no impact. In this case the person the behaviours were directed at has not been bullied but the behaviour still needs to be challenged appropriately and should not be ignored. For example, the use of prejudicial language, which may have no impact on the person it is aimed at, must still be challenged, as the language itself is unacceptable and could affect other people.

respectme state “Bullying can affect people in different ways and this should be taken into consideration. If you are unsure if behaviour is bullying, look at the effect it is having on the child or young person. If they are unable to respond effectively and regain their sense of self and control in the situation, adults need to intervene to help restore it. Keeping the focus on impact reduces the emphasis on issues of persistence and intent. What you do about bullying is more important than how you define it.” (2018)

Incidents may be perceived as bullying when they are, in fact, criminal in nature. It is important to ensure that criminal offences such as hate crime, child sexual exploitation and gender-based violence are clearly distinguished from bullying. There are laws to protect children and young people from this very serious behaviour.

## **Discrimination, Prejudice-based Bullying and the Equality Act 2010**

Bullying behaviour can often be rooted in prejudice and discrimination due to difference or a perceived difference. We are committed to challenging discrimination, prejudice-based bullying and language, and to fulfilling our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out rights which include legal protection from discrimination related to any of the nine protected characteristics: **disability; race; sex; pregnancy/maternity; religion/belief; sexual orientation; gender re-assignment; age; marriage/civil partnership**

Note: In relation to the education of children and young people, the protected characteristics of age and marriage/civil partnership are not included.

We recognise that children and young people can also experience bullying in relation to: asylum seeker or refugee status; body image; being care experienced; social or economic status; young carer responsibilities; imprisonment of parents/carers, siblings, or other family members.

We recognise that children and young people can experience disadvantage, prejudice or discrimination because of any of these individual factors or a combination of factors.

### **Hate incident or hate crime**

A bullying incident is a hate incident if the victim or anyone else thinks it was carried out because of hostility or prejudice based on actual or perceived disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity. If the incident is a criminal offence and the offender targeted the victim because of their prejudice or hostility based on any of these characteristics, this is a hate crime. All hate crimes should be reported to Police Scotland through the School Link Officer. In the case of hate incidents, the designated member of staff / Equality Co-ordinator should seek advice from the School Link Officer.

## **Responsibilities and Reporting bullying, prejudice and discrimination incidents**

### **Headteachers are:**

- responsible for the introduction and implementation of this procedure. However, all staff, all pupils and their parents/carers must play an active part in following the guidance and putting it into practice. Teachers and support staff are expected to be pro-active, to treat all allegations seriously and to refer reports of incidents to the Equalities Co-ordinator / designated member of the senior leadership team. The incident is recorded accurately with future actions detailed.

### **The Equalities Co-ordinator, in consultation with the Head Teacher, is required to:**

- ensure that all allegations are reported and recorded rigorously
- monitor SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities module reports regularly, at least termly

- monitor and report annually on the implementation of this procedure
- supervise the review and updating of this procedure at least every three years

**Pupils are asked to:**

- report all incidents and suspected incidents of any type of bullying, discrimination or prejudice that they experience to a member of staff, where it is safe for them to do so
- report all incidents and suspected incidents of bullying, discrimination and prejudice that they see to a member of staff, where it is safe for them to do so
- support each other and to seek help from a member of staff, to ensure that everyone feels safe and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.
- if they don't feel able to speak to a member of staff, they can post their concern in one of our bubble time boxes, ask a friend to speak on their behalf or contact an external organisation for advice and support, e.g. Childline.

**All school staff are required to:**

- be pro-active in implementing the procedure
- treat all allegations and observation of bullying, discrimination and prejudiced behaviour or language seriously
- seek to address incidents, where appropriate
- record any incidents on a Wellbeing Concern form
- inform the Equalities Co-ordinator / designated member of staff of all incidents

**Parents/carers are asked to:**

- be aware of *respectme*, Scotland's Anti-bullying Service booklet – Bullying Behaviour: A Guide for Parents and Carers ([available at http://respectme.org.uk/resources/publications/](http://respectme.org.uk/resources/publications/))
- work collaboratively and respectfully with staff, children and young people and other parents/carers where appropriate to help ensure bullying, discrimination and prejudice cannot thrive
- speak to any member of staff (the class teacher, school administrator or member of senior leadership team) if they have any concerns about bullying, discrimination and prejudice experienced by their child or by another child / children at the time of the incident or as soon as possible thereafter
- encourage their children to be positive members of our school community
- monitor closely their child's use of their mobile phone and the internet and to intervene if there is a suspicion that these are being used inappropriately
- understand that we seek to understand the experiences and address the needs of all children and young people who experience bullying, discrimination or prejudiced behaviour as well as those who present bullying, discrimination or prejudiced behaviour. We do this within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support.
- speak to the Head Teacher if their concerns continue following initial intervention
- be aware that they can contact a relevant external organisation for advice and support
- be aware of the school's complaints procedure and the Council's Advice and Conciliation Service and their rights with regard to these procedures

**PROMOTION OF EQUALITY**

All teaching and learning within a Catholic school is rooted in the teaching of the Church. As part of our work to promote equality, we aim to ensure that children are offered opportunities to develop their understanding of faith in practice and to:

- understand and celebrate diversity in all its forms;
- learn about equality and inclusion in a variety of curriculum areas (e.g. HWB, Science, RE, and Literacy);
- develop an understanding of global citizenship;
- understand the power of language particularly relating to verbal abuse due to race, disability or social standing;
- develop an understanding of their rights, the rights of others, and their responsibilities to each other;
- develop an understanding and appreciation of other religious beliefs and cultures;
- develop emotionally and intellectually with the personal qualities and attributes required to make a successful life in a diverse society.

#### **Through the Curriculum for Excellence, we:**

- Increase knowledge of children's rights and responsibilities as responsible citizens.
- Challenge stereotypes, bias and discrimination, including prejudice-based attitudes and language.
- Deliver an inclusive curriculum that reflects all identities: disability, religion/belief; asylum seeker or refugee status, being care experienced; social or economic status; young carer responsibilities; imprisonment of parents/carers, siblings, or other family members. This enables our children and young people to develop their sense of understanding and inclusion of others as well as seeing themselves reflected in the learning community.
- Provide age-appropriate reading materials and resources that positively reflect and represent diversity and reflect the protected characteristics, e.g. people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled people.
- Teach Critical Literacy.
- Build resilience and empathy in young people as confident individuals.
- Raise awareness about bullying and our Anti-Bullying Procedure across a range of school subjects.

#### **PREVENTION**

By promoting a positive school ethos, with a focus on rights, equalities and health and wellbeing, we hope to prevent bullying, prejudice and discrimination happening. For example:

- We update posters and use them to remind pupils that bullying, prejudice and discrimination are not acceptable and what to do if they or someone they know is being bullied or experiencing prejudice
- Our pupil Equalities Group actively supports the school's work on prevention of bullying, prejudice and discrimination
- Bullying, prejudice and discrimination and other equality-related issues are a standing item on the SLT meetings and our Pupil Council agenda.
- We carry out regular surveys and focus groups to evaluate ethos and health and wellbeing in the school
- The school holds diversity, anti-bullying projects to raise the profile of these issues. For example, during Anti Bullying Week, we raise awareness of what bullying looks like, how we can prevent it and what supports are available for pupils who experience bullying. We also hold anti-bullying assemblies and discuss bullying in key adult time and HWB lessons
- The Equalities group ensure that all the pupils are aware of and learn about their human rights through lessons, events, assemblies and displays. The Rights-Respecting values are being embedded in the school and so pupils are being empowered to become more active citizens and learners
- We work with other agencies and partners in health, police and the voluntary sector to promote a positive ethos. This includes working with organisations such as, 'Show Racism the Red Card'
- We have a successful buddying system to support transition to primary school
- Our staff receive regular training to increase their awareness and understanding of all forms of bullying, prejudice and discrimination as well as to develop skills in restorative practice
- We share good practice with our cluster and within our Diocese

- We use our public platforms to: share the vision, aims and values of the school promote the positive impact that the inclusive ethos of the school has outline key information for pupils, parents and carers on accessing support and help
- We use the Charter for Catholic schools to ensure that, through Church Teaching, we promote Social Justice and opportunity for all.

## **SUPPORT**

### **How we support pupils who are bullied or experience prejudice and discrimination**

We listen to the child or young person

- We reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling.
- We encourage them to talk about how they feel, find out what happened and who was involved
- We involve them in making choices about how the matter could be resolved
- We discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe
- We ask them to report any further incidents to us straight away
- We affirm that the bullying can be stopped and that we will persist with intervention until it does
- We say clearly what will happen next and that we will update them on progress
- When the incident has been resolved, we monitor and check that bullying has not started again

### **What happens next?**

- The teacher or member of staff who receives the report will record the incident on a Wellbeing Concern form and discuss next steps with the designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator.
- At all times, child protection procedures and/or Risk Management procedures should be followed, if necessary.
- In most cases, further investigation will be done by the designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator.
- Further investigation may involve:
  - Speaking with the children or young people involved, preserving confidentiality.
  - Speaking with children or young people or others who witnessed the incident, preserving confidentiality.
  - Speaking with parents (*after consultation with the child or young person*)
  - Seeking advice from partner services and relevant organisations
- In all cases where there may be criminal implications (e.g. sexual assault or hate crime), the designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will report this to Social Care Direct and or Police Scotland.
- In the case of hate incidents, the designated member of the senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will seek advice from Police Scotland.
- If it is found that bullying, prejudice or discrimination has taken place, we will take appropriate and proportionate action (see examples of possible actions below)
- If it is found that bullying, prejudice or discrimination has not taken place, we will speak with the child or young person who reported the incident and offer further support if needed
- At all times, we will update the child or young person who reported bullying, prejudice or discrimination

### **Our work with pupils who bully others or present prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes / behaviour**

A child or young person who is bullying someone else may not be doing this consciously but the impact of bullying, prejudice or discrimination is still felt and this is taken seriously. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour or present prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes / behaviour will be treated fairly and consistently using actions that are proportionate and appropriate to the age and stage of the child and to the incident (see below).

- We interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in the incident separately.
- We listen to their version of events and take time to discover the reasons for the behaviour.
- We talk to anyone who may have witnessed the incident.
- We reinforce the message that bullying, prejudice and discrimination are not acceptable, and that we expect it to stop.
- We address prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes that may be behind the behaviour
- We seek a commitment to stop bullying.
- We affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We consider consequences under our school's Positive Behaviour Management Procedure.
- We consider what support the pupil needs and whether other referrals are required, e.g. educational psychologist, counsellor.
- In all cases where there may be criminal implications (e.g. sexual assault or hate crime) we report this to Police Scotland.
- In the case of hate incidents, we seek advice from Police Scotland.
- We advise pupils responsible for bullying, prejudice or discrimination that we check to ensure that the behaviour stops.
- We contact the parents of the pupil(s) at an early stage, where appropriate.
- We follow up after incidents to check that the bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour has not started again in any form.

#### **Some examples of our actions**

- Restorative practices, including acknowledging grievances.
- Involvement of a parent/carer where appropriate.
- Peer mentoring and mediation.
- De-escalation strategies.
- Physical separation of person/people presenting bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour, where necessary and possible.
- Use of support base to increase confidence and provide support.
- Consequences, including loss of privileges.
- Assessment of additional support needs, including counselling, for the person being bullied or experiencing prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour or for the person who is bullying or displaying prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour.
- Involvement of other agencies and partners in health, police and voluntary sector.
- Referral to specific support service, such as Psychological Services, Education Welfare Service, Social Work or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Note: Exclusion from school is not itself a sanction or punishment for bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour and would only be used in specific circumstances and as a last resort.

#### **Online bullying and bullying outside the school premises**

We know that bullying, prejudice and discrimination can occur outside the school gates and via mobile phones and social network internet sites. The behaviour may be presented by pupils from our own school, by pupils from other schools or by people who are not at school at all. Where a pupil or parent informs us of bullying, prejudice or discrimination outwith the school premises we will:

- Talk to pupils about how to avoid or handle these incidents outside of school.



- Talk to the Head Teacher of any other school(s) whose pupils are allegedly presenting bullying, discrimination and prejudiced behaviour.
- Talk to the transport company about bullying on buses
- Talk to the police, if appropriate.

### **Follow-up**

When the incident has been resolved, we monitor and check with the child or young person that bullying has not started again.

## **RECORDING AND MONITORING BULLYING INCIDENTS**

The designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator or Pupil Support Leader (secondary) will record all incidents in the Bullying and Equalities module in SEEMiS.

The following information is recorded:

- the person experiencing the behaviour
- the person displaying the behaviour
- the nature and category of the incident
- the perceived reason(s) for bullying
- actions already taken and future actions
- conclusion (being addressed, resolved, not resolved, unfounded)

All incidents should be recorded. Records should include whether the incident is bullying, and/or prejudice-based and the nature of this. If there is any dispute or doubt (on the part of any individual) about whether the incident was or was not bullying or prejudice, the incident and the doubts should be recorded.

The designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will:

- ensure that this procedure is implemented.
- monitor SEEMiS reports on regular basis, at least termly.

Records of bullying, discrimination and prejudice-based incidents will be collected centrally from SEEMiS by the local authority from August 2020 on a termly basis.

## **COMMUNICATING THIS PROCEDURE**

We promote our anti-bullying procedure throughout the session. This procedure will be placed on the school website. Posters are on display around the school advising pupils how they can report bullying, discrimination and prejudice, or seek confidential help. In-school arrangements for anonymous reporting are regularly promoted via school assemblies. The procedure is also reinforced through HWB lessons.

## **CONCERNS AND FEEDBACK**

We recognise that there may be times when pupils or parents/carers feel that we have not dealt well with an incident of bullying, discrimination and prejudice or a wider community issue. If a pupil or parent/carer feels that an incident/issue has not been fully resolved to their satisfaction, we ask them to contact the Head Teacher in the first instance.

If the Head Teacher cannot resolve these concerns informally, parents/carers can raise their concerns more formally through the school's Complaints Procedure. If early resolution at this stage is not achieved, then parents/carers can use the Council's Advice and Conciliation Service. We are also pleased to receive positive feedback from parents/carers when things have gone well.

At any time, a pupil or parent/carer can seek advice and support from an external organisation.

## **EVALUATING AND REVIEWING OUR PROCEDURE**

We evaluate the effectiveness of this procedure on an annual basis, reviewing the number and type of incidents that are reported alongside the attendance, exclusions, attainment and achievement of pupils in protected groups. Pupils' perceptions and experiences of bullying are reviewed through questionnaires and focus groups. Feedback received from parents is also taken into consideration. The procedure is reviewed formally every 3 years.