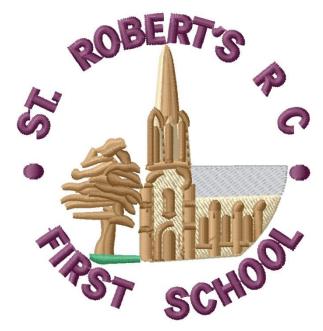# St. Robert's Catholic First School and Nursery

Oldgate, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 1QF

We care, we serve, we learn together in the love and truth of Jesus

Anti- Bullying Policy

Date Reviewed:	Review Date:
November 2016	November 2017
David Sutcliffe	Richard Shepherd
Headteacher	Chair of Governors

Bullying should always be taken seriously.
All bullying is unacceptable, whether physical, sexual, verbal or psychological

Introduction

Catholic belief is that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and as such, should all be treated justly.

"The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God." Catechism of the Catholic Church

At St Robert's Catholic First School we strive to ensure that this belief is put into practice so that all are welcome. We work to ensure that each person, in all their uniqueness, is able to thrive in our Catholic school, irrespective of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, physical appearance, disability or the actual or perceived sexual orientation of themselves or of their parents/carers.

 "Because all people are equal in God's sight, every person possesses the same dignity and has a claim to the same human rights. Hence every kind of social, racist, sexist, cultural or religious discrimination against a person is an unacceptable injustice."
        YOUCAT 330

At St Robert's Catholic First School we endeavour to create a safe and stimulating environment where everyone knows that they are valued as God's children. Every person has the right to be treated with respect and each person has the responsibility to treat others in the same way. Our mission statement is lived out so that children are enabled to have the confidence and strategies to speak up and tell of any bullying experiences, knowing that positive and fair action will be taken.

Aims and objectives

- To provide a secure, safe and positive Christian environment free from threat, harassment or any type of bullying behaviour, where children and adults can grow and develop.
- To create a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- To produce a consistent whole school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- To work with all members of the school community (staff, children, parents/carers and governors) to foster productive partnerships which help maintain a bullying–free environment.
- To celebrate diversity and the uniqueness of individuals.

What is bullying?

Bullying can take many forms and can be experienced in many different ways.

DCSF 'Safe to Learn' 2007 defines bullying as

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'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as

'The intentional repetitive or persistent hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power'

DFE 'Bullying at school' November 2014 states that there is no legal definition of bullying. However, it states that bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- *repeated*

- *intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally*

- *often aimed at certain groups, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation*

It takes many forms and can include:

- *physical assault*

- *teasing*

- *making threats*

- *name calling*

- *cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (eg email, social networks and instant messenger)*

The DFE 2014 guidance states that schools should have their own definition of bullying. Bullying is defined by our school community as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can be categorised into seven main types:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture

- Bullying related to home circumstances

- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

- Bullying related to gifts and talents

- Bullying related to sexual orientation

- Bullying related to gender

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Bullying related to race, religion or culture

Racist, faith-based or cultural bullying is bullying based on a person's background, colour, religion or heritage. This form of bullying has a negative impact on a child's sense of identity, self-worth and self-esteem. It also can be negative about the child's family, and about their ethnic or faith community as a whole.

Bullying related to home circumstances

The home circumstances of children can make them vulnerable to bullying. This may include obvious signs of affluence or lack of it, being a looked after child, being a young carer or having a family member with a disability or special need.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Children with health or visible medical conditions, or perceived physical characteristics, such as size and weight may be vulnerable to bullying.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

Children with SEN and disabilities are vulnerable to bullying. Their differences can be used by bullies to isolate them from friendship groups.

Bullying related to gifts and talents

Children and young people who are gifted and talented can be vulnerable to bullying. Their achievements and abilities can set them apart from their peers. This may lead to resentment and jealousy among their peers which may make them targets for bullying behaviour.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

Homophobic bullying involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of their perceived or actual sexual orientation. Homophobic bullying includes all forms of bullying but in particular it can include homophobic language. This is terms of verbal abuse used towards lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people or those who are perceived LGBT. It can be used as an insult or to refer to something or someone as inferior eg derogatory use of the word 'gay'.

Bullying related to gender

Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying affects both genders. Sexist bullying is based on sexist attitudes that, when expressed, demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Both sexes may be victims and each may be a victim of their own sex. Children who feel that they belong to another gender or do not conform with the stereotypically defined roles often ascribed to particular genders, can also become a target of bullying.

Forms of Bullying

Different forms of bullying can be seen within the seven identified types of bullying. Forms of bullying include:

Physical

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This can include physical harm such as punching or pushing, being made to give money or belongings, or forcing a child to act against their will.

Verbal

Verbal bullying can include being teased in a nasty way, being called 'gay' in a derogatory way, being insulted about race, religion or culture, being called names or being the subject of offensive comments.

Indirect

This can include being deliberately excluded from groups or ignored, or being the subject of tales or rumours.

Electronic /'cyberbullying'

This form of bullying includes verbal or indirect bullying via text message, email, instant messenger services or social network sites or images spread via the internet or mobile phones.

Our Approach to Bullying

Our approach to bullying is informed by the Catholic faith.

"Every human being is created in God's image and likeness and therefore is valuable and worthy of respect."
            Christ at the Centre

Key Principles

•   The school leadership will work with all in our community to prevent all forms of bullying, including prejudice based bullying, and to fully address incidents of bullying as they arise.

•   All bullying in its variety of forms and types will be taken equally seriously and addressed appropriately.

•   We will address bullying within the framework of Catholic beliefs and Church teaching and in a way which is age-appropriate.

Our Approach to Bullying

When responding to incidents of bullying we aim:

•   to make the child who has been bullied feel safe

•   to encourage better behaviour from the child who has displayed bullying behaviours

   Of paramount importance in the application of this policy is that at all times the dignity of the child be safeguarded. In our schools the following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents of Bullying:

•   if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
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- a clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the headteacher

- a member of staff will interview all concerned and will record the incident

- class teachers will be kept informed and if it persists the Class Teacher will advise other appropriate staff

- parents will be kept informed

- punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation will all parties concerned.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a class teacher or member of staff of their choice

- reassuring the pupil

- offering continuous support

- restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened

- discovering why the pupil became involved

- establishing the wrong doing and need to change

- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- official warnings to cease offending

- withdrawal of time at break or lunchtime

- exclusion from certain areas of school premises

- minor fixed-term exclusion

- major fixed-term exclusion

- permanent exclusion.

Homophobic bullying and using homophobic language

Homophobic language can be used as an insult or to refer to something or someone as inferior such as the derogatory use of the word 'gay'. The derogatory use of homophobic language in our school will always be challenged even if it appears to be being used without any homophobic intent.

Children with SEN or disabilities

Our school is committed to actively promoting the equality of opportunity for all children with SEN or disabilities. Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, in most cases (except those related to specific conditions) school will expect the same standards of behaviour as those which apply to the rest of the school community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

Staff training

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All teaching and support staff receive regular training on anti-bullying. All adults working in the school know the anti-bullying policy and the procedures used for reporting of incidents. Training on anti-bullying is part of the induction of new staff.

All staff recieve training about being sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied. Those being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems or changes. Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. We encourage all our children to report bullying in school to a trusted adult.

Our staff are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with our policy.

Staff are expected to take preventative measures. This includes being aware of where and when bullying might take place. This awareness is informed by discussions with children. The staff training includes equality training to raise awareness among staff of potential prejudicial behaviour and how not to reinforce stereotypes.

Curriculum

As a Catholic school Religious Education is the core subject of our curriculum. There are opportunities within RE to make links with Fairtrade, Cafod and Mini Vinnies to reinforce the principles of human rights, Catholic social teaching and the uniqueness of the individual, made in God's image and likeness. Our curriculum as a whole is planned and delivered to enable children to develop empathy, to understand the effect bullying has on people and to take responsibility for trying to prevent bullying. Through a variety of planned activities across the curriculum such as circle time, our children gain in self-confidence and develop strategies to speak up for themselves and express their own thoughts and opinions. Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity and an assortment of strategies to protect themselves from bullying.

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in RE, class time, PSHCE, reflective prayer and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

Reporting and recording of incidents of bullying

Our school has a clear system for reporting bullying. Staff report incidents directly to the Headteacher, and children and parents/carers are explicitly reminded of the school's procedures each year during anti-bullying week.

Reporting to the Local Authority

All incidents of racist bullying are reported to the local authority.

The Role of the Governing Body

The governing body monitors the incidents of bullying that occur and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy annually. The governors require the headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

Monitoring the Policy

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This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy annually. To discover the extent to which bullying exists in school and to monitor the extent to which our anti-bullying policy is effective, the record and strategies will be reviewed alongside Pupil Voice which will be carried out annually by the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

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