

Anti-Bullying Policy

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“When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” He said to him, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

Matthew 22:38-40

1. Statements of Principles

1.1 School Aims

At St Leonard’s we...

- pursue excellence in all and for all;
- take Christ as the model for life;
- strive to create community.

1.2 Anti-Bullying

St Leonard's Catholic School is committed to ensuring that every pupil is treated with respect and dignity and will take action to prevent or redress instances of bullying or discrimination. The school believes that people should not be discriminated against or bullied because of their race, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, or because they have special or additional needs. **Government guidance:** This policy has been drawn up with assistance from guidance issued by the Department for Education (DfE), *Preventing and tackling bullying* and will be reviewed against any new government guidance issued from time to time.

2. Definition of Bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. Bullying may be defined as the abuse of power by an individual or group in relation to another individual or group and it 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

3. Why is an Anti-Bullying Policy necessary?

The school believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. The School has a clear policy on the promotion of good citizenship through assemblies, PSHE and the curriculum where it is made clear that bullying is not acceptable.

4. Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The Gospels and the teaching of the Catholic Church set out our standards for the life of a community. We try to be the first to show respect to one another with the greatest patience in tolerating weaknesses. No one aims at personal advantage but is rather concerned for the good of others. (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church) Bullying, whether verbal or behavioural, is about intimidation, persecution, and abuse of power directed towards the vulnerable in any community. The Church, by contrast, teaches us to create communities of tolerance, wholeness, service, and respect for others; places where a person can grow as God intended. We must, therefore, strive to offer a stable and peaceful home to people of every temperament and ability, background and outlook. All will be helped to reflect on the ways in which they can contribute to and live up to this ideal. Bullying is the antithesis of a community of faith and virtue, and so must be confronted firmly and with compassion. It is an injustice which must be challenged.

Through the operation of this policy we therefore aim:

- (i) to maintain and drive a positive and supportive culture among all pupils and staff;

- (ii) to deter bullying behaviour, detect it when it occurs, and deal with it on a case-by-case basis by counselling and/or disciplinary sanctions; and
- (iii) to comply with the School's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at the School because it is contrary to teachings of the Catholic Church and therefore all our aims and values, our internal culture and the reputation of the school. It is harmful to the person who is bullied, and to those who engage in bullying behaviour, and those who support them, and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage; and it interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time free from intimidation.

This policy will also apply to bullying behaviour outside of the school of which the school becomes aware.

5. Bullying Behaviour

5.1 Meaning

Bullying is behaviour which hurts or causes distress by taking unfair advantage of another person in some way, making him or her feel uncomfortable or threatened. Bullying may be:

- (a) physical - hitting, kicking, pushing people around, spitting; or taking, damaging or hiding possessions;
- (b) verbal - name-calling, taunting, teasing, insulting, or demanding money;
- (c) exclusionary behaviour - intimidating, isolating or excluding a person from a group;
- (d) general unkindness - spreading rumours or writing unkind notes, phone texts or e-mails; or
- (e) cyberbullying - using the internet, mobile 'phones, social networking sites (such as Facebook, Bebo and Twitter), etc to deliberately upset someone else (see section 2.2 below).

Bullying may also be:

- (f) sexual - talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way;
- (g) sexist - related to a person's gender or gender reassignment;
- (h) racist, or relating to someone's religion, belief or culture;
- (i) related to a person's sexual orientation (homophobic);
- (j) related to pregnancy or maternity;
- (k) related to a person's home circumstances; or
- (l) related to a person's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulty, health or appearance.

5.2 Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying uses electronic communications (email, chatrooms and social networking sites, text messages and mobile phone pictures, etc.) to bully.

The school will investigate cases of cyber-bullying. In doing so, it will seek the support of parents, of the police and internet service providers.

Cyber-bullying cases can often be difficult to resolve because they occur out of school hours and often involve pupils from other schools. However, the school is committed to doing what it can, consistent with the reasonable use of its resources, to support pupils who are being bullied and assisting their parents to resolve the matter.

Pupils who engage in cyber-bullying can expect disciplinary action to be taken against them.

5.3 Intention

Not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. Some individuals may see their hurtful conduct as 'teasing' or 'a game' or 'for the good of' the other person. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable but may not be malicious and can often be corrected quickly with advice and without disciplinary sanctions.

5.4 Responsibility

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure, whatever the circumstances, that no-one becomes a victim of bullying. A person may be vulnerable to bullying because of his/her age, physical appearance, nationality, colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, culture or disability, or because s/he is new in the School, appears to be uncertain or has no friends. S/he may also become a target because of an irrational decision by a bully.

5.5 Legal Aspects

A person who makes a physical or sexual assault on another, or who steals or causes damage to the property of another, commits a criminal offence and also a civil wrong known as a 'tort' for which there can be legal consequences outside the School. Bullying behaviour may also be regarded as threatening behaviour or harassment which can be either a criminal offence or a civil wrong. Misuse of electronic communications could also be a criminal offence, for example, it is an offence to send an electronic communication (such as a text message or e-mail) to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety.

6. Anti-Bullying Culture

6.1 Ethos

Our expectation of all members of the School community is that:

- (a) every pupil at St Leonard's Catholic School will follow and uphold the school's high expectations and adhere to the school's behaviour policy;
- (b) a pupil or a member of staff who witnesses or hears of an incident of bullying will report it;
- (c) a complaint of bullying will always be taken seriously; and
- (d) no one will tolerate unkind actions or remarks or stand by when someone else is being bullied.

6.2 Equal Opportunities

In School and in every year group:

- discriminatory words and behaviour are treated as unacceptable;
- positive attitudes are fostered towards people who are disabled and towards ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the School; and
- positive attitudes are fostered towards gender and sexuality differences through the curriculum and tutorials.

6.3 Staff

Through their training and experience, members of staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture by:

- celebrating achievement;
- anticipating problems and providing support;
- disciplining sensibly, fairly and consistently, taking into account any special educational needs or disabilities of the pupil and the needs of vulnerable pupils;
- making opportunities to listen to pupils; and
- acting as advocates of pupils.

6.4 Pupils

Through our pastoral care systems, pupils are informed and taught that bullying will not be tolerated in the School. They are encouraged:

- to celebrate the effort and achievements of others;
- to hold and promote positive attitudes;
- to feel able to share problems with staff;

- to turn to someone they trust, if they have a problem;
- not to feel guilty about airing complaints.

7. Anti-Bullying Systems

7.1 Approach

Our systems for detecting and dealing with bullying are designed to operate:

- vertically, through all year groups and house teams; and
- horizontally, within year groups and in the classroom and other activities.

Our anti-bullying systems are implemented and driven in the way described below.

7.2 Vigilance

Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly:

- before lessons; in the queue at the Dining Room and in the Dining Room;
- in social areas including the yard; and
- on school transport.

7.3 Meetings

Bullying is regularly discussed in meetings between:

- members of the Senior Leadership Team
- Heads of Year, Heads of Department, Tutors and pupils in their Tutor Group, and
- Governors, as appropriate.

The result of these meetings is to feedback information about friendship patterns, particular incidents, any pupil who seems to be isolated, any growing 'power base' and any known conflict between a member of staff and a pupil, or between pupils so that strategies can be developed to prevent bullying incidents.

7.4 Education

Measures are taken throughout each year to educate pupils about bullying and this policy. These measures include:

(i) PSHE Curriculum

Our PSHE Curriculum includes work on bullying which covers:

- Who is the 'bully'? Who is the 'victim'?
- Why are some people 'bullies' and others 'victims'?
- What should a pupil do if s/he is bullied?
- What constitutes bullying? Where are the boundaries?
- What should be done if bullying is confirmed?

(ii) Assemblies

Anti-Bullying messages are given in assemblies.

(iii) Anti-Bullying Week

Once a year we hold an Anti-Bullying bullying week.

7.5 Staff Training

Appropriate training in all aspects of care is arranged to ensure that Heads of Year (where applicable) and other staff involved in the pastoral management of pupils have the necessary professional skills, especially:

- awareness of the risk and indications of child abuse and bullying, and how to deal with cases;
- counselling skills (including bereavement);

7.6 Pupil Responsibilities

We emphasise with Sixth Form Students the role, which is expected of them in setting a good example and being helpful to younger pupils and each other.

7.7 Record Keeping and monitoring:

Heads of Year maintain records of the welfare and development of individual pupils. Every complaint or report of bullying must be entered in the Behaviour Log in SIMS as 'Alleged Bullying' until proven. The Senior Leadership Team monitor and review the Behaviour Log at the end of each half-term and in order to enable patterns to be identified, both in relation to individual pupils and across the School as a whole and to evaluate the effectiveness of the School's approach.

7.8 In-school Support Services

St Leonard's has a number of in-school support services that play a role in our Anti-Bullying Systems these include:

(a) A School Counsellor

A part-time School Counsellor is able to provide a confidential listening and advice service to pupils. Part of this service is designed to provide strategies and empower pupils.

(b) Chaplaincy Co-ordinator

At times the Chaplaincy Co-ordinator is able to provide a similar service to that of the School Counsellor. Although not a trained counsellor, she can provide a listening and supportive ear for any pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.

(c) Peer Supporters / Ear4U

A small group of 'Peer Supporters' co-ordinated by the School Counsellor, provides a supportive group and framework for pupils.

7.9 Why incident may not be reported

7.9.1 Victim

There are many reasons why a pupil who has suffered bullying may be reluctant to report it. S/he may become demoralised and may say, for example:

- it is telling tales. They won't believe me because the person I am complaining about is popular and I am not, and I will become even more unpopular;
- the things they are saying and doing are too embarrassing to discuss with an adult;
- it is all my fault anyway for being overweight/too studious etc;
- there are too many of them - there is nothing the staff can do;
- it will get back to my parents and they will think less of me;
- I will just try and toughen up and grow a thicker skin; or

- I will lie low and not audition for a part in the school play etc.

7.9.2 Witnesses

There are also reasons why a pupil who has witnessed or learned of bullying behaviour may not want to make a report. S/he may say:

- it is 'grassing' and I will become unpopular;
- it is not my concern anyway; or
- I don't like the victim and I would find it embarrassing to be associated with him/her.

7.9.3 Culture

Any of these responses would be contrary to our culture at the School. When we drive and implement this policy we encourage every pupil to understand that:

- (i) every complaint of bullying will be taken seriously;
- (ii) members of staff will deal with a complaint correctly and effectively in accordance with their experience and the training they have received;
- (iii) there is a solution to nearly every problem of bullying;
- (iv) a pupil who complains will receive support and advice and in many cases the problem can be dealt with on a no-names basis; and
- (v) the primary aim will be for the bullying to cease, not the punishment of the bully unless this is necessary.

8. Procedures

8.1 Guidelines

The following procedures are a guideline except where expressed in the terms 'should' or 'must'. The best guide is the experience and training of the staff.

8.2 Reporting bullying complaints

8.2.1 Pupils

A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied, should complain without delay and can do so in several ways. S/he can:

- tell his/her parents, his/her Head of Year, Tutor, Teacher, School Chaplain or a responsible older pupil; alternatively;
- contact the School Counsellor or one of the Peer Supporter, for advice;

8.2.2 Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child is being bullied should inform their child's Head of Year without delay.

8.2.3 Staff

This policy focuses on the bullying of pupils although it is recognised that staff can be the victims of bullying and on occasion could be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about being bullied or harassed should refer to the School's Bullying and Harassment policy which is set out in the Staff Handbook. Pupils and parents who feel that a member of staff is bullying should report this in accordance with the procedures set out above. Complaints against teachers will be dealt with in accordance with staff disciplinary procedures.

8.3 Initial complaint

A person in authority who learns of alleged bullying behaviour should:

- (a) firstly, respond quickly and sensitively by offering advice, support and reassurance to the alleged victim; then
- (b) report the allegation to the appropriate Head of Year as soon as possible.

The Head of Year must:

- record the complaint of Alleged Bullying in the Behaviour Log (PARS/SIMS); and
- co-ordinate the School's response to the complaint.

Head of Year should reassure the pupil, but must not give a guarantee of absolute confidentiality.

8.4 Assessment

The Head of Year will normally see the victim and (unless the case is very serious) any witnesses without delay and form an initial view of the allegation. The assessment will consider:

- the nature of the incident/s - physical? verbal? exclusionary? etc;
- is it a 'one-off' incident involving an individual or a group?
- is it part of a pattern of behaviour by an individual or a group?
- has physical injury been caused? Who should be informed - Parents? The School's Safeguarding Officer? Social Services or the LADO? The police?
- can the alleged bully be seen on a no-names basis?
- what is the likely outcome if the complaint proves to be correct?

At this stage, the possible outcomes for an incident which is not too serious include:

- there has been a misunderstanding which can be explained sympathetically to the alleged victim with advice to the alleged bully; or
- the complaint is justified in whole or in part, and further action will be needed (see Range of Action, below).

8.5 Serious incident

If the Head of Year believes that serious bullying behaviour:

- has recurred after warnings have been given to the 'bully' s/he must inform the Deputy Head Teacher and ensure that the School's Designated Safeguarding Lead is aware (**DSL**) The DSL or Deputy DSL will then interview the alleged victim, bully and any witnesses separately, in order to establish the facts of the case. S/he may decide to ask another senior member of staff to be present.

The Head of Year will interview the alleged victim and bully separately:

- to confirm the facts of the case, if considered necessary; and
- to decide on the action to be taken in accordance with the Range of Action set out below.

The Head of Year will notify the parents of the victim and bully giving them details of the case and the action being taken.

8.6 Range of Action

When a complaint is upheld the range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim, including support from external services where appropriate;

- advice and support to the bully in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning, and involvement of the Chaplain;
- consideration of the motivation behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to tackle any underlying issues of the bully which contributed to the bullying behaviour. If these considerations lead to any concerns that the bully may be at risk of harm, the School's child protection procedures will be followed;
- a meeting supervised by a member of staff, between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and the ways in which they may be able to avoid future conflict;
- a disciplinary sanction against the bully, in accordance with the School's Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- involving Social Services or the police;
- notifying the parents of one or both pupils about the case and the action which has been taken;
- such other action as may appear to the Head Teacher to be appropriate;
- noting the outcome in the Behaviour Log (PARS/SIMS).

8.7 Monitoring

The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter. Action may include:

- sharing information with some or all colleagues and with pupils (where applicable) so that they may be alert to the need to monitor certain pupils closely;
- ongoing counselling and support;
- vigilance;
- mentioning the incident at meetings of staff;
- reviewing vulnerable individuals and areas of the School;

8.8 Formal complaint

If the victim or his/her parents are not satisfied with the action taken, they should be advised to make a formal complaint, according to the School's Complaints Procedure.