

ST JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL CARNACAVILLE



Anti Bullying Policy

GENERAL:

Bullying is a form of abuse perpetrated by a child or group of children on another child. In most cases however it does not set in motion the child protection procedures detailed in the school's Child Protection Policy document.

Bullying takes many forms. It can be short term or long term. Bullying can be physical, verbal or even just a look. It can be overt or subtle intimidation. Whatever form it takes however it must be tackled.

DEFINITION:

Bullying can be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for the victim to defend him or herself. It is the wilful conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. It is exerting some sort of power over the victim – a power not always recognisable to the teacher.

Here in St Joseph's we take the issue of bullying very seriously and try to combat it at the earliest opportunity whenever and wherever it occurs. Although the school has been relatively free of 'bullying' we remain alert and vigilant at all times. Bullying within schools, including ours, generally takes three forms:

- **Physical** (hitting, kicking, spitting, theft or damage to belongings or property)
- **Verbal** (threats or name calling)
- **Indirect** (spreading rumours or excluding someone from the group)

The victims of such abuse usually exhibit symptoms such as behaviour changes (withdrawal), lack of concentration, marked deterioration in school work or absenteeism.

Consistent therefore with our basic responsibility to keep our pupils safe from harm and provide secure learning environment we as a school have in place certain structures to prevent bullying becoming a major issue in the school.

- At the outset it must be stressed that bullying can be highly distressing and damaging to children and will not be accepted in St Joseph's.
- All members of staff, teaching and ancillary are vigilant at all times to the possibility of bullying occurring and will take steps to stop it happening, to protect and reassure the victim and to discipline the bully.
- If the bullying persists the parents of both the victim and the bully will be contacted.
- All incidents of bullying are reported to the Designated Teacher for Child Protection (D.T.) and to the Principal.

If any member of staff in St Joseph's comes across bullying the following steps should be followed:

- Remain calm – do not react emotionally
- Always take the incident seriously
- Report the incident as soon as possible
- Reassure the victim – do not make him/her feel inadequate or foolish
- Both parties to the incident(s) will be interviewed by the Principal.
- The bully will be encouraged to see the victim's point of view.
- Appropriate sanctions will be administered towards the bully. The punishment will be explained clearly and the reasons why it is being given.

If an incident or series of incidents are deemed to be of a very serious nature the Chairperson of the Board of Governors will be informed immediately.

All other members of staff will also be informed and asked to remain vigilant. Both sets of parents will be informed calmly, clearly and concisely of what happened by the Principal and told what action the school was taking to try and solve the matter.

In St Joseph's any complaint by a parent that their child is or may be being bullied will be fully investigated by either or both the Principal and designated teacher for child abuse in the school. This will usually include ensuring that another child or small group of children befriend and support the child being bullied during the school day.

In St Joseph's a parent who makes a complaint about bullying will obtain a personal response from the Principal (or designated teacher) as soon as possible but no later than one week after making the complaint. The parent will be informed as to what has happened as a result of the investigation carried out and the action which is being taken.

SANCTIONS:

St Joseph's will take action against bullies in the form of sanctions. The sanctions used against a pupil who bullies will depend on the seriousness of the offence but will include the loss of any privileges he/she has. His/her behaviour will be carefully monitored until staff are satisfied that the problem has stopped.

If a pupil's bullying behaviour persists the second stage will be to instigate the child protection procedures outlined in the Child Protection Policy. Exclusion of a child for a period of time or expulsion of a child will only occur when all other remedies have been tried.

PREVENTING BULLYING:

St Joseph's in common with all schools needs to look carefully how bullying can be prevented. This policy statement sets out the basic structure of how bullying will be tackled and emphasises the link between a bullying policy and our policies on Child Protection and Discipline (Positive Behaviour). All this is under the mantle of Pastoral Care within our school.

In preventing bullying pupils must be made aware that bullying is wrong. This can be done during general assemblies and in PDMU for example. They should be aware that they must speak out if being bullied or if they know something.

In St Joseph's our pupils are aware of who they go to if anything is happening to them and this should be regularly stated.

Messages about bullying must be emphasised through the curriculum and regularly revisited. We feel we have a good school where little bullying exists. However it is essential that we have in place a structure to deal with bullying issues when they arise. Through the adoption of this basic policy statement we feel we have the proper procedures in place to ensure any bullying is easily controlled and prevented at an early state.

RESPONSIBILITIES

PUPILS:

- Do not suffer in silence if you are a victim of bullying
- Do not become involved in any form of bullying
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected incidents of bullying
- Intervene to protect the pupil being bullied by reporting the incident to an adult.

PARENTS:

- Should advise their children to report any incidents of bullying to their teacher, the Principal or designated teacher
- Watch for any signs of their child being bullied
- Reassure the child that something can and will be done to stop the bullying
- Advise their child not to retaliate to any form of bullying
- Co-operate and work with the school in matters of bullying whether their child is the victim or perpetrator.

It is the responsibility of the whole school community to work together to combat and eradicate bullying from our school.