



# BEECHWOOD

## Sacred Heart School

### **Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure**

*This policy is made available to parents of all new pupils, day and boarding, on the school website and on request from the School Office. It is available to the staff at the school from the school website, in the Staff Handbook (electronic) and on request from the School Office. Content of this policy is directly discussed with new staff upon induction into the school.*

This policy has been designed taking into account the DfES pack, 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence'(2002), the range of material produced by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (2005), the Department for Education's "Safe to Learn: Embedding Anti-bullying Work in Schools" (2007) and the Department for Education's 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' (July, 2011).

#### **Aims and Definition**

At the heart of a successful school lies respect for the individual. At Beechwood we aim to provide a caring, safe and friendly environment where our pupils can learn and develop in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Our expectations of good behaviour are defined by the Beechwood Code but our aims regarding are simple and clear. At Beechwood we aim:

- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and it will not be tolerated;
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and on off-site activities;
- To support everyone to identify and protect those who might be bullied;
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of students is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying;
- To encourage members to tell someone that they are being bullied and not suffer in silence.

Bullying of any kind is not acceptable. This includes harassment or bullying based on race, colour, religion, gender, sexual orientation, sexist, age, homophobic, special education needs and disability, disability, national origin, citizenship, marital status, or any other basis protected by law.

If bullying does occur, all pupils and parents should be able to tell someone and know that the incident will be dealt with promptly, effectively and appropriately. We expect anyone who knows that bullying is happening to tell a member of staff.

Bullying is the intentional, repetitive or persistent hurting of one person by another, often where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying may not

necessarily include all individual examples of unpleasant, aggressive or anti-social behaviour.

Bullying can be done face to face, through third parties, or through sending messages or images by email, text or over the internet. It may be:-

- Emotional: being deliberately unfriendly, excluding people from groups, tormenting (eg hiding books or possessions, making threatening gestures, damaging property or theft of property);
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, spitting or using any form of physical violence;
- Racial and cultural: racial taunts, gestures or graffiti;
- Religious: anti religious or sectarian taunts, gestures or graffiti;
- Sexual/Sexist: unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments or rumours;
- Homophobic: focussing on the issue of sexuality, including name calling;
- Verbal: name calling, teasing, mocking, spreading rumours, making offensive comments;
- Focussed on special needs or disability;
- Cyber: misuse of all areas of the internet, such as email and chat rooms, mobile phones, text messaging, camera or video technology deliberately to cause offence, torment or spread rumours.

Bullying hurts and can do lasting psychological harm, on rare occasions even leading to suicide. Pupils who bully need to learn different ways of behaving.

## **MEASURES TO PREVENT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT**

### **Signs of Harassment/Bullying**

Pupils who are being harassed/bullied may show changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be changes in work patterns, a lack of concentration, or truancy. All members of Beechwood should be aware of these possibilities and must promptly report any suspicions of bullying to your Form Tutor, your Head of Division, Mr Fisher or another member of Staff.

Reporting bullying is a positive action and will always be treated as such.

There are essentially two strands to the Beechwood Policy:

1. Prevention – the whole school approach to awareness and prevention
2. Dealing with Incidents

### **1. Prevention**

#### **Create an Ethos of Respect**

- Our ethos must be one in which all pupils are valued by all staff members and by their peers;
- The way in which all members of the Beechwood community treat each other must reflect this ethos;

□ It is the responsibility of the staff to be vigilant, observant and to speak to their line manager, Head of Division or Deputy Head if they have cause to suspect bullying might be taking place.

### **Whole School Strategy to prevent bullying**

- The Beechwood Code highlights the need within the Beechwood community for mutual respect and care;
- The PSHE programme provides a range of opportunities at all key stages for pupils to discuss issues to do with friendship, relationships, caring for each other in the community as well as discussing bullying as a specific topic;
- Whole School and Divisional Assemblies frequently focus on issues such as respect, friendship, community values and bullying itself;
- Staff are required to treat all pupils with respect, fairness and justice as underpinned by the School's Catholic ethos;
- There are two members of staff on duty at Lunch and Break times, so there is always an adult watching behaviour and offering someone to go to should an incident occur. Prefects are also on duty for this purpose.
- All staff have a pivotal role in the pastoral welfare of the students in the School and most are part of pastoral year teams. INSET on bullying has featured as part of Staff CPD and ongoing training is encouraged and available on request.

### **Education in the Curriculum**

Respect for the individual is at the heart of all curriculum programmes, especially the Religious Studies curriculum, PSHE and Drama. The school will raise the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through the PSE. All staff are required to be vigilant during their lessons for the signs of bullying.

## **2. Dealing with Incidents**

### **Disciplinary Action for Violating this Policy**

If the Headmaster determines that this policy has been violated by an individual(s) he/she/they will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include referral to appropriate counselling, temporary or permanent exclusion. The school recognises that false accusations of harassment and/or bullying can cause serious harm to innocent persons. If any investigation results in a finding that the complainant knowingly and falsely accused another person of harassment and/or bullying, the complainant will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including permanent exclusion.

### **Procedure for dealing with bullying**

All reports of bullying should be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately:

- Teachers should listen carefully to accounts and try not to make premature assumptions. Most reports will be dealt with in the first instance by the Form Tutor or Head of Division, with support as required from the Deputy Head or Head of Prep;
- The first priority is to stop the bullying and support the victim and then to deal with the bully. Again, a positive culture regarding the reporting of bullying is encouraged and at no point should anyone fear reprisal for reporting an incident of bullying.
- A variety of strategies may be used when dealing with bullying:-
  - ✚ **Support Groups** – these are established by teachers and include those pupils who have been named by the victim and also more supportive students. The victim does not attend the group, but their feelings are conveyed by the teacher. Each person in the group is asked what they can do to help the victim and the resulting ideas are then discussed with the victim and could also be discussed with the parents if this is thought appropriate;
  - ✚ **Circle of Friends**- if a pupil has become isolated in the year group the Head of Division or Head of Prep may set up a support network to help the person re-establish themselves;
  - ✚ **Mediation by adults**- the Head of Division, Deputy Head or Head of Prep will discuss the inappropriate behaviour directly with the bully and agree targets that should ensure a change of behaviour. There will also be discussion with the victim about behaviour and attitudes;
  - ✚ **Involvement of Parents**- parents of a pupil reported for bullying may be invited into School (but at the very least be made aware of it with a phone call) to discuss the issue and how best they can support their child in recognising and changing their behaviour, so that it meets the school's expectations as outlined in the Beechwood Code and this policy.

A central record of incidents of serious bullying is held by the Deputy Head / Head of Prep. Other incidents are logged by Divisional Heads, to enable patterns to be identified

Again, if a pupil does not respond positively to attempts to stop the bullying behaviour, or the bullying behaviour is sufficiently serious, the pupil will be dealt with according to the School's Rewards and Sanctions Policy and appropriate sanctions applied. This could lead to exclusion or referral to outside agencies, the decision(s) for which rest at the Headmaster's discretion.

**If you are a pupil: -**

**What can you do if you are being bullied?**

- Remember that silence is the bully's greatest weapon!
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG!

- Seek help from your Tutor/Boarding Mistress/School Nurse or any other adult whom you feel comfortable talking to.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout “No!” Walk confidently away.
- Teachers and other members of staff will take you seriously and will support you.

**If you know someone is being bullied:**

- TAKE ACTION! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

**Counselling**

Beechwood supports counselling for all parties in a bullying incident. The victim must be helped to see that it is not their fault that she is being bullied. She must be assured that she is safe and that someone is dealing with her problem. Moreover the bully must be made to see the antisocial nature of their behaviour and appreciate the hurt they are causing.

**Reporting and Recording**

The school will maintain records of complaints of harassment and/or bullying, as well as records of subsequent investigation of such matters. These records will be kept confidential to the extent practicable and appropriate under the circumstances.

**Dissemination of information and consultation about this policy**

This policy has been discussed by Heads of Division, Form Tutors, SMT and Governors and by pupils through their representatives on the School Council. The policy is published in the Parents and the Staff Handbooks and is available to all pupils in their Form Room Folders.

The effectiveness of the policy will be monitored by Heads of Division, the Deputy Head and Head of Prep and will be reviewed annually at School Council.

Reviewed August 2011 by PF (To be ratified by the School Council Oct 18<sup>th</sup> 2011)