St. Thomas' CE Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Written & Reviewed by Paul Sanchez   October 2023

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Rationale

Everyone at St. Thomas' CE Primary School has the right to feel welcome, secure and happy. Only if this is the case will all members of the school community be able to achieve to their maximum potential. Bullying of any sort prevents this being able to happen and prevents equality of opportunity. It is everyone's responsibility to prevent this happening and this policy contains guidelines to support this ethos.

If bullying occurs, all children must feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems within the school to end bullying. It is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school.

This document outlines how we make this possible at St. Thomas' CE Primary School.

Definitions of Bullying
Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time, making it difficult for the person concerned to defend themselves. This can take the form of name-calling, violence, threatened violence, isolation, ridicule or indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories about someone, being made the subject of malicious text messages and cyber-bullying.

The school works hard to ensure that all pupils know the difference between bullying and simply "falling out".

Actions to Prevent & Tackle Bullying
Prevention is better than cure so at St. Thomas' we will be vigilant for signs of bullying and always take reports of incidents seriously. We will use the curriculum whenever possible to reinforce the ethos of the school and help pupils to develop strategies to combat bullying behaviour. We will also ensure that it is addressed through the use of SEAL, assemblies, circle time and promoting positive social interaction at break and lunch time. We will also ensure that pupils are consulted on the effectiveness of this policy.

Pupils are told that they must report any bullying incidents to an adult within school.

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated and taken seriously by staff members. A record will be kept of incidents. The class teacher of the bullied child will be responsible for this and will be required to give a copy of the report of action taken to either the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher. In order to ensure effective monitoring of such occurrences, and to facilitate co-ordinated action, all proven incidences of bullying should be reported to the Headteacher or Deputy. If bullying includes racist abuse, then this should also be indicated on Child Protection Operating Management System (CPOMS).
Upon discovery of an incident of bullying, we will discuss with the children the issues appropriate to the incident and to their age level of understanding. If the incident is not too serious, a problem-solving approach will be used. Each pupil must be given an opportunity to talk and the discussion should remain focused on finding a solution to the problem and stopping the bullying recurring.
There are various strategies that can be applied if more than one pupil is involved in bullying another. Assemblies, role play and other drama techniques can be used as well as circle time, curricular and SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) activities. If held regularly, this can be an effective way of sharing information and provide a forum for discussing important issues such as equal rights, relationships, justice and acceptable behaviour. It can also be used just within the affected group to confront any bullying that already exists.

Bullied children need to feel secure in the knowledge that assertive behaviour, and even walking away, can be effective ways of dealing with bullying. Setting up counselling systems can also be beneficial and will be considered as appropriate.

Anti-bullying Council
At St. Thomas' we have an anti-bullying council made up of pupils from Years 2-6. Their job is to work on various anti-bullying initiatives as appropriate whilst on duty across both key stage playgrounds. They promote themselves as a good friend and pupils know they can speak to members of the council who may be able to act as a "buddy" in remedying the particular situation.

Parental Involvement
Parents of children who have bullied or have been bullied may be informed of an incident and the action that has taken place and asked to support strategies proposed to tackle the problem. The bully will also be reminded of the possible consequences of bullying and the sanctions for repeated incidents will be clearly explained to him/her (persistent bullying may result in exclusion). A monitoring system may also be used; usually incorporating a reward for achieving desired behaviours.

Parents will be reminded regularly through letters and newsletters to inform their children that they must tell someone should they ever be bullied. Keeping information from the school, and from their parents, will never help a problem to be solved, and may prolong the period a bullied child has to suffer. Whilst there is little history of bullying at Acacias, we believe that one case is one case too many and we believe it is essential to constantly review this policy to ensure we are in a position to strengthen our approach to this issue. Outside agencies linked to behaviour support have been utilised where appropriate.

Relationship with other policies
- Behaviour – the school's policy clearly outlines a range of strategies available to staff for managing behaviour.
- Safeguarding – if any disclosure occurs in relation to bullying and safeguarding, the schools safeguarding procedures should be followed.
- Confidentiality – children have the right to expect bullying incidents to be treated sensitively. However, staff should not give guarantees of confidentiality where the safety and welfare of a child is at risk. Further guidance is given in the school's Confidentiality Policy.
- E-safety – this contains clear guidance on promoting safe e-practices within school to minimise the risks of e-bullying, including cyber-bullying.