

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation

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# Anti-Bullying Policy

*In our Church of England Federation, we take strength in collaboration, yet celebrate uniqueness. As schools, we may be small, but together we develop children ready to make their mark on the world. We welcome the child yet embrace the whole family. We celebrate our rural environment yet aspire to look beyond our boundaries. We strive for knowledge and gratefully accept opportunities that come our way. We all take a pride in our Federation as we follow in Jesus's example.*

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## Our Aims

At St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation (which is referred to as the Federation in the rest of this document) we take seriously all forms of conflict, friendship problems and have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying behaviour. We believe that if children respect one another and care for one another as led by the example of Jesus in the parable of the Good Samaritan then this will enable them to live life in all its fullness and “Be the best they can be.”

Our aims are:

- To uphold and nurture our Christian ethos by encouraging the values of friendship, thankfulness, forgiveness and trust.
- To provide a safe and secure environment for all children in our care in which they feel positive about themselves and in which they are cherished and valued.
- To develop children’s self esteem and sense of worth by creating a happy atmosphere in which both parents/carers and members of staff work together for the welfare of the children.
- To provide an environment in which everyone is mutually valued and respected regardless of gender, sexual orientation, race, age, beliefs and ability.
- To encourage children to adopt agreed standards of behaviour and values in order to develop a sense of self-discipline and to take responsibility for their own actions.

## Definition of Bullying Behaviour

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where children disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, and where children make an effort to resolve the problem. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is defined as **‘behaviour by an individual or group - usually repeated over time - that intentionally hurts another individual or group’**.

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical bullying** (hitting, punching, finger jabbing, any inappropriate touching, pinching, jostling, damaging or taking property)
- **Verbal bullying** (name calling, put downs, threats, teasing, ridiculing, belittling, name calling, excessive criticism or sarcasm)
- **Indirect bullying** (rumours or stories, exclusion from a group, shunning, invading privacy, graffiti designed to embarrass, withholding friendship or affection)
- **Cyber bullying** (inappropriate phone calls including prank calls, inappropriate text messaging including through websites, social networking sites, instant messaging, chat rooms or e-mails, sending in appropriate or offensive images by phone, email or via the internet). Please see both the Federation's Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Policy – Children, Parents and Carers, which are available on our School's websites or by asking at your Federation School's office.
- **Racist bullying**
- **Homophobic or gender variant bullying**
- **Bullying of children who may be vulnerable** or experiencing bullying behaviours (e.g. children with SEND, SLCN, EAL)

This policy will refer to 'the person bullying' and 'the person being bullied' rather than 'bully' and 'victim', both of which can be defined as negative labelling.

### **Whole Federation Approach to Preventing Bullying**

- Issues surrounding friendships and bullying behaviour are taught through the Personal, Social and Health Education Curriculum. Pupils are taught to explore some of the ups and downs of relationships, including the positive aspects and benefits of friendships and the negative aspects of relational conflict. Through circle time pupils discuss the many ways of dealing with sometimes difficult situations and the ways in which they can seek help.
- Within the Federation, whole school assemblies are used to discuss bullying and raise pupils' awareness of what bullying looks like, and how they can respond.
- Pupils will be involved in appropriate Anti-Bullying Campaigns.

- Circle Times in classes will provide opportunities for more detailed discussions and role play activities to explore the nature of bullying.
- Class and School Councils will provide a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the children to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- Positive Play Leaders to reduce potential conflict during breaktime and lunchtime. Members of staff on playground duty will inform Class Teachers of any incidents.
- The Framfield 5R's and the Blackboys Learning Code will be upheld at all times.
- All members of staff will be trained to identify bullying and to follow the Federation's Policy and Procedures on bullying and will monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes inappropriate in order to prevent bullying from developing.
- Ensure pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied.
- Work with pupils who have been bullying in order to address the problems they may have.

### **How our Federation Schools will respond to allegations of bullying**

The Federation School will undertake the following:

- The Class Teacher will discuss the incident(s) with the pupil being bullied. It is important that they are listened to and believed.
- The incident will then be discussed with the pupil(s) engaging in bullying.
- Information will be gathered from witnesses to explain what they saw, in the case of cyberbullying evidence may be used from electronic devices.
- The Headteacher of the school will be informed.
- Parents of the children involved will be informed of the outcomes of the investigation.

## **What will the Federation School do if bullying has occurred**

Class Teachers will check to ensure that the person being bullied feels safe and monitor their wellbeing and provide appropriate ongoing support.

There may be immediate, short-term actions to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the bullied child such as separating the child who has engaged in bullying from the child they have bullied during playtimes.

The child who has been bullying, will be given further education about what bullying is and the impact it has on others. The child will be encouraged to develop greater empathy for the other child and encourage them to see their behaviour from the other child's perspective. This could involve referral to the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO).

If bullying continues, the school may seek the support of outside agencies if appropriate.

**If the bullying continues, the school may need to apply sanctions if appropriate, which could include:**

- Sanctions in line with the Federation School's Relationships and Behaviour Policy will be used where appropriate. These might include:
  - Behaviour Charts
  - Involvement of parents/carers or other agencies
  - Loss of privileges
  - Withdrawal from lunchtimes/playtimes
  - Fixed or permanent exclusion from their school (in extreme cases)
  - Records will be kept on pupil's files.
  -

Parents of those involved will be informed of any action taken.

## **Monitoring Behaviour**

Where a pupil or group of pupils deny involvement in bullying behaviour the pupil(s) concerned will be observed and monitored. The pupil being bullied may be asked to record and report any incidents that cause them concern. A group of friends will be asked to support the pupil being bullied through class work and play. The matter may be discussed in Circle Time (keeping names anonymous) in order to raise awareness of how a group can tackle bullying.

If the behaviour complained of is not within the definition of bullying but is a friendship issue the school will work with the pupil claiming to be bullied and with the other pupil(s) involved to help them to achieve a resolution.

## **How to get help with bullying**

### **Pupils**

Pupils are encouraged to report any negative behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They can do this through:

- Speaking to their Teacher/Teaching Assistant or any member of staff
- Speaking to a parent/carer/other adult who then may contact their school within the Federation in any of the normal ways.
- Speaking to their School Council Representative or a playground buddy

### **Parents/Carers**

Should parents/carers have a concern about bullying they should contact their child's Class Teacher to discuss their concerns. Following this should the concern not be resolved then the parents/carers should contact their Headteacher to arrange a meeting to discuss their concerns.

### **Working with Parents and Carers**

The Federation will:

- Ensure that parents/carers know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Ensure parents/carers know about the Federation's Complaints Policy and Procedure, which is available on our school's websites and from our school's offices, and how to use it effectively if they are not satisfied.
- Ensure parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.
- Work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Keep parents/carers fully informed of the school's observations/investigations and any actions taken in response to parental concerns.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

This Policy will be monitored and evaluated regularly by the Senior Leadership Team to ensure that it is effective in handling issues of conflict between pupils at schools within the Federation.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than annually. The policy review will be undertaken by the Federation's Headteachers and the Governing Body's Policies Working Party.