

Anti – Bullying Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was first formulated by the staff at St. Thomas the Apostle N.S., Rosegreen in May 2012. It is our desire to support each child to develop his/her potential in a caring environment. Bullying behaviour is contrary to this ethos. It undermines a child's potential to benefit from education. Bullying has an adverse effect on its victims.

Rationale

On behalf of , St. Thomas the Apostle N.S., we have put in place a written anti-bullying policy to show all children, parents and staff that bullying, either physical or verbal is not tolerated in our school.

We want to create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.

We want to devise measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School

It is the philosophy of this school to value each child. Each child should have equal opportunity to develop their full potential. Bullying is contrary to this development. We want to create an atmosphere in our school which values each child.

Co-operation between staff, parents and pupils is the first step in the harmonious working relationship of any school.

Aims of our Anti-Bullying Policy

The purpose of this Anti-Bullying Policy is to achieve the following:

1. To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/guardians, school personnel.
3. To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.

4. To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
5. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
6. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
7. To work with and through the various local agencies (e.g. Social Services, N.E.P.S etc) in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
8. To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on anti-bullying behaviour.
9. To provide children with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self worth, as self-esteem is the single most important factor in determining behaviour.
10. To encourage adults (parents, guardians, teachers etc) to act as positive role models for children in regard to how they relate to others.

Contents of Policy

Definition of Bullying

A child is bullied when one or more children expose him/her repeatedly and/or over time to physical or verbal abuse. The attacks or assaults may not necessarily be direct but may take a less visible and indirect form such as social isolation and exclusion from the group. Bullying knows no boundaries of age, gender or background.

Possible Signs of Bullying

Children may:

- Be frightened of walking to or from school
- Be unwilling to go to school
- Beg a parent to drive them to school
- Begin doing poorly in their school work
- Come home regularly with books or clothes destroyed
- Become withdrawn
- Start stammering
- Become distressed
- Change in eating habits
- Cry themselves to sleep
- Have nightmares and even call out 'leave me alone'
- Have unexplained bruises, cuts, scratches
- Have their possessions 'go missing'
- Refuse to say what is wrong
- Constantly complain of headaches or seem anxious
- Give impossible excuses to explain any of the afore mentioned.

What can Parents do?

We feel at St. Thomas the Apostle N.S. that active home school links are an essential ingredient in the harmonious development of the child.

If your child is being bullied we recommend the following approach:

Take a sensible approach. Listen and investigate. The child should be told that there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is essential that parents are particularly loving and sympathetic towards their bullied children. Every opportunity should be taken to enhance their self-esteem. Bullied children should not be encouraged to hit back. Usually the bully is physically stronger. Children must be encouraged to tell their parents/guardian. The parent/guardian must tell the class teacher.

The teachers at St. Thomas the Apostle N.S. are actively educating the children on the difference between 'telling tales' and telling on bullies. Children especially the younger ones, do not always understand this. If the children see bullying, the parents should encourage them to tell. By telling, they are helping the victim and the bully.

While it is distressing for most parents to discover that their child is a victim of bullying, it can be equally upsetting for the parent to learn that their child is using bullying behaviour. The child using bullying behaviour may need professional help.

Procedure for Investigating Alleged Incidents of Bullying

- A. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by the teachers. A record of all allegations will be kept in the School Incident Book.
- B. In any alleged incident of bullying, the class teacher (accompanied by the principal) will speak separately to the pupils involved and will make written notes of details in an attempt to get both sides of the story. Children may be asked to write their account of the incident.

The following types of questions will be asked:

- What kind of bullying has taken place?
- Where did the incident take place?
- When did the bullying happen?
- Who did the bullying

- C. Should more than one person be involved, each child will be interviewed individually and then the group will meet with the teachers. Each member of the group will again be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear as to what everyone else said.
- D. If it is concluded that an incident of bullying has taken place the parents/guardians of all parties involved will be informed and may be asked to call to the school and meet with the teacher or teacher and principal.
- E. A follow-up meeting will take place (within two weeks) with the child who was bullied and the child who was bullying separately – to ensure that there is no further bullying.
- F. There will be a follow up communication with the Parents

Roles and Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of Ms. Maura Molony, the school principal to co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy. It is the responsibility of each class teacher to record any incidents of inappropriate behaviour in the class book. The pupils of St. Thomas the Apostle N.S. are fully aware of our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Implementation Date

This policy is effective since May 2012

Ratification and Communication

This policy was reviewed in October 2015. It was ratified at a Board of Management Meeting in November 2015.

Signed:

Chairperson

Principal