

## **Policy for Fostering Healthy Relationships**

Our overall Christian aim is to "Love your neighbour as yourself".

- The school seeks to promote an environment in which all students feel valued and accepted as unique individuals in the school family.
- The school recognises that conflicts in relationships can arise; for most part such conflicts can be dealt with easily and redemptively by staff and will be called 'unkind behaviour'.
- Two contexts where more serious problems can arise are:-
  - The arrival of a new student into the school
  - Where an individual comes to feel deliberately ostracised from other children.
- The school, therefore, sets out to promote acceptance of one another through:-
  - Everyday relational and devotional life of the school, where staff look to be pro-active in fostering acceptance.
  - Through teaching in assemblies and Biblical Studies lessons.
  - Following a pro-active programme when a new child enters the school
  - Promoting a climate in which unkind behaviour or the deliberate exclusion of others are held to be unacceptable practices.

### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is defined as any behaviour in which a person systematically and deliberately uses strength or power to hurt or coerce others by intimidation. This may be verbal or physical intimidation. Potential areas of bullying could be:-

- Cyber-bullying,
  - Prejudice-based,
  - Homophobic or
  - Gender-based bullying
- There is an expectation that all staff will operate proactively in order to cultivate a climate of acceptance and thereby minimise occurrences of ostracising or bullying.
  - Where a child experiences distress as a result of the perceived or actual treatment of others, the school addresses such cases with due seriousness.
  - In the case of bullying arising:
    - Pupils are to have been made aware of the routes whereby their distress can be communicated.
    - Procedures, as set out in this document, are to be followed to seek to bring about redemption to the situation.

## **Promoting Acceptance**

- Part of our training of the students will lead them to ask, "What would Jesus do?" in a situation as well as asking what He would ask of us in the situation. This will, hopefully, provoke a faith response in their hearts.
- In bringing peace we will be encouraging pupils to confess what they have done, to say sorry and to forgive and learn to accept one another.

### Before a child joins the school

- Inform the other children of the new child's expected arrival.
- Ask several children, as appropriate, to take responsibility for caring for the new arrival. That is, to be 'buddies'.
- Encourage the children to face their questions and concerns about another child joining the school.
- Reinforce your own expectations and call the children to respond in faith.

### As the child joins the school

- Review with the child how he/she is settling into the school.
- Try to keep informed by asking other children.

### Difficulties fitting in

- Try to meet matters in a low-key way whilst showing concern. Make positive suggestions as appropriate.
- Pray about the situation with the child.
- Talk about and pray for children and families in our regular staff prayer meetings.

## **Preventing Bullying**

Bullying may be prevented from arising through fostering a proper attitude of mutual respect and acceptance. This will be explored with the children as we look at relevant Bible passages such as 1 Corinthians 12.

Parent-teacher communication is vital should any problems arise. Staff should be helped in asking the right questions of children.

## **Dealing with Bullying**

- Remain calm, giving confidence and showing that you are in charge.
- Take the incident seriously.
- Take action quickly.
- Consider whether the action should be private or public.
- Offer concrete help, advice and support.
- Make it plain to the person causing the offence that you disapprove of the behaviour and why
- Encourage the person causing the offence to see things from the victim's point of view.
- Discipline the child causing the offence appropriately, taking care not to act impulsively or aggressively.
- Explain the discipline clearly.

- Do not be over-protective of the victim but allow him/her to help himself/herself through suggested strategies e.g. saying 'no' to unwanted behaviour.
- Be discreet in talking with parents about the other child involved in the incident.

### **Informing Others**

- Inform school management
- Inform colleagues to ensure vigilance
- Inform parents

### **"No blame" approach**

When a child shows signs of being a victim of bullying but there is no clear evidence of bullying taking place, the following procedure is recommended:

- The victim needs to be made to feel that their concerns are being heard.
- Staff commit to observing the children involved.
- Review the situation and take appropriate action

Avoid the use of terms like bully, victim and bullied in these discussions. Ensure that parents and children know the expectations that have been set in place.

Pat Wells

Chair of Governors

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