**OUR LADY IMMACULATE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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***“With God all things are possible”***

***(Matthew 19:26)***

**At Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School, we will inspire our children to achieve personal excellence for themselves and for the glory of God.**

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| **Anti-Bullying Policy** |

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| **Date** | **Review Date** | **Nominated Lead** | **Nominated Governor** |
| **Autumn 2023** | **Autumn 2024** | **Lesley Roche** | **Linda McSweeney** |

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| **Headteacher:** | Lesley Roche |
| **Chair of Governing Body:** | Linda McSweeney |

**Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School**

# Anti-bullying Policy

## Statement of Intent

In accordance with our vision and mission statements we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

## Aims

* Recognising that we are created by God and in the image of God, we aim to instil in children respect for themselves and others
* To ensure that all children feel safe, secure and happy
* To ensure that no child is able to cause physical, mental or emotional harm to any individual

**Statutory duty of schools**

The Governors and Headteacher have a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils.

**What Is Bullying?**

In order to be considered bullying, the behaviour must include:

* **An Imbalance of Power:**Children who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
* **Repetition:**Bullying behaviours happen more than once or have the potential to happen more than once.

Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

* **Verbal bullying** is saying or writing mean things. Verbal bullying includes:
  + teasing;
  + name-calling;
  + inappropriate sexual comments;
  + taunting;
  + threatening to cause harm.
* **Social bullying**, sometimes referred to as relational bullying, involves hurting someone’s reputation or relationships. Social bullying includes:
  + leaving someone out on purpose;
  + telling other children not to be friends with someone;
  + spreading rumours about someone;
  + embarrassing someone in public.
* **Physical bullying**involves hurting a person’s body or possessions. Physical bullying includes:
  + hitting/kicking/pinching;
  + spitting;
  + tripping/pushing;
  + taking or breaking someone’s things;
  + making mean or rude hand gestures.
* **Cyber bullying** is bullying that takes place over digital devices like cell phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

* Social Media, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter;
* SMS (Short Message Service) also known as Text Message sent through devices;
* Instant Message (via devices, email provider services, apps, and social media messaging features);
* email.

Through assemblies, discussions and our teaching we reiterate that the children should say in the first instance:

**‘Stop, I don’t like what you are doing.’ - whilst raising their hand.**

Then, they are reminded to talk to an adult to raise their concern. We encourage children to talk to a member of staff who will then record and follow up as appropriate. Notes written during or after a child has raised a concern, are logged on CPOMs.

From time to time, parents and carers may have concerns about their son or daughter's education and/or wellbeing at school. Quite often this is due to a misunderstanding about school policy or practice. Sometimes the pupil may be behaving unusually at home or at school and/or expressing their own concerns. Whatever the situation, we would encourage you, and/or your child, to **talk to us about it at the earliest opportunity** so that we can help sort out the problem.

**Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?**

At Our Lady Immaculate we recognise that:

* Bullying can be extremely damaging to individuals’ self-esteem and impact on their relationships.

* No one should have to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

* We all have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

## Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

* is frightened of walking to or from school
* doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
* begs to be driven to school
* changes their usual routine
* is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
* begins to truant
* becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
* starts stammering
* attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
* cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
* feels ill in the morning
* begins to do poorly in school work
* comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
* has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
* asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
* has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
* has unexplained cuts or bruises
* comes home hungrier than is reasonable (money/lunch has been stolen)
* becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
* is bullying other children or siblings
* stops eating
* is frightened to say what's wrong
* gives improbable excuses for any of the above
* is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
* is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

**School**

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

* if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached;
* a clear account of the incident will be recorded on CPOMs;
* all concerned will be interviewed and the incident will be recorded on CPOMs;
* class teachers will be kept informed and if it persists other staff will be informed on a need-to-know basis;
* parents/guardians/carers will be kept informed;
* punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned;
* cyber bullying may be referred to outside agencies, such as the police.

**Challenging Children**

We have to acknowledge that as a school we may have children with extremely challenging needs:

* physical;
* emotional;
* learning;
* behavioural;
* social.

Children whose behaviour not only impinges on themselves but on the school as

a whole, can prevent effective teaching and learning. They can also be disruptive and cause breakdown in relationships within a classroom. They can also affect health and safety of other children and staff and themselves e.g. leaving class without permission, throwing furniture around.

These children will be registered with the Inclusion Manager and appropriate action and support will be provided in line with the SEND policy. Children on the SEND register will receive specific targeted support, e.g. Anti-Bullying Alliance SEND resources.

The health and safety of all children will always take precedence when making any decision about appropriate action.

**Pupils**

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

* trained Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (ABA);
* being offered an opportunity to discuss the experience with a class teacher or member of staff of their choice;
* being offered continuous support;
* restoring self-esteem and confidence.

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

* trained Anti-Bullying Ambassadors (ABA);
* discussing what happened;
* discovering why the pupil became involved;
* establishing the wrong doing and need to change;
* informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil.

**Outcomes - In the event of Bullying Taking Place:**

1. The bully (bullies) will be asked to write a letter of apology to the victim and may be required to make appropriate reparation. A letter will be sent to the perpetrator’s parents detailing their punishment which will be decided by the Headteacher.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion will be considered
3. When appropriate, mediation will take place to facilitate reconciliation between the two children.
4. If necessary, actions may be taken to reduce contact between pupils for a period of time.
5. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## Prevention

## We will use a range of methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

* TELLING school ethos
* Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
* Intervention work from Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
* Home School Agreement
* Assemblies
* Anti-Bullying week
* Internet Awareness Week
* Display materials around the school
* Positive achievement assemblies
* Behaviour Plan
* PSHE sessions on E-Safety and bullying
* The teaching of Religious Education

All staff are on alert for bullying behaviour and/or signs of distress, e.g. isolation, reluctance to attend school, suspicious illness, deterioration in work, asking to stay in at break time.

## Equal Opportunities

All pupils are treated as equal and particular care is taken to ensure that any vulnerable children are protected through peer and adult support.

## Health and safety

Care is taken to ensure that the site is as visible as possible and that children are not unsupervised at any time.

**Arrangements for recording, monitoring and evaluation**

All incidents of bullying are logged on CPOMs. Reports to the Headteacher and staff enable evaluation of the relevance of provision for dealing with bullying related incidents – defined as any incident which is perceived by the victim or any other person to contravene this policy.

The Governing Body will monitor the pattern and frequency of bullying related incidents.

## Related Policies

Positive Behaviour Policy

Child Protection Policy

Harmful Sexual Behaviour/Child on Child Abuse Policy

E-Safety Policy

Religious Education Policy

RHSE Policy

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# Guidance for Parents

**We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the class teacher.**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

It is important to recognise that very few situations are as simple as they first appear.

If you believe your child is being bullied, please record what your child says, including any specific information such as what was said to them and who else was present.

Email the class teacher to inform them that you need to speak to them about bullying.

If the situation has been previously addressed by the class teacher and you feel it is continuing, contact the Headteacher by email or through the school office.

At all times, encourage your child to speak to the class teacher

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# Guidance for Pupils

**We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the class teacher.**

The school has a ‘Worry’ box. This box is for you to put a note to your teacher about anything that is worrying you. It could be about:

* Friends
* Play time
* Work that you don’t understand or would like help with
* Good ideas
* Worries about teachers

If you are worried or upset because the same person or people do things or say things which you don’t like, you should tell your class teacher as soon as possible. If another adult is near, and may have heard, you should also tell them.

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# Guidance for Staff

**We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the class teacher.**

1. Take the matter seriously. However, the bullying incident has been communicated, (from parent, pupil or member of staff) you **must** investigate and record all information on CPOMs.

1. Listen to both perpetrator and victim. Make full notes about the situation. Ask questions about what made them react as they did.

1. Do not react emotionally. Situations are rarely as simple as they first appear.

1. In the event that bullying has been identified, inform the Deputy Head in the first instance who will then inform the Headteacher. Take agreed action, acting as quickly as possible.

1. If the behaviour has happened to other children (apart from the victim) they should know it is being dealt with.

1. Reassure the victim that he/she is correct in speaking to you. Encourage the victim to help him or herself, discussing ways of dealing with the situation. He/she might need encouragement to be more assertive or more skilled socially.

1. Counsel the bully. Help him/her to consider the implications of the behaviour. Make it clear that the behaviour is not acceptable. The bully should be taught to express himself or herself without hurting others. If the bully does not learn to control his/her behaviour, he/she may continue to bully in secondary school or in adult life.

1. Punishment should be carefully considered. Aggressive action gives the bully the message that it is alright to bully if you have the power. Punishment for bullying is decided by the Headteacher, in consultation with the child's parents, and may include a loss of privileges.