

St Richard's Catholic College

FRIENDSHIP & ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: September 2019

Chair of Governors: _____

The Governing Body will review the policy in September 2020

Friendship and Anti-Bullying Policy

It is the entitlement of every pupil in St Richard's Catholic College to enjoy an environment free of prejudice and any form of bullying behaviour, either inside or outside the classroom and on the way to and from school. Founded on Christian principles, our college seeks to promote equality of opportunity as we work together to form a community in which all are expected to show 'respect for a person and respect for a person's property'.

Our Aims

At St Richard's we take all forms of conflict, friendship problems, and bullying behaviour seriously. Our aims are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for all pupils in our care.
- To create a happy atmosphere in which parents/carers and staff work together for the welfare of the pupils.
- To ensure everyone is mutually valued and respected regardless of gender, race, age, sexuality, beliefs and ability.
- To encourage pupils 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. (Further details in Behaviour and Discipline Policy and The Education Act 2011).

Our Code which is displayed in every classroom and journal stipulates the following:
We support each other by ensuring that no-one is insulted, offended or harmed in any way.

We recognise that everyone has the right to happiness, free from injury or intimidation.

We wish ours to be a listening, ordered environment with open channels of communication between all staff and pupils.

Pupils will be reminded of the Code regularly and will be encouraged to adhere to it for the good of the whole community.

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 both pupils disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, but both pupils 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, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally." (Taken from the Department for Education advice March 2014, 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying').

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical** bullying (hitting, punching, finger jabbing, any inappropriate touching, pinching, jostling, breaking 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 sending nasty phone calls, text messages or e-mails/chat rooms. Linked to our college's Acceptable Use Policy (ICT). Teachers now have wider search powers to tackle cyber-bullying included in the Education Act 2011.

Some bullying is done because a pupil is deemed to belong to a certain group. This has been labelled 'prejudice based bullying', and includes homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sexual or gender bullying, and bullying of pupils with learning or other disabilities. (This is linked to our Equalities Policy)

Usually one pupil starts bullying another pupil. However, there are often other pupils present (bystanders). These may:

- help the bully by joining in
- help the bully by watching, laughing or shouting encouragement
- remain uninvolved
- help the victim by telling the bully to stop or fetching an adult

All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it.

Strategies for Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Parents, pupils and staff all have an important part to play in the identification and detection of bullying. Prompt communication between all parties involved is essential.

Whole School Approach

All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are committed to the creation of conditions which discourage bullying through: sanctions that are applied fairly, consistently, proportionally and reasonably; vigilant supervision of areas such as toilets, corridors, staircases, the changing rooms, the playground and the back area of the college. Time spent by Form Tutors with their form is especially valuable and is a proactive way of gathering intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict, thus enabling strategies to be developed that prevent bullying occurring in the first place.

- Issues surrounding friendships and bullying behaviour are taught through the Personal, Social Health & Economic Education Curriculum, Citizenship Curriculum and tutor time. 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 relationship conflict.
- Whole School Assemblies are also used to discuss bullying and raise pupils' awareness of what bullying looks like, and how they can respond.
- Regular questionnaires are completed and action plans are put in place following them based on young people's perceptions and experiences. Displays providing information are regularly updated.
- Tutor Time/Circle Time provide opportunities for more detailed discussions and role play activities to explore the nature of bullying.
- The School Council and Year Council provide a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the pupils to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- Student Listeners, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and staff aim to enable pupils to resolve friendship problems and low level bullying behaviour without adult intervention.

- Student Listeners, Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and staff promote positive play to reduce potential conflict during break time and lunchtimes.
- St Richard's code will be upheld at all times. All staff will monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes inappropriate in order to prevent bullying developing. Staff on playground duty will inform relevant staff of any incidents.
- Provide effective staff training to ensure all staff understand the principles and purpose of the school Friendship and Anti-bullying Policy, their legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.

Intervention Strategies

Strategies for responding to bullying behaviour

Where bullying does occur this will be followed, by an immediate and appropriate response, including the use of disciplinary sanctions where necessary.

Early identification is the most effective way in minimising bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the person doing the bullying needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop. They may also need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for bullying.

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/TA or any member of support staff
- Speaking to a parent/other adult who then may contact the college in any of the ways listed.
- Speaking to their School Council Rep or a Student Listener.
- Passing on information via a confidential issues box and e-mail address, which is checked daily. Pupils can access the e-mail address via their pupil e-mail account by typing 'issues box' in the To: section of a new email. If they are not using their pupil email account they should address it to issuesbox@strichardscc.com

When bullying is known to have happened or be on-going

The Form Tutor 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 engaging in bullying.

Information will be gathered from witnesses to explain what they saw.

The Form Tutor/class teacher/Pastoral Leader/LMT/Principal will be informed.

Sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy will be used where appropriate. These might include:

- official warnings to cease offending or withdrawal of certain school privileges
- detention
- involvement of the Schools Police Liaison Officer
- exclusion from certain areas of college premises
- Close supervision
- a fixed-term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

The purpose is to signal to the pupils that a recurrence of the bullying behaviour will be unacceptable.

- Parents of those involved will be informed of any action taken.
- Records will be kept on pupils' files.

- Support will be sought from East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance service where necessary.
- Behavioural support, counselling or mentoring will be put into place when appropriate.

Where a pupil or group of pupils deny involvement in bullying behaviour the pupils concerned will be observed and monitored. The pupil being bullied may be asked to record and report any incidents which cause them concern.

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.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

All stakeholders (pupils, staff, parents and governors) will be expected to promote this policy. Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm'. Where this is the case, staff should report their concerns to the designated Safeguarding Lead teachers or Safeguarding Officers in college. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, there may be an identified need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Bullying outside College Premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the college premises "to such an extent as is reasonable." Where bullying is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. (DFE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' Guidance).

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

In St Richard's, it is our clear intention to minimise the stress caused by bullying. All pupils are aware that we share a caring environment and that those who abuse this in any way will be treated as bullies.

We will review this policy and procedures annually and assess the implementation and effectiveness of various strategies used. The policy will be updated to take account of new Government and local guidance, and the views of the whole school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Mission Statement of the college, our statement of community expectations and the management of pupil behaviour, our Equalities policy, our Community Cohesion action plan, our Acceptable Use policy and The Equality Act 2010.

Complaints

The Governing Body has established a formal complaints procedure and this may be used by a parent/carer if necessary.

Parents are asked to read the full Friendship and Anti-bullying policy which can be found on the college website.