

POLICY ON BULLYING

Rationale

Pupil intimidation or bullying covers a full spectrum of behaviour. This spectrum ranges from making an individual in a group feel awkward and out of place, through repeated taunting, isolating an individual, verbal or physical intimidation to full physical aggression. Aspects of behaviour from this spectrum occur in all schools and communities. However, it is imperative that schools pursue an active policy to confront such anti-social behaviour. This policy should be known and agreed by all staff, pupils and parents within the school community and be adopted by the whole school community. Such behaviour is contrary to the gospel values and Christian ethos of the school.

Aims

1. To recognise and accommodate individuality within the community.
2. To create a non-threatening environment.
3. To develop tolerance and forbearance.
4. To develop respect for each other.
5. To encourage recognition of intimidating behaviour.
6. To be proactive rather than reactive in this area.
7. To provide clear guidelines for staff, parents and pupils.
8. To provide young people with the skills to cope with intimidation when they leave school.

Guidelines

1. St. Mary's School is unequivocal in its opposition to intimidatory behaviour of any kind and will adopt a positive, whole school approach to confront such behaviour when it occurs.
2. The School believes that intimidation is best dealt with openly, by discussion with all parties being fully involved.
3. The School urges all pupils who feel they are the victims of bullying or intimidation to report their worries or concerns to an appropriate person, so that the problem can be identified and brought out into the open. The victim may report to:
 - a fellow pupil who can go to a member of staff;
 - a sixth former who will be attached to the Year or form for that purpose
 - a form tutor, their Learning Coordinator or the Pastoral Manager;
 - any other member of staff - teaching or non-teaching.
4. The matter will then be discussed with both the victim and the alleged perpetrator, **the strategy being discussed with the victim before implementation.**
5. In the first instance the aim is to counsel both parties so that the intimidation can stop, and the self-esteem of all is maintained.
6. If the problem persists a Learning Coordinator may set up a self-help group with cross year support from older pupils.

7. Sanctions against the perpetrator, in accordance with school policy, will be enforced only if the policy implementation is obstructed and the intimidation continues and not for the initial intimidation.
8. In more serious cases or if a problem persists the parents of both parties will be fully informed and involved in the process.
9. External counselling can be arranged if required through the Pastoral Manager. Parents will always be informed in such cases.
10. A survey of pupils' views will be undertaken to ascertain the extent of the problem. Sixth form volunteers will be sought to support the forms in Years 7 and 8.
11. External agencies will be contacted to provide appropriate support and training for staff and pupils.
12. By their example, staff will set a lead in this area.
13. The policy will be disseminated through assemblies, year assemblies and class discussion. The policy will be reinforced by the active use of tutorial time and incorporated in the School's programme for P.S.H.E.

Conclusion

The implementation of this policy should serve to raise the self-esteem and enhance self-awareness for all pupils. It should foster good working relationships within a Christian community based on the gospel spirit of Christian charity. The policy should create an open environment where pupils feel secure but not over-protective so that they are able to develop the range of interpersonal skills.

Reviewed: January 2009

Next Review Date: July 2012

Responsible Governor Committee: Pastoral