



St Benedict's High School – Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction and Rationale

As a Catholic school, St Benedict's upholds the Charter for Catholic Education. In honouring Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, we strive to create an inclusive ethos which aims to honour the life, dignity and voice of each person, made in the image of God. We have a commitment to communicate Catholic social teaching and thereby to promote social justice and opportunity for all. In addition, we promote respect for different beliefs and cultures.

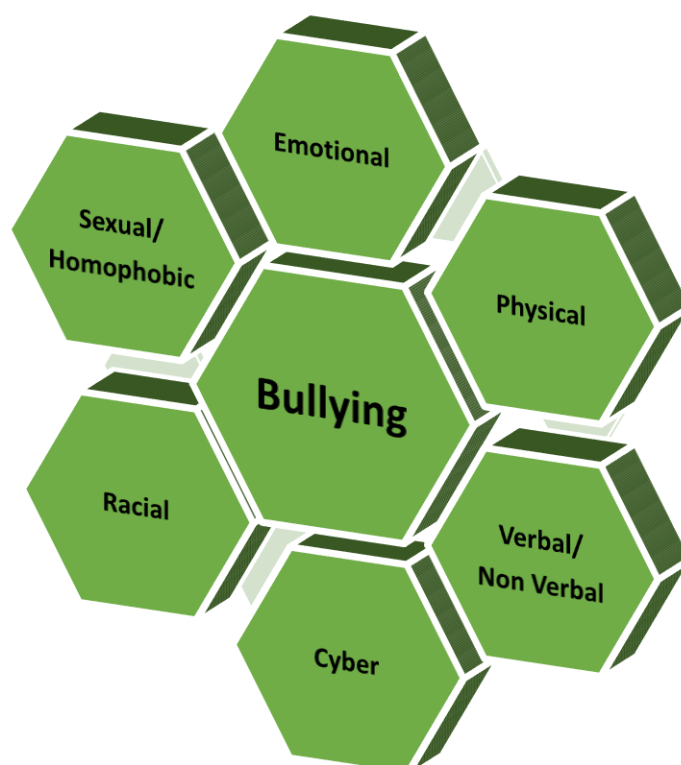
The vision for all Scotland's children is that all children should be confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens. In order for these outcomes to be achieved, children should be: safe; healthy; achieving; nurtured; active; respected & responsible and included. St Benedict's High School is fully committed to Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC).

To achieve this vision: All those working with young people will aim to:

- ◆ Develop positive relationships with young people and adults which are mutually respectful, responsible and trusting; and promote their emotional health & wellbeing.
- ◆ Build resilience and skills in young people and parents & carers, to prevent and deal with bullying.
- ◆ Prevent bullying of young people through a range of strategies and approaches.
- ◆ Ensure that an ethos of anti-bullying is embedded in day to day practices and the message that bullying is never acceptable is continuously reinforced
- ◆ Support young people and their parents and carers who are effected by bullying

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined by the Scottish Government as “**behaviour which leaves people feeling helpless, frightened, anxious, depressed or humiliated.**” (A National Approach to Anti Bullying for Scotland’s Children and Young People, 2010). Bullying is often persistent and may take many forms, such as:



- ◆ **Emotional:** Being unfriendly, excluding from peer groups, and tormenting e.g. hiding possessions.
- ◆ **Physical:** Pushing, kicking, hitting, other forms of violence.
- ◆ **Racist:** Racial; taunts, graffiti, gestures, name calling.
- ◆ **Sexual:** Sexual harassment (unwanted physical contact), sexual abuse/demeaning comments.
- ◆ **Homophobic:** Because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- ◆ **Verbal:** Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, threatening, intimidating.
- ◆ **Non-verbal:** Staring someone out, laughing at someone as a group.
- ◆ **Cyber:** All inappropriate use of the internet or other forms of communication technology i.e. mobile phones to send threatening messages, photographs, spread rumours, name calling etc.

All bullying behaviour can impact negatively on the wellbeing of those affected.

“The impact an incident has had on a child or young person is more important than whether it is classified as bullying.” (Scottish Government, 2010).

The impact of bullying behaviour may lead to:

- ◆ Reduced self-confidence;
- ◆ Poor or non-attendance at educational establishment;
- ◆ Withdrawal from normal activities and loneliness;
- ◆ Anxiety and depression;
- ◆ Tearfulness;
- ◆ Humiliation;
- ◆ Feeling unsafe and fearful;
- ◆ Changes to behaviour and/or physical appearance;
- ◆ Aggression;
- ◆ Demonstrating bullying behaviour towards others;
- ◆ Health issues, such as, eating disorders; self-harm and suicidal thoughts.



How we prevent bullying

St Benedict's use the following approaches and interventions which help in preventing and dealing with bullying behaviour:

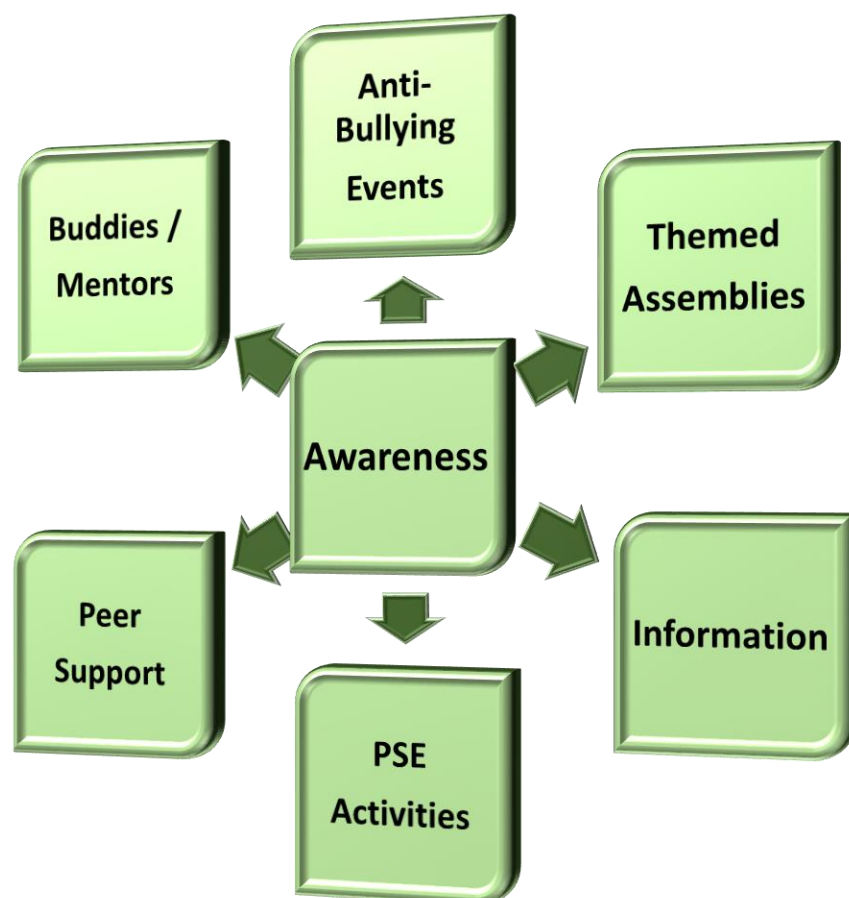
Creating a positive ethos by:

- ◆ Promotion of the Gospel values of love, peace, respect, forgiveness and the dignity and immense worth of every person
- ◆ Creating an environment based on mutual respect, strong relationships and a cohesive community;
- ◆ Seeking agreement amongst the establishment community on what bullying is; giving explicit and consistent messages that bullying is unacceptable;
- ◆ Reviewing the life of the school to identify any factors which might allow or encourage bullying;
- ◆ Restorative approaches;
- ◆ Raising awareness and understanding of Children's Rights (UNCRC);
- ◆ Nurturing approaches;
- ◆ Ensuring that the use of institutional power does not model bullying; and
- ◆ Encouraging safe and responsible use of personal mobile technology.



We promote awareness of the wrongfulness of bullying behaviour by:

- ◆ PSE curricular activities for all year groups;
- ◆ Conducting and progressing feedback from anti-bullying survey;
- ◆ Anti-Bullying displays;
- ◆ Themed assemblies;
- ◆ Peer support,
- ◆ Buddies / mentors;
- ◆ National anti-bullying week and local anti-bullying events / activities;
- ◆ St Benedict's school handbook;
- ◆ Working in partnership with the pupil and parent council;
- ◆ Working in partnership with a range of services – see useful links at end of the document;
- ◆ Providing specific information regarding prejudice bullying, hate crime and equalities;
- ◆ Providing information on how to be protected against cyber bullying;



In the event of bullying:

What should young people do?

- ◆ Young people will be regularly reminded to do the following if bullying behaviour occurs:
- ◆ Tell someone immediately, at home or at the school, even if they are not personally being bullied but have seen it with others.
- ◆ Follow advice given by staff regarding personal safety.
- ◆ Participate in a restorative meeting with the person displaying bullying behaviour if they feel comfortable with this process.

What should parents & carers do?

Parents will be made aware of the schools anti bullying policy when their child joins St Benedict's High School. The full policy is available on the school web site. Paper copies are available by calling reception.

If a parent thinks their child is experiencing bullying behaviour they should:

- ◆ Reassure their child. It is not their fault and the matter will be dealt with sensitively and promptly. They have done the correct thing by sharing this information.
- ◆ Contact the child's pastoral care teacher and pass on all information.
- ◆ Work in partnership with the school to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion

What should the school do?

If a young person discloses bullying behaviour to any member of staff they should deal with the matter immediately. All disclosures will be taken seriously even if, as adults, they do not think the incident described is “real” bullying or very serious. Staff are aware that insensitive handling of a bullying incident might result in more not less difficulty for the pupil experiencing bullying behaviour. The year group head should be informed.

- ◆ A full investigation will take place, led by the year group head. Those involved may be asked to record in writing their view of the events – follow appendix 1 & 2
- ◆ Those involved will be interviewed and counselled by an appropriate member of staff
- ◆ Parents will be contacted
- ◆ Those involved will be given some advice on how he/she can improve the situation
- ◆ Where appropriate and agreed by both parties a restorative meeting may take place
- ◆ Details of the event should be noted in the young person’s click & go records and shared with key members of staff including the child protection coordinator if appropriate
- ◆ If appropriate, staff members should be notified of the pupils and the difficulties they are having
- ◆ Pastoral Care teacher will continue to check that the pupil is well and that no further incidents have taken place – appendix 2b
- ◆ Parents should be updated on actions taken by the school
- ◆ A bully log form should be completed by year group head and recorded on SEEMIS/management/bullying&equalities/maintain incident. Bullying figures are shared termly for statistical purposes with the local authority.

If the situation persists

- ◆ Both sets of parents may be invited into school to discuss a way forward. (These meetings would take place separately)
- ◆ Our community police officer may speak to individuals to reinforce the legal implications and offer advice & support
- ◆ Those involved may require to work on a 1 to 1 basis with support staff to address issues
- ◆ Class changes may be required (pupils experiencing bullying behaviour should not be moved unless requested by the pupil and parent)

If the problem is not resolved

The matter would then become subject to more serious sanctions and if the problem persisted could lead to exclusion or possible legal action.

Monitoring & Evaluation

Recording of Incidents

To ensure consistency of practice across all educational establishments and settings all incidents of alleged bullying/bullying should be recorded on SEEMIS/management/bullying&equalities/maintain incident.

A flowchart offering guidance for dealing with reported incidents is available in Appendix 2.

Responsibilities of the Local Authority

Data and information provided from SEEMIS will be monitored at Children's Services headquarters.

Data Monitoring – Equalities

Bullying can be based on prejudice because of differences or perceived differences due to the protected characteristics covered by the Equality Act, 2010, of a child or young person or a group in which they are perceived to belong to. Incidents of prejudice based bullying will be recorded on the logging forms and reported to children's services headquarters on a quarterly basis. A report of bullying incidents which are characterised by the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act 2010 (perceived or actual) will be presented to the Education and Children Policy Board on an annual basis.

Policy Review

A National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People (2010) recommends that anti-bullying policies are reviewed and updated every 3 years. St Benedict's policy on Anti-bullying will be reviewed in line with this guidance.