ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Aim

We believe that every girl has the right to realise her potential in a happy and safe environment. We aim to ensure that all students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

Objectives

- All members of staff, parents and students have a clear understanding of what bullying is.
- All members of staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Bullying is taken seriously at St Edmund's. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

Definition of Bullying

The Department for Education (DfE) defines bullying as: 'behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally'. Bullying involves an imbalance of power and all types of bullying are damaging to an individual's well-being.

Types of bullying

Bullying can take many forms, but includes:

- <u>Verbal</u> - deliberate, unkind and persistent remarks. Racist, sexual or homophobic name calling. Being hurtful about appearance. Name calling, sarcasm, persistent teasing.
- <u>Emotional</u> - spreading hurtful rumours. Writing graffiti or using images/offensive materials. Tormenting, humiliating. Excluding someone and leaving them out on purpose
- <u>Theft/Damaging property</u> - Taking someone's bag deliberately and breaking it. Malicious damage to property e.g. pencil case, uniform.
- <u>Physical</u> **-** Pinching, punching, pushing, kicking and hitting. Any violence that is done on purpose to others.
- <u>Racist</u> - A racial taunt, graffiti, gestures. Making inappropriate comments regarding faiths and beliefs.
- <u>Sexual</u> **-** Making sexual comments. Inappropriate touching.
- <u>Cyber bullying</u> **-** The use of ICT, particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else. Hurtful, harmful messages sent from individuals and groups.
- <u>Homophobic</u> **-** Because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality.

Who Bullies?

Anyone has the capacity to bully. There are no completely reliable predisposition diagnoses. However, those who perceive themselves as low status within a community, institution or group may use bullying in an attempt to artificially boost their status. Self-esteem is therefore a key factor in whether someone bullies or not. This puts equal opportunities and inclusion at the centre of all anti-bullying work in schools.

Who is bullied?

Anyone can be bullied – young person, parent/carer/guardian, staff member or volunteer. People who suffer bullying are often perceived by others to be different. Sometimes the perceived difference is individual to that person – shyness, physical appearance, clothing and possessions, accent, perceived inappropriate behaviour.
Frequently the perceived difference comes from assigning an individual to a group. Such bullying would then be designated as class, disability, homophobic, racist, religious or sexist. People can be assigned or be a member of more than one group.

Preventative measures

The school will:

- Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, ICT lessons, tutorial time, assemblies, subject areas and informal discussion, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- Give care and support to create and maintain a safe learning environment where all pupils feel safe, secure and valued and know they will be listened to and taken seriously in line with the school ethos.
- Participate in local and national initiatives such as Anti-bullying Week and National Safer Internet Day.
- Seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive, anti-bullying education.
- Consider the use of specific strategies, e.g. implement House structure across the school and peer mentoring on a more regular basis subject to available resources. Prefects are trained in awareness of bullying, giving them the skills to support victims of bullying.
- Presentations from outside agencies and theatre groups.
- Students are encouraged to develop and understand the school values of respect, responsibility and resilience.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs of 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 starving (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

School procedures if bullying is reported

The school recognises that bullying is never acceptable and will follow the procedures as outlined below:-

1) Incidents of bullying should be reported immediately to any member of staff who in turn will report the matter to the appropriate Head of House.
2) All students will be listened to, and individual issues understood. The school provides opportunities for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and the incident acted on.
3) Staff must take appropriate action on information given. The professional judgement of the Head of House will determine the nature of the problem and the appropriate level of response and course of action. The Head of House may decide that it is more appropriate for the tutor to deal with the case and will need to liaise with other Heads of House depending on which students are involved.
4) In most cases written accounts of the incident will be taken through discreet interviews where necessary and following investigation, the incident will be dealt with appropriately.
5) Incidents of bullying will be recorded on the *Anti-bullying Referral Form* by type and outcome. This data is held by the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and used for monitoring and evaluation and is shared with the Governing Body.
6) A variety of appropriate strategies may be used to deal with reported incidents:
   - Apology from bully to victim (verbal/written).
   - Discussion of victim's own behaviour leading up to the incident.
   - Positive steps to be taken with bully to encourage improved behaviour.
   - Monitoring of bully after incident to see any repeated behaviour.
   - Counselling of victim/bully.
   - Parents /carers will be contacted by letter /telephone/invited into school, if appropriate.
- Implement disciplinary sanctions, including detentions/exclusions.
- Use specific organisations and resources for help with particular problems.

- Work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and when a criminal offence may have been committed.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

A senior member of this school staff will be identified to lead on the implementation of the policy and act as the link person with outside agencies. An annual report will be made to the governing body, including statistics about:
- The number of reported concerns
- Monitoring information about the pupils involved
- Motivations for bullying
- Actions taken and outcomes

The school will review the policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

BBy/Autumn 2016