

St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School



St. Thomas of Aquins
R.C. HIGH SCHOOL



St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School

Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice amongst Children and Young People

St Thomas of Aquin's Roman Catholic High School is a learning community which ensures a safe, supportive and enjoyable environment where pupils, staff, and parents are inspired and motivated to work hard for one another to fulfil pupils' God-given potential.

Self-Discipline

Teamwork

Trust

High expectations

Openness

Mutual Respect

Achieving excellence

Success

Policy reviewed March 22

Nominated Lead: I Jean Pierre

To be reviewed in March 2025

Anti-Bullying Procedures

1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy is based on the City of Edinburgh Council's policy* and views of staff, parents and pupils of the school and reflects the City of Edinburgh Council's strong commitment to providing a safe environment for all in its educational establishments.

As a Catholic school, the values of the Gospel permeate all aspects of school life. The children / young people grow to recognise that every person is unique, made in God's image and likeness. God's message of love, tolerance and respect for the individual is reinforced within our teaching and is central to collective acts of worship.

The emotional health and wellbeing of children, young people and staff is essential for our pupils to develop academically and grow into healthy individuals with successful life chances. We are committed to developing positive relationships between all in the school community, children, young people, staff and parents. Our core practices are the 4 Rs: Relationships, Rights Respecting, Resilience, Restorative.

The school is engaging in the accreditation process to become a Rights Respecting School. This procedure covers the following articles of the UNCRC:

- Article 2 – You have the right to protection against discrimination.
- Article 19 – You have the right to be protected from being hurt or badly treated.
- Article 29 – You have the right to an education which develops your personality and your respect for other's rights and the environment.

This procedure has been revised and updated in consultation with staff, parent and pupil groups, including our Pupil Parliament, Parent Council and Equalities Committee.

2. SCOPE

This school procedure follows the *City of Edinburgh Council's Communities and Families Procedure on 'Preventing and Responding to Bullying and Prejudice amongst Children and Young People' (2020) which is based on '*Respect for All: The National Approach to Anti-Bullying for Scotland's Children and Young People*'. It has been written with reference to the Scottish Catholic Education Service Equality Policy for schools and in consultation with representatives of the Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh. This policy applies to all members the school community.

3. POLICY CONTENT:

Our values and beliefs

As a Catholic school we embrace the life and teaching of Jesus Christ as our founding principle. Through the ethos of the school we will endeavour to work with pupils so that they come to know Jesus Christ' teachings as guiding principles throughout their life. We work towards helping each person in the school community to grow in a holistic way, develop, mature and fulfil their potential.

- All people are made in the image and likeness of God, and are deserving of dignity and respect
- All learners are of equal value.
- We recognise and respect difference.
- We foster positive attitudes and relationships, and a shared sense of cohesion and belonging.
- All pupils and staff have the right to feel happy, safe and included. St Thomas of Aquin's will support every young person to achieve and attain their very best.
- We actively foster good relations between diverse groups and individuals, respect individuality and celebrate diversity.
- We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity for all and we work actively towards eliminating all forms of bullying, prejudice and discrimination. We challenge inequality and promote inclusive, nurturing environments.
- We recognise the effects that bullying, prejudice and discrimination can have on a child or young person's feelings of worth, on their health and wellbeing and on their school-work.
- We provide opportunities for success through a variety of curricular and extra-curricular options and pathways.
- We encourage creativity and support our young people to build the skills and resilience they need for the future.
- We have the courage to aspire to the very best we can be. We belong to our school and we are very proud of our school and learning community.
- We use restorative approaches to repair and strengthen relationships between staff and pupils within our whole school community.

4- DEFINITIONS

What do we mean by bullying?

“Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person's capacity to feel in control of themselves. This is what we term as their sense of 'agency'. Bullying takes place in the context of relationships; it is behaviour that can make people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online”.

(Respect for All, 2017)

Bullying behaviours can take many forms. Examples of bullying behaviours include:

- Name calling, teasing, putting down or threatening.
- Ignoring, leaving out or spreading rumours.
- Hitting, tripping, kicking.
- Taking and damaging belongings
- Sending an abusive text, email or instant message, or posting an abusive comment on a social networking site (online or cyber-bullying).
- Targeting someone because of who they are or who they are perceived to be.

Discrimination, Prejudice-based Bullying and the Equality Act 2010

Bullying behaviour can often be rooted in prejudice and discrimination due to difference or a perceived difference. We are committed to challenging discrimination, prejudice-based bullying and language, and to fulfilling our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 sets out rights which include legal protection from discrimination related to any of the nine protected characteristics: **disability; race; sex; pregnancy/maternity; religion/belief; sexual orientation; gender re-assignment; age; marriage/civil partnership**

Note: In relation to the education of children and young people, the protected characteristics of age and marriage/civil partnership are not included.

We recognise that children and young people can also experience bullying in relation to: asylum seeker or refugee status; body image; being care experienced; social or economic status; young carer responsibilities; imprisonment of parents/carers, siblings, or other family members.

We recognise that children and young people can experience disadvantage, prejudice or discrimination because of any of these individual factors or a combination of factors.

Hate incident or hate crime

A bullying incident is a hate incident if the victim or anyone else thinks it was carried out because of hostility or prejudice based on actual or perceived disability, race, religion, sexual orientation or transgender identity.

If the incident is a criminal offence and the offender targeted the victim because of their prejudice or hostility based on any of these characteristics, this is a hate crime.

All hate crimes should be reported to Police Scotland through the School Link Officer. In the case of hate incidents, the designated member of staff / Equality Co-ordinator should seek advice from the School Link Officer.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

See also supplementary guidance on preventing and responding to incidents of prejudice and discrimination related to protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Part 1: Tackling Racist Incidents / Creating an Anti-racist Culture.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities and Reporting bullying, prejudice and discrimination incidents

The Head Teacher, Mr Santini, will be responsible for the introduction and implementation of this policy. However, all staff, all pupils and their parents/carers must play an active part in following the guidance and putting it into practice.

All teachers and support staff are expected to be pro-active, to treat all allegations seriously and to refer reports of incidents to the Equalities Co-ordinator / designated member of the senior leadership team. The incident is recorded accurately with future actions detailed.

Mme Jean Pierre as the Equalities Co-ordinator, in consultation with the Head Teacher will

- ensure that all allegations are reported and recorded rigorously
- monitor SEEMiS Bullying and Equalities module reports regularly, at least termly
- monitor and report annually on the implementation of this procedure
- supervise the review and updating of this procedure at least every three years

Pupils are asked to:

- report all incidents and suspected incidents of any type of bullying, discrimination or prejudice that they experience to a member of staff, where it is safe for them to do so
- report all incidents and suspected incidents of bullying, discrimination and prejudice that they see to a member of staff, where it is safe for them to do so
- support each other and to seek help from a member of staff, to ensure that everyone feels safe and nobody feels excluded or afraid in school.
- if they don't feel able to speak to a member of staff, pupils are able to share their concern anonymously by placing a note in the Place2Be Place2Talk box or contact an external organisation for advice and support, e.g. Childline.

All school staff are required to:

- be pro-active in implementing the procedure
- treat all allegations and observation of bullying, discrimination and prejudiced behaviour or language seriously
- seek to address incidents, where appropriate
- record any incidents on a Wellbeing Concern form
- inform the Equalities Co-ordinator / designated member of staff of all incidents

Parents/carers are asked to:

- be aware of Respect *me*, Scotland's Anti-bullying Service booklet – Bullying Behaviour: A Guide for Parents and Carers (available at <http://respectme.org.uk/resources/publications/>)
- work collaboratively and respectfully with staff, children and young people and other parents/carers where appropriate to help ensure bullying, discrimination and prejudice cannot thrive
- speak to any member of staff (the class teacher, Pupil Support Leader or member of senior leadership team) if they have any concerns about bullying, discrimination and prejudice experienced by their child or by another child / children at the time of the incident or as soon as possible thereafter
- encourage their children to be positive members of our school community
- monitor closely their child's use of mobile phone and the internet and to intervene if there is a suspicion that these are being used inappropriately.
- understand that we seek to understand the experiences and address the needs of all children and young people who experience bullying, discrimination or prejudiced behaviour as well as those who present bullying, discrimination or prejudiced behaviour. We do this within a framework of respect, responsibility, resolution and support.
- speak to the Head Teacher if their concerns continue following initial intervention
- be aware that they can contact a relevant external organisation for advice and support
- be aware of the school's complaints procedure and the Council's Advice and Conciliation Service and their rights regarding these procedures

7- PROMOTION OF EQUALITY

The Teaching and learning framework within a Catholic school is rooted in the teaching of the Church. As part of our work to promote equality, we aim to ensure that children are offered opportunities to develop their understanding of faith in practice and to:

- understand and celebrate diversity in all its forms;
- learn about equality and inclusion in a variety of curriculum areas (e.g. PSE, Science, RE, Art and English);
- develop an understanding of global citizenship;
- understand the power of language particularly relating to verbal abuse due to race, disability, sexual orientation or social standing;
- develop an understanding of their rights, the rights of others, and their responsibilities to each other;
- develop an understanding and appreciation of other religious beliefs and cultures;
- develop emotionally and intellectually with the personal qualities and attributes required to make a successful life in a diverse society.

Through the curriculum S1-S6, we aim to:

- Increase knowledge of children's rights and responsibilities as responsible citizens.
- Challenge stereotypes, bias and discrimination, including prejudice-based attitudes and language.
- Deliver an inclusive curriculum that reflects all identities: disability; race; sex; pregnancy/maternity; religion/belief; sexual orientation; gender reassignment; age; marriage/civil partnership as well as asylum seeker or refugee status; body image; being care experienced; social or economic status; young carer responsibilities; imprisonment of parents/carers, siblings, or other family members. This enables our children and young people to develop their sense of understanding and inclusion of others as well as seeing themselves reflected in the learning community.
- Provide age-appropriate reading materials and resources reflecting and representing diversity and the protected characteristics, e.g. family structures that include single parents, people from minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled people, same-sex parents.
- Use Critical Literacy to support pupil's understanding of historical contexts
- Build resilience and empathy in young people as confident individuals.
- Raise awareness about bullying and our Anti-Bullying Procedure across a range of school subjects.

PREVENTION

By promoting a positive school ethos, with a focus on rights, equalities and health and wellbeing, we hope to prevent bullying, prejudice and discrimination happening.

- We update posters and school display screens / leaflets and use them to remind pupils that bullying, prejudice and discrimination are not acceptable and what to do if they or someone they know is being bullied or experiencing prejudice.
- Our pupil Equalities Committee actively supports the school's work on prevention of bullying, prejudice and discrimination.
- Bullying, prejudice and discrimination and other equality-related issues are a agenda item points on the SLT meetings, Faculty meetings and can feature in our Pupil Parliament meetings.
- We carry out surveys and focus groups to evaluate ethos and health and wellbeing in the school.
- The school holds diversity, anti-bullying projects to raise the profile of these issues. For example, during Respect Week we hold an annual Anti-bullying event to raise awareness of what bullying looks like, how we can prevent it and what supports are available for pupils who experience bullying. We also hold anti-bullying year group assemblies and discuss bullying in PSE lessons.
- The Rights Respecting School group will support pupils are aware of and learn about their human rights through lessons, events, assemblies and displays.
We will be working towards embedding Rights-Respecting values in the school and so that pupils are empowered to become more active citizens and learners.
- We work with other agencies and partners in health, police and the voluntary sector to promote a positive ethos. This includes working with organisations such as Show racism the red card and Respect *me*,
- Our staff have received and have access to training opportunities to increase their awareness and understanding of all forms of bullying, prejudice and discrimination as well as to develop skills in restorative practice.
- We share good practice with our cluster and within our Diocese.
- We use our public platforms to: share the vision, aims and values of the school promote the positive impact that the inclusive ethos of the school has outline key information for pupils, parents and carers on accessing support and help
- We use the Charter for Catholic schools to ensure that, through Church Teaching, we promote Social Justice and opportunity for all.

SUPPORT

How we support pupils who are bullied or experience prejudice and discrimination

See also supplementary guidance on preventing and responding to incidents of prejudice and discrimination related to the protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010. Part 1: Tackling Racist Incidents / Creating an Anti-Racist Culture.

We listen to the child or young person

- We reassure them that they have done the right thing by telling.
- We encourage them to talk about how they feel, find out what happened and who was involved
- We involve them in making choices about how the matter could be resolved.
- We discuss strategies for being safe and staying safe.
- We ask them to report any further incidents to us straight away.
- We affirm that the bullying can be stopped and that we will persist with intervention until it does.
- We say clearly what will happen next and that we will update them on progress.
- When the incident has been resolved, we monitor and check that bullying has not started again.

What happens next?

- The teacher or member of staff who receives the report will record the incident on a Wellbeing Concern form and discuss next steps with the designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator.
- At all times, child protection procedures and/or Risk Management procedures should be followed, if necessary.
- In most cases, further investigation will be done by the designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator or Pupil Support Leader (secondary)
- Further investigation may involve:
 - Speaking with the children or young people involved, preserving confidentiality.
 - Speaking with children or young people or others who witnessed the incident, preserving confidentiality.
 - Speaking with parents (*after consultation with the child or young person*)
 - Seeking advice from partner services and relevant organisations
- In all cases where there may be criminal implications (e.g. sexual assault or hate crime), the designated member of senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will report this to Police Scotland.
- In the case of hate incidents, the designated member of the senior leadership team / Equalities Co-ordinator will seek advice from Police Scotland.
- If it is found that bullying, prejudice or discrimination has taken place, we will take appropriate and proportionate action (see examples of possible actions below)
- If it is found that bullying, prejudice or discrimination has not taken place, we will speak with the child or young person who reported the incident and offer further support if needed.
- At all times, we will update the child or young person who reported bullying, prejudice or discrimination.

Our work with pupils who bully others or present prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes / behaviour

A child or young person who is bullying someone else may not be doing this consciously, but the impact of bullying, prejudice or discrimination is still felt, and this is taken seriously. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour or present prejudiced or discriminatory attitudes / behaviour will be treated fairly and consistently using actions that are proportionate and appropriate to the age and stage of the child and to the incident (see below).

- We interview the pupil (or pupils) involved in the incident separately.
- We listen to their version of events and take time to discover the reasons for the behaviour.
- We talk to anyone who may have witnessed the incident.
- We reinforce the message that bullying, prejudice and discrimination are not acceptable, and that we expect it to stop.
- We address prejudicial or discriminatory attitudes that may be behind the behaviour
- We seek a commitment to stop bullying.
- We affirm that it is right for pupils to let us know when they are being bullied.
- We consider consequences under our school's Positive Behaviour Management Procedure.
- We consider what support the pupil needs and whether other referrals are required, e.g. educational psychologist, counsellor.
- In all cases where there may be criminal implications (e.g. sexual assault or hate crime) we report this to Police Scotland.
- In the case of hate incidents, we seek advice from Police Scotland.
- We advise pupils responsible for bullying, prejudice or discrimination that we check to ensure that the behaviour stops.
- We contact the parents of the pupil(s) at an early stage, where appropriate.
- We follow up after incidents to check that the bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour has not started again in any form.

Some examples of our actions

- Restorative practices, including acknowledging grievances.
- Involvement of a parent/carer where appropriate.
- Peer mentoring and mediation.
- De-escalation strategies.
- Physical separation of person/people presenting bullying, prejudiced or discriminatory behaviour, where necessary and possible.
- Use of support base to increase confidence and provide support.

7. EQUALITIES AND RIGHTS IMPACT, SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

St Thomas of Aquin's RC High School is committed in our duty to eliminate discrimination, victimisation and harassment, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. We will make reasonable adjustments wherever appropriate for those individuals with "protected characteristics" and of particular relevance, disability; gender reassignment; race; religion or belief; sex or sexual orientation; pregnancy and maternity.

8. REVIEW

This policy will be communicated in draft and final form to all stakeholders via school email and Parent Council. It will also be available for staff on the school server. In addition, a draft will be given to the Pupil Parliament for feedback and amendments. This policy will be reviewed on a 3-yearly basis with the BRBLBB Working Party, based on pupil, staff and parental feedback.

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