

# St. Lawrence College



Our school is one community, united in our respect for each other, tolerant of differences and proud of our diversity, honest and positive about our learning and behaviour every day.

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## RATIONALE

The aim of the St. Lawrence College anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any kind and to ensure that everyone in our school community can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of our school community should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the school policy on bullying: therefore, the aim of the policy is to help members of the school community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable, and it will not be tolerated. St. Lawrence College adopts a 'zero-tolerance' approach towards bullying and as a school we take bullying and its impact seriously. Everyone in the school community has a responsibility to report any incident of bullying that comes to their attention and the school will seek ways to counter the effects of such negative behaviour. The ethos of our school fosters high expectations of outstanding behaviour and we will consistently challenge any behaviour that falls below this.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy document are to ensure that all teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents know:

- what bullying is
- what to do if bullying arises
- what the school's anti-bullying policy is

As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

## WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is:

- deliberately aggressive
- persistent
- happens in an unequal power relationship
- results in pain and distress

Bullying may be an isolated incident or occur over a period of time. It can be *emotional, verbal, physical or online*.

- Emotional can include stealing, hiding or damaging property, being unfriendly, excluding, making people feel unwelcome, making threatening gestures and/or sending nasty messages.

- Physical can include hitting, pushing, kicking, punching or any use of violence and / or sexual harassment.
- Verbal can include spreading rumours, name calling, teasing and mimicking, sarcasm and / or threatening behaviour.
- Cyberbullying can include posts and / or photos online that are nasty, sexual or offensive in anyway and cause distress to the person they are related to.

Using the above, all staff will use their professional judgement as to what they consider to be bullying behaviour.

#### WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND TO BULLYING?

- Bullying hurts.
- No one deserves to be the victim of bullying.
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

#### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS FOR PARENTS AND STAFF

A child may indicate by signs or 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 to be at school or in the playground
- 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 make less effort with schoolwork than previously
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (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
- Shows lack of eye contact
- Becomes short tempered
- Change in attitude to people at home.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other social, emotional and/or mental health problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

## OUTCOMES

All known/reported incidences of bullying will be investigated by the class teacher or by a senior member of staff. Parents of the perpetrator may also be questioned about the incident or about any concerns that they may be having.

The child displaying unacceptable behaviour, may be asked to genuinely apologise (as appropriate to the child's age and level of understanding) Other consequences may take place e.g., a parent being informed about their child's behaviour and a request that the parents support the school with any sanctions that it takes (See Positive Behaviour Policy). Wherever possible, the pupils will be reconciled.

In serious cases (this is defined as children displaying an on-going lack of response to sanctions, that is, no change in behaviour of the perpetrator and an unwillingness to alter their behaviour choices), fixed or permanent exclusion will be considered.

During and after the incident(s) have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be recorded and monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

## PREVENTION

At St. Lawrence College Junior School, we use a variety of methods to support children in preventing and understanding the consequences of bullying through PSHE lessons, assemblies, Anti-Bullying Week and continued awareness in the classroom.

The ethos and working philosophy of St. Lawrence College means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property. Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded.

Staff regularly discuss bullying. This informs children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss bullying and report any incidents and concerns about other children's behaviour.

Staff reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular theme in line with our school rules which highlight the need for respectfulness of everyone.

Staff must be careful not to highlight differences of children or an individual child, even if this is done in jest. This gives other children advocacy to use this difference to begin calling names or teasing.

Staff must be vigilant regarding groups of friends together. Friendship groups may bring about the imbalance of power and must be led towards welcoming others to join them and not excluding others from their group.

Staff must reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings and be kind to each other.

Children are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a personal pledge or promise against bullying
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- Making up role-plays about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters that children who use unacceptable behaviour towards others are dealt with quickly

If a child feels that they are being bullied, then there are several procedures that they are encouraged to follow: (not hierarchical)

- Tell a friend
- Tell a teacher or adult whom you feel you can trust
- Tell a parent or adult at home whom you feel you can trust
- Discuss it as part of your PSHE time
- Write it down and deliver it to a teacher or to the school office.

## RECORDING OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

When an incident of bullying has taken place, staff must be prepared to record and report each incident. In the case of racist bullying, this must be reported to the Head teacher. General incidences of bullying should be recorded in the Behaviour Log, this would include incidents where staff have had to become involved and speak with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying.

Confirmed cases of bullying must be recorded in the individual's file in the school office.

All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that further incidents by the same child or children may be prevented from happening in the future.

Severe incidents of bullying will be discussed with the Senior Management of the school.

As the parent/carer of a child whom you suspect is being bullied you should:

1. Report bullying incidents to the class teacher.
2. Speak to the teacher. In cases of serious bullying, staff record the incidents, and the Head teacher is notified.
3. In these serious cases, parents are informed and asked to come into a meeting to discuss the problem.
4. The bullying behaviour or threat of bullying must be investigated, and bullying stopped quickly.
5. An attempt is made to help the child who is accused of bullying to change their behaviour.

Parents/Carers must not under any circumstances:

- attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents
- encourage a child to react in an equally bullying manner as a way of getting back

We thank parents/carers for their cooperation, understanding and agreement with our policy against bullying.