



Article 19: Children have the right to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally.

In considering this policy it should be noted that it will be applied equally to all pupils regardless of gender, race, religion, disability or socio-economic status.

AIM

To promote positive behaviour by declaring the unacceptability of bullying behaviour and determining specific strategies to ensure the health, safety and welfare of St John's pupils.

RATIONALE

The school aims to deliver East Renfrewshire Education Department's vision of '*Everyone Attaining, Everyone Achieving through Excellent Experiences*'. It is our responsibility to work towards eliminating all forms of bullying and to provide a safe, supportive environment for all, without fear of experiencing bullying behaviour. The promotion of fairness, respect, equality and inclusion helps ensure that children and young people feel safe and secure and able to build up strong and positive relationships with based on mutual respect and trust.

"Bullying Behaviour impacts on children and young people's wellbeing and can affect their participation, attainment and inclusion" (Respect for All, Scottish Government, 2017).

By identifying different types of bullying behaviour, staff will be able to create a safe and secure learning environment for all pupils. Moreover, staff adopt a more preventative approach by implementing our positive behaviour strategies. However, pupils who are involved in bullying behaviour will be made accountable for their actions and dealt with under the school disciplinary procedures.

WHAT IS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

"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" (RespectMe, 2015).

Bullying can be expressed through physical, emotional, verbal or intimidating behaviour or in the form of marginalisation. People can be on the receiving end of bullying behaviour for a number of reasons including: age, race, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, nationality or religion. Bullying behaviour can include:

- Being called names, being teased, being put down or threatened
- Being hit, kicked, pushed or tripped
- Having belongings stolen or damaged
- Being ignored, being left out or having rumours spread about you
- Receiving abusive content on social media
- Being forced to do things against your will
- Being targeted for who you are or who you are perceived to be

When talking about bullying behaviour, it is important not to label children and young people as 'bullies' or 'victims'. Labels can stick for life and can isolate a child, rather than helping them to recover or change their behaviour. All children and young people need help to understand why bullying behaviour is wrong in order that they can change it.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE BULLYING

The popularity of mobile, internet and wireless technologies have provided increasing opportunities for 'cyberbullying'. In partnership with parents, it is the school's responsibility to ensure that pupils have a good knowledge of how to use their digital devices and the internet appropriately and safely.

Online bullying behaviour can include:

- Sending threatening or abusive text messages
- Making or sharing embarrassing images or videos
- Trolling on social networks, media and games
- Excluding others from games, networks or online groups
- Setting up hate sites or groups about individuals
- Creating fake accounts or identity theft
- Voting against someone in an abusive poll
- Sending or pressuring someone to send explicit messages
- Encouraging self-harm
- Engaging in sexual conversation

Through the use of the Technologies Experiences and Outcomes and Benchmarks, teachers are able to incorporate cyber resilience and internet safety into learning and teaching about digital literacy.

DEALING WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We aim to build a school community which reflects Gospel values. Our ethos allows staff to develop an atmosphere of trust and openness, which is used to encourage pupils to confide in a staff member if being bullied. Pupils should be aware that they will be listened to and supported.

THE ROLE OF THE STAFF:

- To provide an environment where all children feel safe, welcome and included
- To foster an ethos of inclusion and promote positive attitudes in the classroom
- To actively involve children in promoting positive behaviour
- To discuss and explore the effects of bullying behaviour through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum
- To be vigilant and look out for unusual behavioural trends
- To observe and monitor children who give cause for concern
- To provide support and guidance for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying behaviour against themselves or others

- To engage in restorative approaches to ensure that all children are treated fairly and equally
- To keep abreast of research and national agenda surrounding bullying
- To engage with effective learning and teaching resources, for example, 'Respect Me'

THE ROLE OF THE PUPILS:

- To encourage one another to create an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated
- To ensure everyone feels valued and respected
- To contribute their thoughts and opinions through the Pupil Council and other pupil groups/committees
- To offer peer support and guidance through buddying or mentoring
- To lead or make use of Peer Mediation to support children when solving their own disputes
- To participate in Anti-Bullying campaigns, posters and assemblies to raise awareness

THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS/CARERS:

- To support the school values of tolerance, care, concern and respect for self and others
- To foster an open pathway of communication between the school and home
- To raise awareness of the importance of encouraging a positive and inclusive ethos within the school and beyond
- To feel supported to contact the school if they have any concerns

RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

All reported incidents will be recorded and investigated timeously. The maximum time to carry out a full investigation should be **three working days**. If a delay is unavoidable, the individual who has made the allegation should be contacted by phone, letter or in person, told the matter is under investigation and that the school will be contacting the relevant parent/carer upon completion of the enquiry.

The member of staff to whom the incident is first reported, or who has witnessed the incident, should take the incident seriously. They must use their professional judgement in deciding upon appropriate action. Action will depend on the following factors:

- Age of those involved
- Knowledge of individuals
- Level of distress caused
- Context of the incident

A 'first offence' of a minor nature, for example, name-calling or abusive language will be challenged and the child will be made aware that the behaviour is unacceptable. The pupil should then be told that any further instances will be recorded.

The school will record all allegations of bullying behaviour, with a full investigation carried out. Where the investigation may take longer, a phone call will be made, explaining that the parent/carer will be contacted upon completion of the enquiry.

A member of the Senior Management Team will monitor incidents recorded regularly to ensure patterns of behaviour are recognised and measures are put in place to respond appropriately.