



APOSTOLIC FAITH SECONDARY SCHOOL
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction & Purpose

At The Apostolic Faith Secondary School we strongly believe that all form of bullying is unacceptable, regardless of how it is delivered or what excuses are given to justify it. We aim, as a school, to provide a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and stringent measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

Victims of bullying will be treated in a supportive manner, and their case heard in an atmosphere of positive concern.

The purpose of this document is to set out a definition for bullying and to explain the procedure to be followed for dealing with bullying.

Aims and Objectives

- To give a clear definition of bullying.
- To raise awareness of bullying by ensuring that all leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, learners and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- To bring about conditions in which bullying is less likely to happen in the future by ensuring that all leaders, teaching staff and non-teaching staff know what the policy is on bullying, and to follow it when bullying is reported.
- To ensure a whole school approach to bullying by ensuring that all learners and parents know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

What is Bullying?

There are a number of definitions of bullying but all definitions include the following characteristics:

- That it tends to be repetitive or prolonged
- That it involves an imbalance of power
- That it may be verbal, physical, psychological, racist, sexual or homophobic.

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** – pushing, kicking, hitting, or any kind of violence
- **Racist** – racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** – unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- **Verbal** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing

It is important to remember that **not all aggressive behaviour is bullying**. Some students, especially very young students, without the intention or awareness that it causes distress, may exhibit behaviour, which appears to be bullying. **This type**

of behaviour is taken seriously by the school and will be addressed through the school's behaviour policy. Adults in school and parents need to be clear about the distinction between bullying and isolated acts of aggression.

It should be stated that usually victims of bullying become so through no fault of their own.

However, on occasions, it is important to recognise that there can be different types of victims, they **may** be learners who:

- Are new to the class,
- Are different in appearance, speech or background from other learners
- Suffer from low esteem (but it is not clear whether this is a cause or effect of bullying)
- Are more anxious or nervous

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

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 of walking to and from school
- Changes their usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins truanting
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Threatens to run away
- Cries themselves to sleep at night
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions go 'missing'
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other students or siblings
- Is frightened to say what is wrong.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

The Apostolic Faith Secondary School recognises that bullying can take place between a variety of individuals for example:

- Students bullying students
- Staff bullying students
- Staff bullying staff
- Parents bullying staff

- Staff bullying parents

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

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

At The Apostolic Faith Secondary School we understand we have the responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to the issues of bullying.

Strategies for the prevention of bullying

In order to encourage co-operative, non-aggressive play we have introduced and implemented preventative strategies, which we hope will reduce incidents of bullying behaviour. These are:

- Whole School Christian Values
- Personal, Social and Health Education along with Relationships and Sex Education delivered throughout the school according to our scheme of work covers topics such as peer pressure, choices and bullying explicitly
- E-safety lessons and cyber safety lessons
- Strategies such as circle time and role play are used as a means to explore different issues as they arise in school
- Posters, books and display boards are used to promote a positive attitude towards behaviour and friendships
- Through Collective Worship and the Religious Education scheme of work we constantly talk about the importance of friendship and being a good citizen.
- We seek to promote a happy school
- We seek students' opinions through learner interviews and the school council and key issues from these are dealt with through circle time and at school council meetings.
- SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of learning).
- Outdoor & Adventurous activities

Alongside these strategies we encourage co-operative behaviour through:

- Play leaders
- STARS (Student Prefects)
- Play equipment on the playground
- Buddies
- Designated staff to co-ordinate games sessions at playtimes – for individual students as and when the need arises.

- An annual residential visit focusing on teamwork, co-operation and self-worth
- Pastoral Team

Procedures for dealing with bullying

When bullying has been observed or reported then the following steps should be taken:

The 'Seven Step Approach' should be used. This approach seeks to change the behaviour of the bully and thus achieve the best possible outcome from the victim. Punishment of the Bully may make things worse for the victim and therefore often leads to secrecy rather than disclosure.

Reporting Bullying

How can learners report bullying?

- By telling an adult in school
- By telling a STAR or friend
- Through the class worry box

Action

Designated staff will employ the '**Seven Step Approach**' following a report of a case of bullying. This will take the form of:

- **Step 1** – interview with the victim – sometimes it is helpful to ask the victim to represent their feelings in a picture or in words to share with the alleged bullies
- **Step 2** – Convene a meeting with the people involved (but not including the victim)
- **Step 3** – Explain the problem and decide what action needs to take place (sometimes there is a need for the adult to meet with the victim a second time to feedback information from the group and to clarify certain points but do not put the victim and the alleged bullies together).
- **Step 4** – Share responsibility - who is going to be responsible for which outcome)
- **Step 5** – Ask the group for their ideas – draw up a clear action plan
- **Step 6** – With guidance to help students to implement the plan to correct their behaviour
- **Step 7** – Meet with all parties at regular intervals to make sure the bullying behaviour has stopped – give praise where it is deserved.

How will incidents be recorded?

- Immediate note made in class or playground incident book outlining the name of the child making the report, the date and a brief outline of the problem.
- Records of follow up action to be taken and notes from meetings with students to be held in designated file in Principal's office.

All staff are to record minutes of meetings and place them in the seven step file in the principal's office – this includes minutes of follow up meetings and monitoring. All staff are to complete a **'Keep an Eye On Form'** to communicate with all staff.

Who will respond to a report of bullying?

Incidents should be reported to a member of the Senior Management Team or specifically trained teaching assistants. This will then be dealt with through the 'Seven Step Approach'.

The Senior Management Team, along with the trained teaching assistants will be responsible for coordinating the approach and recording the steps taken.

An outline of the incident will be shared with all staff to raise awareness of the situation using the 'Keep and Eye on' sheet (form). More specific information will be shared with individual staff on a need to know basis. Learners will be given the opportunity to amend their behaviour for themselves first following the Seven Step Approach, however should there be no improvement in the behaviour parents will be informed.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Policy

The Senior Management Team and Pastoral Team will review the incident book regularly to look for recurring incidents and see if these can be related to particular school routines.

If, on review it is deemed that the 'Seven Step Approach' has not worked for a particular child or group of students and the bullying continues, then the following will happen:

- The parents/guardians of the victim and the bully(ies) will be informed
- A referral to the Behaviour Support/ Disciplinary Team will be made which may lead to the suspension or expulsion of the learner, depending on the gravity of the bullying.
- The Management body will be made aware of the disciplinary action taken

The role of leaders

- The Management body supports the principal in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The Management body will not condone any bullying at all in our school, and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously, and dealt with appropriately.
- The Management body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The leaders require the principal to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying, and to report to the leaders on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.
- A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the chair of leaders to look into the matter. The Management body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the Management body notifies the principal, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the Management body.

This policy will be reviewed in the next two academic sessions by the Learning & Progress Committee.

The Anti-Bullying Policy is intended to be a guideline to assist in the consistent application of The Apostolic Faith Secondary School *modus operandi* for employees, parents & guardians and learners. The policy does not create a contract implied or expressed, with any staff of the school. The Apostolic Faith Secondary School reserves the right to modify this policy, in whole or in part, at any time, at the discretion of the school management. This policy has been approved by the **Management of School** to guide the operations of The Apostolic Faith Secondary School with effect from **September, 2021**.