

What is Bullying?



Through our annual parental questionnaires, it is clear that most parents do feel that we respond well to bullying, but this sheet is designed to inform any parent who is unsure of our approach, so that hopefully they can see that we are doing all that we can to ensure that children are happy in school.

The anti-bullying section in our school's behaviour policy (available on the website), states that:

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

1. It is deliberately hurtful behaviour. 2. It is repeated over time. 3. There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

In essence that means that bullying involves one child or a group of children deliberately targeting another, over a period of time in order to hurt that child and also to make the child, who is exhibiting bullying behaviours, feel in control of that person. The control aspect is significant, as children who bully, tend to feel bad about themselves (often deep down) and this is what leads them to pick on others. These children therefore tend to have their own problems and in order to solve bullying, these also need to be addressed.

To be clear what bullying is not; it is not children falling out or even physically hurting each other (friends or otherwise). This, although unacceptable, occurs in all schools, as children learn, over their lives, how to behave and relate to others; this is part of their normal development.

Genuine bullying is very rare in our school, although it may occasionally happen; when we know about it we are quick to respond. Firstly though, we investigate any claims to determine whether actual bullying is taking place. In the vast majority of times, this is not the case, although we still work with the children (and parents) concerned, in order to help them to get over their differences. We use a combination of rewards, encouragement and if needed, punishments in order to teach the pupils how they should behave towards each other. Being a Catholic school, we also talk to the children about these issues from a Christian perspective and remind them of how God wants them to live their lives.

If we discover that genuine bullying is taking place, a member of the senior management will always become involved. Children who bully will receive sanctions for their actions and this will be proportionate to what they have done wrong. However, they will also be helped to see why they may be acting in this way towards other children, so that they can begin to improve their own self-esteem. This does not happen overnight and will often take some time, and also the involvement and support of their own families.

Victims of bullying are well looked after. They are encouraged to come forward and report anything that shows that bullying is continuing. This is really important, as often a victim worries about a bully retaliating, if they should 'tell on them'. Therefore staff go to great lengths to empower the victim so that they feel that they can communicate their concerns. At all times staff will be consistent in their messages and actions towards bullies and victims, so that they both know what will happen should the bullying continue.

The measures described above, outline how we react once bullying is confirmed, however we also do an awful lot to prevent bullying in the first place. We regularly hold anti-bullying days and workshops etc, which are often run by outside specialists. Our PHSE



curriculum also covers anti-bullying and most importantly the religious and spiritual elements of the school greatly contribute to developing an ethos of love, care and respect within our community.

Bullying is very unusual at St Bede's. If we discover it we are quick to deal with it. However, it can take time to resolve, although we are totally committed to achieving this, as we strongly desire that all of our pupils are happy, safe and able to learn.

'Love one another as I have loved you'