

## **POLICY AGAINST BULLYING**

*(this policy is available to parents through the School's website and also in hard copy by request to the School Office)*

It is clearly stated as the first Aim of More House School, as a Catholic School, that we wish to '*establish an environment where pupils and staff are valued and supported as individuals and where their rights and dignity are maintained..*' This policy has regard to the DCSF Guidance contained in '*Safe to Learn ~ Embedding anti-bullying in schools*'.

The Board of Governors values the good relationships fostered by the school, and expects that every allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. Every school is likely to have some problem with bullying at one time or another. In a small school community such as More House it is rare and is dealt with quickly and sensitively. Girls have access to a wide variety of people which ensures they can find someone to talk to whether it is a member of the teaching Staff, Form Tutor, member of the Leadership Group, support Staff, senior girl, School Officer, Mentor or any pupil within the school. All Staff, pupils and parents should be aware of the negative effects that bullying can have on individuals and the School in general, and should work towards ensuring that pupils can work in an environment without fear. It is accepted that it is not always possible for everyone to like everyone else within a community. It is required however that everyone's rights are tolerated and protected. Bullying is unacceptable in this school and will not be tolerated.

### **The overall aims of the policy are:**

- to demonstrate that More House takes bullying seriously and bullying will not be tolerated
- to recognise that bullying, including cyber bullying, may occur on racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic or disability grounds (including special educational needs).
- to take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and on off-site activities
- to support everyone in the actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied
- to demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying

- to promote an environment where it is not an offence to tell someone about bullying
- to promote positive attitudes in pupils

The central part of the policy as stated below forms part of essential discussions in Form time and PSHE lessons.

*The content of this policy is based on the responses of girls of More House to a questionnaire about bullying. It has been adopted by the girls, Staff and Governors of the school as a summary of the School's attitude to bullying and the consequences of such behaviour.*

### **What sort of behaviour can be described as bullying?**

Bullies like to dominate other people and to feel superior to them, especially those who are younger, weaker, in some way different or with some handicap or disability. They use verbal and sometimes physical or psychological behaviour to make the victim feel humiliated and embarrassed in front of other people, and instil a sense of fear. Bullies may be acting alone or in a group and they may try to isolate their victim from their own group of friends; they find the victim's weak spots and attack them. Bullies act well towards their own friends, but change their behaviour completely when dealing with their victims. Their actions towards those who they bully are systematic, calculated, pre-meditated and sustained. Their actions are designed to inflict injury.

### **Verbal bullying**

- Calling people names or laughing at them in a manner which is designed to exclude rather than include.
- Being rude or spiteful or using offensive language about people
- Making threats to hurt people physically or to make them more miserable
- Teasing people about their appearance (weight, hair or clothes), their intelligence, family, money, their colour, race or religion
- Aggressive behaviour
- Bribing people or otherwise making them do things they do not want to do
- Sending hurtful or offensive text messages, instant messages or emails, as well as posting offensive web material.

### **Physical bullying**

- Pushing, kicking, tripping up, hitting, spitting, pinching or pulling hair
- Taking things from another person without their permission
- Damaging another person's belongings
- Playing practical jokes on other people with the intension of humiliating and/or harming them

### **Psychological bullying**

- Using threats to obtain money
- Whispering about people when they are present
- Leaving people out or ignoring them
- Spreading untrue rumours about people or writing notes about them
- Looking at people in an unkind way, making faces
- Getting other people into trouble for something they did not do
- Embarrassing other people

People who are bullied may lose their confidence and can be made to feel that it is their own fault that they are being bullied. All instances of bullying are potentially very serious. At its worst bullying can cause substantial and long-lasting psychological damage to the victim. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

### **What should you do if you are bullied? (guidance for girls)**

Many people who are being bullied make the mistake of keeping it to themselves. If you are being threatened or bullied you must tell someone. This could be:-

- a friend in your class or an older girl, such as your Mentor
- an older brother or sister
- your mother or father or another member of your family
- your Form Tutor or any other teacher
- The Head's PA
- the Head
- Deputy Head
- Your Head of Year
- Your Head of House
- Your House Captain
- The Head Girl or her Deputies

- The Mentor Liaison
- The School Counsellor

If anyone tells you that she is being bullied then you should report this to a member of Staff; do not keep it to yourself.

Other things which help the situation are:-

- Keep calm, ignore the bully and don't let her see that you are hurt by her behaviour
- Stay confident and behave in a friendly way towards the bully so that she has no reason to be aggressive
- Walk away before the bully has the chance to treat you badly

If you report that you have been bullied and you are willing to identify the person who has bullied you and provide evidence that this has happened, the School has a responsibility towards you:

- Someone will talk to the bully to find out why she is acting as she is. The bully will be given every possible encouragement to change her way of behaving.
- The situation will be monitored to make sure that it does not happen again and that the bully does not retaliate.
- The parents of the bully may be told about her behaviour.
- The bully will be given a suitable punishment and warned about her behaviour.

If the bullying is serious or it is repeated then the bully may be suspended from school and this suspension will become part of her permanent school record. In extreme cases a girl may be required to leave the School.

## **Responsibilities**

### *The Board of Governors*

The Chair of Governors and the Head will liaise over all anti-bullying strategies, and individual cases where appropriate.

The Board of Governors will discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies on the initiative of the Chair of Governors and they will discuss the Head's report on this policy as is relevant.

### *The Head*

The Head has a legal duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils.

The Head will when relevant will:

- ensure that all staff, and pupils, have an opportunity of discussing strategies and reviewing them
- determine the strategies and procedures
- discuss development of the strategies with the Leadership Group
- ensure appropriate training is available
- ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, parents and pupils
- report as needed to the Board of Governors

*The Deputy Head, with the assistance of the Senior Teachers will:*

- be responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy
- keep the Head informed of incidents
- assist in arranging relevant staff training
- determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems
- maintain a record of bullying incidents which will not only document incidents but will also provide data for identifying patterns of behaviour.

*Form Tutors will:*

- be responsible for liaising with the Deputy Head and the Senior Teachers over all incidents involving pupils in their Form
- be involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution
- take part in the anti-bullying programme in the PSHE course

*All Staff will:*

- know the policy and procedures
- be observant and ask pupils what is happening to them
- deal with incidents according to the policy
- never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity
- participate in the PSHE course

- participate in relevant training on this issue
- ensure, when on duty, that there is appropriate supervision of the places around the School site where bullying is most likely to occur.

### **Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum**

The School will, where relevant, raise awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through its PSHE programme, school assemblies, the School Forum, use of tutorial time and in the Departmental programmes of study as appropriate.

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school.

### **Signs of Bullying (guidance for Staff)**

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, e.g. becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness or taking unusual absences. There may be changes in work patterns or a lack of concentration.

All Staff should be aware of these possibilities and to report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the Deputy Head or Senior Teachers.

Pupils will be encouraged to report incidents of bullying. In a school the size of More House any instance of bullying is more likely to be identified quickly and girls have easy access to a wide range of individuals: teachers, members of the Leadership Group, support staff, Form Staff, School Officers, pupils in all years and Forms.

### ***Dealing with Incidents***

- if bullying is suspected or reported the incident will be investigated and dealt with initially and immediately by the teacher approached
- if a racial, religious, cultural, sexual/sexist, homophobic, disability or cyber element to the bullying is suspected the Deputy Head will be informed immediately.
- the teacher will record the details of the incident and inform the Deputy Head

- the Deputy Head will interview all the parties and make a record
- staff teaching the bullied pupil and the Form Tutors will be informed
- the Deputy Head will determine in consultation with the Form Tutors the appropriate strategy and plan of action to combat the bullying
- the Form Tutor will oversee the implementation of the strategy
- parents will be kept informed by the Deputy Head if this is felt to be beneficial
- any sanctions against the bullies will be determined by the Deputy Head in consultation with the Head
- the Head will be kept informed by the Deputy Head. Where necessary ~ if the bullying persists for example ~ the issue will be passed to the Head for final action
- Record keeping ~ if there is an instance of persistent bullying ~ two or more connected incidents ~ the Deputy Head will make a note of this which will be lodged on the files of the girls' concerned. A note will also be made in the 'bullying index' which is kept by the Deputy.

### **Bullied Pupils**

Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Pupils who have been bullied will be given support determined by the Deputy Head in consultation with the pupil. The school Counsellor maybe involved in this process if the pupil wishes.

### **Bullies**

Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies, through appropriate support, will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the School. However, the School recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies. It may be appropriate to arrange time with the School Counsellor.

### **Sanctions**

Any of the School's formal punishments, as outlined in the School's behaviour and discipline policy, can be used against bullies as appropriate. These may include things such as: Detention; Report; Internal Suspension; Temporary Exclusion. For persistent offenders or incidents considered as gross acts of aggression a pupil could be permanently excluded.

## **Involvement of Parents**

Parents, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive approach to educating pupils to combat it.

Parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as thought appropriate by the Deputy Head, after consultation with the Head.

Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures and the possibility of permanent exclusion following gross acts of bullying.

## **Suggestions for Parents**

### **Strategies for Dealing with Bullying**

Please remember that there is a difference between ‘the rough and tumble’ between adolescents and true bullying. Whilst it is true that children often need to be more robust in secondary school than has been the case at primary level, bullying is not acceptable.

#### ***If your child has been bullied:***

- calmly talk to your daughter about it
- make a note of what your daughter says ~ particularly who was said to be involved
- reassure your daughter that telling you was the right thing to do
- explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately
- telephone your daughter’s Form Tutor or Year Head as soon as possible
- explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing and make an appointment to see the Form Tutor if necessary

When you are talking to your daughter’s Form Tutor or Head of Year stay calm, remember that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of the incident. Try and be as specific as possible about what your daughter says has happened ~ giving dates, places and names of other girls involved. Do ask if there is anything you can do to help your daughter or the School. Stay in touch with the School and let us know if things improve as well as if problems continue.

If you are worried that your concerns are not being addressed discuss your concerns with the Deputy Head or Head. If this does not help, write to the Chair of Governors, via School, explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happen.

***If your child is bullying other children:***

Children may be involved in bullying pupils at some time or another. Often parents are not aware. Children sometimes bully others because:

- they don't know it is wrong
- they are copying older brothers or sisters or other people they admire
- they haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their peers
- their friends encourage them to bully
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings

To stop your child bullying others:

- talk to your daughter, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes other unhappy. This will be reinforcing what is being taught in school in the PSHE programme and through the relevant parts of the curriculum.
- discourage others from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- show your daughter how to interact with other children without bullying
- discuss the problems your daughter is experiencing with her Form Tutor and how you can all work together to stop the bullying behaviour from continuing
- regularly check with your daughter how things are going at school
- give your daughter praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people

***Review: next due September 2011***

***This policy should be read in conjunction with the other policies in the School's 'Safeguarding Suite' of policies and also the School's policy on behaviour and discipline.***