



Fifteen Minute Focus

Bullying



"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group

by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power."

What does St Paul's do about bullying?

Schools must, by law, have an anti-bullying policy and although incidents are extremely rare at St Paul's, we work hard to prevent this type of behaviour by;

- making sure that all children and adults mean the same thing when they use the term bullying;
- helping children understand how bullying feels for the victim;
- ensuring that all pupils feel OK about telling an adult when they know that bullying is going on;

- ensuring that all children know exactly what to do if they think they are being bullied, and are confident that action will be taken to make it stop;
- helping children enjoy, celebrate and respect the ways in which we are all different, as well as the ways in which we are similar;
- helping children to feel good about themselves.



Why schools don't just get rid of bullies?

Many children, at some point between 6 and 15 years will have been bullied, seen bullying or bullied themselves. There is no evidence that children are born 'bullies' or 'victims' - they change roles according to where they are, who they are with and what is going on in their lives;

If schools simply move the problem onto another school, other children will continue to suffer;

There **are** ways of changing bullying behaviour. Helping bullies to understand their victim's feelings and the effects of their behaviour; teaching them to stand up to peer pressure; giving them support to manage the problems they are facing — all these things can change this behaviour for good.



When children who are bullied are asked what they want to happen, they rarely mention punishing the other child or revenge, they almost always say: **"I just want it to stop"** and that's where we focus our efforts.

Bullying: "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power."

What to do if you are concerned your child is being bullied:

- praise your child for talking to you— reassure them that they have done the right thing;
- encourage them to explain their worries— however minor they may seem to you, the feelings are very real for them;
- talk to them about how to manage their emotions, e.g. by talking, relaxing, exercising or distracting themselves;
- don't jump in with advice or try immediately to solve the problem. Listen to their ideas and unless they are likely to end up in serious danger or trouble, be prepared to let them try them out ;
- telling your child to fight back, or say something 'clever' may end up with them feeling twice as bad. They might get into further difficulty, hurt or be laughed at;
- help your child to think about what they would like to happen, and how they would like you to help them achieve this;
- talk about ways of avoiding the children doing the bullying, e.g. staying with a group of friends, knowing who to go to for help etc. Tell your child that you have to involve their teacher.
- bullying destroys confidence. If you think your child may be being bullied, you need to work extra hard to help them feel valued and important;

If the behaviour continues after your child has tried out their own strategies, there are further steps you can take.

What to do if your child knows bullying is going on:

- listen to your child's concerns. Let them talk about their feelings. Try not to jump in with opinions and advice;
- there is strength in numbers. Encourage your child to talk to others who feel the same and to swap ideas about what to do;
- help your child to look at bullying in the same way as they would any situation in which someone might get hurt. (They would not consider that telling on a small child who is about to cross a dangerous road is 'snitching'.) Bullying can be just as dangerous!
- talk to your child about what they can do to support a child who is a victim e.g. tell an adult, befriend the other child, be kind to them and include them in their games.



What to do if your child is bullying ?

- if you are told that your child is involved in bullying, stay calm. Don't dismiss the idea or rush into punishing them;
- listen to what they have to say. If they deny it, arrange an appointment to see the teacher together;
- talk to your child about how the victim feels - they may not realise how much they are hurting, frightening or upsetting them;
- remind your child that you love *them* - it is *their behaviour* that is the problem;
- help your child to develop the confidence to make better choices - happy children don't need to bully others!

Why don't witnesses tell?

Almost always, bullying involves witnesses. Even when children feel upset or angry about the situation, they don't tell because:

- it is not cool to be seen as a 'snitch';
- it is hard to go against the crowd;
- they may worry that they will become targets themselves.

Evidence shows that the more children tell about any bullying they see, the less it happens.

Why do children bully?

Children bully because:

- they want to be 'in' with the crowd;

- it can feel like fun; they don't appreciate how much it hurts;
- they dislike or are jealous of someone;
- it makes them feel powerful/respected;
- it gets them what they want;
- they are bullied themselves and are taking out their hurt and anger on someone who will not fight back;
- they are experiencing problems in their life that are making them feel bad.

If you suspect bullying...

- alert us immediately;
- make sure you talk to your child before you do this by being clear that this is what you must do;
- when you talk to us, stay calm and give specific details (names, dates and places). Ask us what we will do about it and also for advice. As partners, we both want what is best for your child;
- our Anti-bullying and Harassment Policy is available on our website and when we meet with you we will make a plan to tackle your concerns, including any follow-up actions, so that you know when you will hear from us again.

We believe that the only way to stop bullying behaviour, is to create a culture where any hurtful behaviour is quickly brought out into the open, discussed and dealt with. Children and young people need to be empowered to make a noise about bullying—wherever and whenever it happens.

Our House Captains, along with Kat Davey and Emelia Belshaw, have been working on a poster campaign to publicise the importance of standing up and saying no to unacceptable behaviour. Look out for their posters around school.

Kat, Emelia and Ahmed also wrote and presented an assembly about how children must talk to a trusted adult if there is something or someone bothering them.