

ST MARY'S HADDINGTON ROAD

Anti-bullying Policy

St Mary's Haddington Road has adopted the following anti-bullying policy in conjunction with the parish's overall Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers

Here at St. Mary's we believe that all of our volunteers have the right to a supportive, caring and safe environment. This is especially true of all children/young people and vulnerable adults who are involved with the parish.

We seek to minimise the occurrences of and potential for bullying. In St Mary's, bullying is seen as a form of anti-social behaviour. It is always wrong and will not be tolerated.

The Pastoral Council recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to certain key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

(a) A positive parish culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity, encourages volunteers to disclose and discuss incidents of

bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and promotes respectful relationships within the parish.

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(d) Implementation of education strategies (including awareness raising measures) among volunteers through information sessions and the circulation of the parish Code of Conduct.

(e) Effective supervision and monitoring of children/young people and vulnerable adults

(f) Supports for volunteers and staff

(g) Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Key elements of a positive parish culture

- The parish acknowledges the right of each member of the community to enjoy activities in a secure environment.
- The parish acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The parish promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The parish identifies the liturgy as a means through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming volunteers' attitudes and values.
- The parish believes in early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual children/young people and vulnerable adults in a sensitive manner.
- The parish recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents/guardians informed on procedures to improve relationships.
- The parish recognises the role of parents/guardians in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

- The parish recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The parish promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
 - The parish promotes qualities of responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members.
- Staff members and volunteers share a responsibility to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the parish community.

What is bullying?

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour – verbal, psychological or physical - conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Bullying behaviour is intentional and deliberate.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,

- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, does not fall within the definition of bullying.

Rights and Responsibilities

The fostering of good quality interpersonal relationships among clergy, parish staff, volunteers and parishioners generally a responsibility shared by everyone. All members of the parish community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Responsibilities of the Pastoral Council

The Pastoral Council seeks to ensure that all volunteers and parishioners, especially children/young people and vulnerable adults, are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Council arranges information sessions to educate volunteers on issues surrounding bullying. The Council will ensure that proper measures are in place to deal with any incidents appropriately as they arise.

Responsibilities of Parish Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the parish.
- To implement prevention and intervention strategies that build and maintain a safe environment for children/young people and vulnerable adults.
- To take all reports of bullying seriously.

Responsibilities of parishioners, including children/young people and vulnerable adults

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour.
- To refrain from bullying others.
- To make it known if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour.

Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

- To support the parish in the implementation of the policy.
- To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To speak to the parish safeguarding representative if they suspect that child is being bullied.
- To instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other children/young people and vulnerable adults being bullied during parish activities

Strategies

The strategies that are used by our parish include:

Parish-wide approach

- A parish-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the parish; adults should model the type of behaviours they promote to pupils.
- Highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Education of staff and volunteers to help ensure that all staff/clergy/volunteers develop an awareness of what bullying is and the need to respond to it. The topic of bullying and other forms of abuse are addressed at each Pastoral Council meeting.
- The parish's Anti-Bullying Policy is posted on the parish website and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are made aware of it and can request a copy.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The parish's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the parish for dealing with cases of bullying

behaviour are as detailed below. The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Children/young people and vulnerable adults are encouraged to report bullying behaviour as soon as possible.
- Any child/young person, vulnerable adult or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any member of the clergy or the parish safeguarding representative.
- All reports will be taken seriously.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying allegations, the contacted person will exercise his/her judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and any children/young people and vulnerable adults involved are required to co-operate and assist the parish in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- A calm, unemotional problem-solving approach should be adopted.
- Where possible, incidents should be investigated in a manner that helps ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All discussions should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all children/young people and vulnerable adults concerned. The parents/guardians should be present for any discussions.
- When analysing allegations of bullying behaviour, questions should be asked in a calm manner. Anyone investigating bullying allegations should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.
- Parents/guardians should be informed at the earliest possible opportunity of any allegations concerning their child or any vulnerable adult for whom they are responsible.

The following steps are taken in dealing with bullying behaviour:

- In St Mary's we try to enable those involved to engage in a mediated conversation, the purpose of which is to allow for the alleged victim to have a voice and the alleged perpetrator to understand the consequences of their actions. The perpetrator is requested to apologise to the victim.
- If the bullying behaviour reoccurs the matter will be discussed by the Pastoral Council at its next meeting and decision will be taken on whether to ask the party concerned to withdraw from his/her specific volunteering role in the parish. The decision of the chair of the Council will be final.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the parish has dealt with a bullying case appropriately, the parent/guardian can bring the matter to the attention of the Dublin Diocese safeguarding office.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is important that all recording of bullying incidents is done in an objective and factual manner. This parish's procedure for noting and reporting alleged bullying behaviour is to keep a written record of any complaints once received.

- If it is established that bullying has occurred, a written account is kept by the parish safeguarding representative of the investigation process.

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