

# **United Against Bullying School Case Study: Raising awareness of the definition of bullying with the whole school**

## **How St John Vianney Catholic Primary School raised awareness of bullying and provided a code when bullying is observed by pupils**

### **Context of our anti-bullying work**

Context of our school community – We are a large 2 form entry Catholic Primary School that serves children in West Denton, a town in the city of Newcastle. The school has experienced many changes over the past 6 years including new management, new staff, expansion to 2 form entry from 1 form entry. We wanted to raise awareness of anti-bullying, develop a clear, concise and consistent approach to bullying, develop a whole school code for responding to bullying and thus reducing incidents of bullying. Although our children had some awareness of bullying, there was mixed ideas about what bullying was and how it could be dealt with. Historically, bullying was addressed once per year in the Autumn Term through an anti-bullying assembly but rarely explored again until the following year. Children could not define what bullying was and the term bullying was often used in the wrong context (friendship issues etc).

### **What we hoped to achieve**

- To raise awareness of bullying and provide a clear and simple code when bullying is observed by pupils
- To support the mental health and wellbeing of our most vulnerable children
- To empower children to talk about bullying and friendship issues and give them strategies when they face issues during playtimes
- To ensure consistent whole school approach to behaviour management
- To reduce low level disruption in class

### **The action we took**

#### **Actions we took**

A clear definition of bullying was agreed across the school and the STOP code was introduced to give both pupils and staff a clear pathway to follow if they see incidents of bullying. The STOP code was intentionally designed to be simple, easy to remember and clear. Physical actions to go with each step were also introduced to support our younger learners to

remember the code.

A member of staff has been assigned and trained following the THRIVE approach to work with specific children, delivering 1:1 sessions as well as with small friendship nurture groups. A physical space in school has been set up and resourced for these sessions, ensuring a calm and peaceful environment.

A successful Anti-Bullying week has taken place and subsequent Anti-Bullying assemblies have revisited the important messages delivered back in November.

Following pupil questionnaires, school council meetings and playtime observations, an area for development was identified. Children sometimes struggled to find a friend to play with therefore it was decided by pupils that a buddy bench would be a welcome addition to the playground. This would provide a place for children to go to if they need a friend to play with or someone to talk to.

A staff training schedule has been discussed with HT and the PSHE lead has begun the Anti-Bullying Alliance training. The training will be rolled out to all members of staff next half term. Staff meeting time and INSET time will be given.

The Anti-Bullying Policy has been updated and references the Equality Act 2010 and shows our commitment to preventing and responding effectively to the bullying of protected and vulnerable groups of children. A child-friendly Anti-Bullying Policy has also been produced as well as a Peer-on-Peer Abuse Policy.

An Assertive Discipline and Positive Behaviour Management Policy has also been introduced to ensure a consistent whole school approach to behaviour management.

The revised school RSE curriculum is fully embedded and ensures the statutory requirements in Health and Relationship Education are met. Books have been purchased to enhance our school library that celebrate the family unit in whatever form it takes. Our curriculum acknowledges that families are made up differently (including single-parent families, blended families, step-parents, carers, same sex parents etc).

## Impact and outcomes of the work

Children and staff have a clearer understanding in terms of the intricacies of bullying, particularly with regard to different roles: ringleader, assistants, outsiders, target etc. Children recognise what bullying is and what it is not. Across school bullying is recognised by the following definition:

**Bullying is when someone, or a group, repeatedly intend to cause harm, either physically or emotionally, to another person or a group. Bullying can happen face to face or online.**

When bullying occurs, children are listened to and it is dealt with in line with our policy, sending out a clear message to the school and wider community that bullying will not be

tolerated.

Children and staff are encouraged to follow the STOP code in school (See bullies; Tell someone; Offer kindness, Protect each other) . The STOP code is revisited throughout the year and displayed in common areas of the school. An information leaflet about our school's approach to bullying, outlining the STOP code has been produced for children and staff to refer to. The leaflet is displayed in school and parents can access it via our school website.

Pupils feel safe and empowered to speak up about friendships/bullying problems with staff. Daily playtime chat sessions give pupils voice and offer opportunities to support the children in conflict resolution. The sessions also allow teachers to monitor patterns in behaviour and act quickly, following the schools clear Anti-Bullying policy.

The SEMH sessions have had immediate impact for some pupils. Children who have been identified as requiring support access sessions at least once per week, sometimes daily, depending on their individual need. Children engage in sensory play therapy and all sessions take place in a quiet space designed and resourced for purpose. Teachers have reported that the children involved are calmer, more settled and can attend to their learning in class more effectively.

Buddy Benches ordered and awaiting delivery.

## **What we have learned**

It is vital to have a whole school consistent approach with all of our Anti-Bullying and Behaviour Policies that every member of staff adheres to. Revisiting these policies regularly is key so that they do not become stagnant. All staff accept and take on board new initiatives.

That children can play a massively positive role and can be empowered to support adults in pupil conflict resolution, with a solution focussed approach.

That SEMH sessions provide a vital role in supporting children's wellbeing that can often contribute to behaviour issues, bullying, disruption in class, friendship issues and low self-esteem.