



St Dunstan's
— College —

THE SEVEN-STAGE “NO BLAME” APPROACH TO BULLYING

THE NO BLAME APPROACH: THE SEVEN-STEP PROGRAMME

Nomenclature: *in this process, Junior School nomenclature has been used. For adaptation to Senior School nomenclature, please read Form Teacher as Form Tutor, Head of Phase as Head of Year or Head of Section and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral as College Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of Junior School as Head of College. Please note that, where the Form Teacher feels uneasy about this procedure, or the nature of the incident, he or she should inform the Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral who will nominate another member of staff to assist in this process. If a situation is particularly sensitive, the Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral may elect any staff member that they deem appropriate. Our priority at all times should be the well-being of the pupils in our care.*

1. The Form Teacher and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral talks to the victim about his/her feelings and to find out what/who is involved. The incidents do not need to be detailed. He or she might be asked to write key words or information or draw a picture if they are finding it difficult to articulate a situation. The procedure is explained and the pupil is encouraged to present examples of the upsetting behaviour and his/her feelings as a result in Step 2. The need to not blame an individual is also explained. A list of perpetrators, onlookers (if appropriate) and friends who might be able to help is drawn up and attend the meeting in Step 2.

2. The Form Teacher and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral meets with the agreed group (Step 1). The victim, or the Form Teacher/Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral on their behalf, explains his/her feelings and the problem. Neither specific incidents nor blame is discussed.

3. The Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral explains that the behaviour sounds like it falls into the category of bullying. He/she reinforces that as a school we do not tolerate bullying and that we therefore need to make some important decisions in the meeting. If the issue can be resolved and the victim is happier, then there is no need for parents to be involved or sanctions imposed, which in the most serious cases of bullying can result in a pupil being removed from the College. It is explained that the purpose of the meeting is to make things better, not, at this stage, to blame anyone. If we can achieve this outcome, then things will

not be pursued further. If, however, the situation is not resolved, then a full investigation would need to be held.

4. The Form Teacher and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral ask if the group feels they can help in improving the situation.

5. The Form Teacher and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral encourage each member of the group to suggest how the victim could be helped to feel happier. The Form Teacher positively receives the ideas but no commitments are made.

6. The Form Teacher and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral suggests they try out their ideas to see whether improvements can be made. It is explained to the group that it is really important that the meeting is not discussed once the pupils leave the room. Any instances of "I can't believe you told..." or similar will be dealt with very seriously.

7. The next day, the Form Teacher and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral organises another meeting to see how things are progressing. Depending on progress, further meetings are arranged as often as deemed necessary to be confident the issue is resolved. Usually this would be the next day with a follow up at the end of the week/a week later.

Recording

If a child reports an incident of bullying, then the Form Teacher should document this on *My Concern* and the Head of Phase and Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral informed as soon as possible. The following information would normally be required:

- name of victim;
- date and time of disclosure (and to whom, if not the Form Teacher);
- brief description the behaviour, including any details of dates/specific locations/times etc;
- names of perpetrators and onlookers;
- any short term actions.

When gleaning information about an incident, it is important:

- not to ask leading questions;
- not to promise confidentiality;
- to state that no blame is attached;
- not to promise that things will get better.

Sanctions

Once investigated, every effort will be made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties, which will seek to support the victim(s) and change the behaviour of the perpetrator(s). In serious cases parents will be informed and consulted. This process will

normally be carried out by the Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral.

When the above procedure is deemed not to have had the desired impact, or it is decided that the incident is serious enough, disciplinary sanctions will normally be applied by the Head of the Junior School. These may include suspension, required removal or - in the gravest cases of severe or persistent bullying - expulsion. Counselling may be maintained for both parties even after sanctions have been applied.

Incidents of bullying are dealt with as individual cases. Sanctions that are appropriate for one may not be relevant for another. These are possible examples of sanctions:

- Bullies may be monitored during their free time.
- Bullies may be put on a behaviour report card.
- Bullies may be given a formal warning by the Head of the Junior School.

As soon as an incident has been investigated, a plan of action is agreed and put into place.

In the earliest stages of dealing with bullying, parents may not necessarily be informed. This is an important aspect of the "No Blame" approach. If it is deemed a significant bullying situation, or the above does not resolve the situation, the parents of all pupils involved will be kept fully informed by the Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral. Parents are asked to let the school (normally the Form Teacher, Junior School Deputy Head Pastoral or Head of the Junior School) know directly if they have cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about incidents involving others. The school always endeavours to handle information discreetly, and while it likes to follow up such matters it does not do so without careful consultation first. It is much easier to counter problems at an early stage.