



STREATHAM
BAPTIST
CHURCH

Streatham Baptist Church Anti-Bullying Policy (Children and Young People)

Policy Approved by: Church Leaders / Trustees: 23rd February 2021

Communicated to Church Staff: via email

Communicated to: Activity Leaders (if applicable): via email

Communicated to Church Members (if applicable): n/a

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1. Introduction

Streatham Baptist Church (SBC) is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all its members in line with the Equalities Act 2010. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at SBC. If bullying does occur, all children and young people, and parent/carers should know who to talk to at SBC and have confidence that their concerns will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We want children and young people to take part in activities they like, so they can build their confidence and make positive friendships that can help protect them and others from bullying.

Children and young people are defined as anyone up to their 18th birthday.

2. What Is bullying?

Definition

Bullying may be defined in many different ways. In the United Kingdom, there is no legal definition of bullying.

Bullying is the use of force, coercion, or threat, to abuse, aggressively dominate or intimidate. The behaviour is often repeated and habitual. One essential prerequisite is the perception (by the bully or by others) of an imbalance of physical or social power. This imbalance distinguishes bullying from conflict. Bullying is a subcategory of aggressive behaviour characterized by the following three criteria: (1) hostile intent, (2) imbalance of power, and (3) repetition over a period of time.

Bullying is the activity of repeated, aggressive behaviour intended to hurt another individual, physically, mentally, or emotionally. Bullying occurs when a person is

exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons (If bullying is done by a group, it is called mobbing) and that negative actions occur when a person intentionally inflicts injury or discomfort upon another person, through physical contact, through words or in other ways. Individual bullying is usually characterized by a person behaving in a certain way to gain power over another person. Rationalisations of such behaviour sometimes include differences of social class, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, appearance, behaviour, body language, personality, reputation, lineage, strength, size, or ability.

Examples and outcomes of bullying

Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. It includes name calling, hitting, pushing, spreading rumours, threatening or undermining someone. It can happen anywhere – at school, at activity meetings, at home or online. It is usually repeated over a long period of time and can hurt a child both physically and emotionally. Victims generally find it difficult to protect themselves from such incidents and their vulnerability often leads to repeated episodes.

Bullying can be focused around issues, such as:

- Racism (racial taunts, graffiti, gestures)
- Sexual (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments)
- Sexual orientation and gender identity (taunting because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality or gender preference)
- Body (insulting a person physically)
- Exclusion (making someone feel different or not included in every day childhood experiences)

Bullying can be acted out in a variety of ways, such as:

- Verbal (name-calling, sarcasm, threatening, teasing, sexual comments or coercion)
- Social (spreading rumours, leaving people out, embarrassing people, filming a person being bullied)
- Physical (pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence, stealing)
- Cyber (is any form of bullying which takes place online or through smartphones and tablets. Social networking sites, messaging apps, gaming sites and chat rooms, such as, Facebook, Xbox Live, Instagram, YouTube, Snapchat, Tik Tok and other chat rooms.¹ This can include sexting which is sending a sexual message, photo or video to someone else.)
- Mobile (threats by Facebook, text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology i.e. camera & video facilities)

3. Why is it Important to respond to bullying?

SBC has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying, as:

- Bullying hurts.

¹ This list of examples is likely to change as new social media platforms are introduced every year.

- No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Children/young people who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.
- Bullying behaviour amongst children/young people may be linked to poor practices and conduct by staff and volunteers (i.e. a culture of bullying created by adults).
- Bullying may require a safeguarding intervention.

4. Our Approach

- All trustees, staff, volunteers, children, young people and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All trustees, staff and volunteers should know what SBC's policy is on bullying, and follow our procedures when bullying is reported.
- All children, young people and parent/carers should know what SBC's policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As an organisation, we take bullying seriously. Young people and parent/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Help children and young people understand about bullying – we have a responsibility to educate all young people about what bullying is so that they can better identify it.
- A Code of Behaviour will be explained to children and young people attending our activities and displayed prominently (see Appendix A).
- Bullying will not be tolerated.
- There may be underlying reasons why someone is bullying and we will seek ways to support children and young people with these. This may include referral to other appropriate agencies.

5. Signs and Symptoms

A young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and consider monitoring more closely or taking other action if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from one of our activities
- doesn't want to go by public transport
- begs to be driven to or from one of our activities
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to one of our activities
- starts to not attend one of our activities
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts self-harm, or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- appears unwell or feels ill during one of our activities

- comes home with clothes torn or personal items damaged
- has possessions which " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- repeatedly says their possessions or monies are "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other young people or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be explored.

6. SBC – Guidelines & Procedures

'Stop bullying on the spot'

- The bullying behaviour must be stopped quickly
- Model respectful behaviour - intervene, separate people and make sure everyone is safe
- See Appendix B for helpful organisations who can advise practitioners, children/young people and parents.

Find out what happened

- If you are not sure of, or need to clarify, the situation, get the facts – keep all children/young people involved separate and get the stories from several sources both adults and children/young people. Listen without blaming or labelling bullying until you are sure.
- Determine if it's bullying – what is the history/is there a power imbalance/ has it happened before, or are you worried it will happen again?

Support young people who are bullied

- Listen and focus on the young person or child, show you want to help and that it is not their fault. They may find it difficult to talk about, and may need extra support e.g. Counselling
- Give advice about what to do – think through what to do if it happens again, other sources of advice or support – assertiveness skills/building confidence and self esteem
- Avoid telling a young person/child to ignore it, say they provoked it, advise physical fighting back or suggesting to parents that they should contact the other parent. Assist with mediation wherever possible.
- Keep the lines of communication open – ensure that young people feel safe to talk to staff and volunteers about what is happening for them, both in and out of SBC.

- Follow up – ensure consistent support

Support children/young people who bully and address bullying behaviour

- Make sure the young person/child knows what the problem behaviour is – children/young people who bully must learn their behaviour is wrong
- Show young people that bullying is taken seriously – model respectful behaviour when addressing the problem
- Work with the young person/child to understand some of the reasons he/she bullied – to fit in/issues at home/stress/they have been bullied
- Use consequences to teach – consequences that build or involve learning empathy
- Involve young people who bullied in making amends or repairing the situation – write a letter to apologise, clear up, do a good deed.
- Avoid strategies that don't work or have negative consequences – e.g. three strikes and you are out, peer mediation/conflict resolution (bullying is about an imbalance of power), group treatment tends to lead to reinforcing behaviour in each other.
- Follow up: continue to work with the young person/child to help them understand how their actions affect other people.

Support bystanders who witness bullying

- Even if young people are not bullied or bullying others they can be affected by bullying. Many times, when they see bullying, they may not know what to do to stop it.

Report bullying incidents

Details of any bullying incidents during an activity should be recorded on the activity record.

- Discuss during debriefs (post activities) with other staff and volunteers leading or supporting an activity. Consider risk factors and any action to minimise an incident being repeated at future activity sessions.
- If the circumstances may relate to safeguarding, report to your line manager or Designated Person immediately.
- In serious cases, parents should be informed and will be asked to come to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- If necessary and appropriate, police must be informed.

Potential Outcomes

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place. Seek a reconciliation.
2. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion should be considered.
3. Children/young people may be referred to external agencies for further support.

7. Policy Implementation

- All Activity Leaders and those working with children and young people should be aware of this policy. A copy is available in the Church Office, with the Safeguarding Policies and the Children's and Youth Workers. A hard copy can be supplied to all those working with children and young people on request.
- Parents or guardians should be informed about this policy and a copy supplied where requested.
- At least annually, but preferably termly, children and young people should be reminded about acceptable behaviour and that bullying is unacceptable.
- At least annually all Activity Leaders and those working with children and young people should be reminded about this policy.
- Where there has been bullying children and young people should be reminded about acceptable behaviour.
- Where there has been bullying Activity Leaders and all those working with Children and young people should be reminded about acceptable behaviour and their responsibility to reinforce this.
- All ministers, staff and Trustees should be aware of this policy and support its implementation.
- Where there has been bullying an investigation procedure should be followed as in Appendix C. This should include a debriefing meeting involving the children's and/or Youth Worker and any activity Leaders and Volunteers involved.

APPENDICES A, B & C

APPENDIX A: CODE OF BEHAVIOUR

STREATHAM BAPTIST CHURCH CODE OF BEHAVIOUR FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Basic principles: This code of behaviour aims to:

- identify acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
- encourage cooperation, honesty, fairness and respect
- create an environment where your self-esteem, self-respect and self-confidence will grow
- encourage you to recognise and respect the rights of others
- encourage you to take responsibility for your own behaviour
- help resolve conflicts

Dos and don'ts (in person and online)

You should:

- ☺ cooperate with others
- ☺ be friendly
- ☺ listen to others
- ☺ be helpful
- ☺ treat everyone with respect – children, young people, leaders and other adults
- ☺ take responsibility for your own behaviour
- ☺ talk to your activity leader or another trusted adult about anything that worries or concerns you
- ☺ follow this code of behaviour and other rules (including the law)
- ☺ join in and have fun!

You shouldn't:

- ☹ be disrespectful to anyone else – “anyone” means Leaders, other children
- ☹ bully other people (including using social media, emails etc)
- ☹ behave in a way that could be intimidating
- ☹ be abusive towards anyone

APPENDIX B: HELPFUL ORGANISATIONS

<p>Bullying UK (Part of Family Lives)</p> <p>BullyingUK part of Family Lives have launched a new LiveOnline Support service for every member of the family to get advice direct from our Expert team, our advisors are standing by to support you with a wide range of bullying problems.</p>	<p>Helpline: 0808 800 2222</p>
<p>National Bullying Helpline</p> <p>The helpline (a non-Charity) is a Voluntary Organisation, is a household name and continues to provide practical and timely support to both adults and children; those bullied in the community, the home, the playground and/or the workplace. In fact, the helpline is unique and today it is the only organisation of its kind run by qualified HR professionals. This website is now a central source of useful and practical information. Whether you are the bully, the bullied, the employer, the employee, a dispute resolution service provider, an academic or just a member of the public seeking 'up to date' information - you will find practical support here on this site.</p>	<p>Tel: 0845 22 55 787</p> <p>www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk</p>
<p>Kidscape</p> <p>Whatever your problem or concern we are here to support you. All problems, whether big or small, will be answered with the same level of care and concern. Your call will be treated as confidential and you can remain anonymous.</p>	<p>Parent's Helpline: 020 7823 5430 (Mon-Tues 10-5pm)</p> <p>www.kidscape.org.uk</p>
<p>Childline</p> <p>ChildLine is a counselling service for children and young people. You can contact ChildLine in these ways: You can phone on 0800 1111, send us an email, have a 1-2-1 chat with us, send a message to Ask Sam and you can post messages to the ChildLine message boards. You can contact ChildLine about anything - no</p>	<p>Helpline: 0800 1111</p>

<p>problem is too big or too small. If you are feeling scared or out of control or just want to talk to someone you can contact ChildLine.</p>	
<p>Thinkuknow</p> <p>Find the latest information on the sites you like to visit, mobiles and new technology. Find out what's good, what's not and what you can do about it. If you look after young people there's an area for you too – with resources you can use in the classroom, at home or just to get with it. Most importantly, there's also a place which anyone can use to report if they feel uncomfortable or worried about someone they are chatting to online.</p>	<p>www.thinkuknow.co.uk</p>
<p>Kidsmart</p> <p>Aimed primarily at parents and people who work with children, this site includes top tips, resources and some "SMART" rules to help teach children how to stay safe online.</p>	<p>www.kidsmart.org.uk</p>
<p>CEOP (The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre)</p> <p>The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre is dedicated to eradicating the sexual abuse of children. That means we are part of UK policing and very much about tracking and bringing offenders to account either directly or in partnership with local and international forces.</p>	<p>www.ceop.gov.uk</p>

APPENDIX C: Completing an Investigation

Streatham Baptist Church Guidelines for completing an investigation

Introduction

- The purpose of this document is to give guidelines to anyone who undertakes an investigation on behalf of SBC
- It should not preclude the involvement or alerting of appropriate professional bodies, prior to or at any stage during an investigation. This includes police if a crime is alleged or suspected or Social Services Safeguarding Team if deemed necessary by the SBC designated safeguarding Person.

Definition

- In the course of church life, there will often be negative comments and 'grumbles' which are commonplace. However, when anyone makes a formal complaint, this must be responded to in an appropriate and timely way. These guidelines are relevant when formal complaints are made.
- If anyone makes a complaint or a disclosure which contains allegations relating to any potential misconduct, especially if it relates to a possible issue of safeguarding of Adults at Risk or Children and Young People, misuse of finances or any misuse of authority, then this should be taken seriously and reported as a formal complaint.

Response to a Formal Complaint

- If someone makes a formal complaint to a member of staff or Church Leader, then this should be logged with the Church Manager. An initial response should be sent to the complainant within 3 - 5 days, acknowledging receipt of the complaint and setting out the likely timescale by which a response will be made in writing
- A response is ideally made as soon as possible, though the time may vary due to the nature of the complaint. Some complaints will by their nature receive a quick response but others will require a longer timescale due to their complexity.
- The key thing is that the complainant is made aware of the process and has a reasonable idea of when a response will be made.

The investigation

- The Leadership team will appoint an Investigating Officer (IO) to look into the complaint or disclosure made. This person may be a member of the leadership or a Church member of good standing who has relevant skills and experience or the Safeguarding Designated Person if the matter relates to a safeguarding complaint or disclosure. Where the complaint relates to a Minister or Leader this will be referred to the London Baptist Association Team Leader for investigation.
- The IO should be given a brief of the allegations that have been made and be given access to all relevant paperwork e.g. complaint letter.
- If the person being investigated is a Leader or related to a Leader, then a conflict of interest must be registered and that Leader needs to remove themselves from discussions
- The IO will have an assigned person on the leadership team to support them. This person will regularly check in with the IO to see how the investigation is going and how the IO is doing.
- The IO should develop:
 - a timeline of objective facts which sets out what has happened and when
 - a series of set questions that they will ask the people that they want to interview.
 - an action plan which realistically sets the expected time needed for the investigation

Interviews

- All interviews should be conducted in a confidential setting. Ideally, the church building should be used where possible and a note-taker present to assist the interviewer. Meeting at someone's home should be avoided unless absolutely necessary. Recordings are not normally necessary and should only be taken with the agreement of both parties.
- The person who is being interviewed should be asked questions which allow them to share what information they have. They should be made aware that further questions may be asked at a later stage as a part of the investigation. They should be made aware that notes will be shared with relevant parties if necessary and that the IO will be writing a report which will go to SBC's leadership team.
- The notes taken should be a reasonable summary of the key points made in the meeting in answer to the questions. They do not have to be a verbatim account of everything said. These should be sent to the interviewee as soon as possible (ideally the same or next day) following the interview to be agreed and confirmed as a fair and accurate record.
- Notes of any relevant meetings, whether in person or on the phone, should be made available to the IO.
- All notes and correspondence must be filed confidentially in the church building in the assigned storage folder.

The role of prayer

- Prayer is a key aspect of such investigations and it is desirable for all parties to enter prayerfully into all the meetings that take place around a complaint or investigation.
- However, prayer also needs to be handled carefully. Prayers should be for honesty, truthfulness and justice to be done and for the well-being of those affected.
- Everyone involved in investigations needs to be aware of the danger of spiritual manipulation that can sometimes be at work through prayer and avoid any prayers which, intentionally or otherwise, apply pressure to anyone involved.

The report

- Once all evidence is gathered in, the IO should make a written report which should be shared with the Leadership team.
- The report should contain clear findings in response to the allegations and whether enough evidence has been found for these allegations to be upheld or dismissed.
- This report will be discussed at the next Leaders meeting for questions and validation.

Communication with those affected

- Once the final decision is confirmed the relevant parties must be informed of the outcome as soon as possible and the implications of the outcome and what the next stage is.
- The person against whom the complaint has been made will also be informed about their opportunity to appeal against the decision.