

## **Section 8: Anti-Bullying Guidelines and Procedures**

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, Scripture Union has adopted the following antibullying policy within the framework of the organisation's overall code of behaviour.

Scripture Union recognizes the serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of people under the age of 18.

### **Introduction**

The aim of Scripture Union's activities is to create a safe, fun, and inclusive environment for children and young people to learn about faith. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of learning. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of young people, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

This policy will include a comprehensive set of procedures in how to address bullying and how to address the issue. It will look at the definition and types of bullying. The impact and indicators of bullying behaviour associated with bullying and key principles of best practice.

### **Anti-Bullying Statement and Prevention Strategies**

Bullying can happen, anywhere. We at Scripture Union have thought about this. We have a plan to limit and stop bullying. We do what we say in our plan. We work together to stop bullying. We at Scripture Union love and appreciate that we are all different and equal. We all keep our eyes and ears open for bullying and we take action to stop it. We all keep learning how best to respond to bullying. We look for the good in everyone. We aim to build each other up and never knock anyone down. Any person under 18 attending a Scripture Union activity can talk to a trusted adult at Scripture Union about their feelings and worries. Adults will listen to and support every person, including people under 18. Anyone, including people under 18 and including bystanders can report any bullying behaviour to any adult at Scripture Union.

### **Procedures Regarding Bullying Behaviour**

- All those working with people under 18 at SU will foster an environment that supports the disclosure, discussion and reporting of all acts of bullying. People under 18 are to be encouraged to share episodes of bullying with staff or volunteers. A failure to report bullying can have lasting effects on those being subjected to bullying behaviour.
- Scripture Union confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible on SU activities.
- SU staff and camp leaders will exercise sound judgement to establish whether or not bullying has occurred and decide on what steps need to be taken to resolve the situation. As far as is practical, efforts will be taken to help to restore relationships.

- Investigations of group bullying will involve a discussion with the group, followed by a conversation with each individual.
- Enquiries by SU staff and camp leaders may include people under 18 that are not directly involved, as they may have useful information.
- Incidents of bullying will be monitored to ensure that there are no further occurrences.
- An Incident Report Form will be completed by SU staff or the camp leader detailing the facts of each instance of bullying.
- Parents will be notified about all incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Serious acts of bullying and instances where the bullying behaviour persists will result in those responsible being removed from camp activities and arrangements being made for their return home.

#### Definition of Bullying

- In the context of these procedures, bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour (verbal, psychological or physical) conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.
- The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:
  - » Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, and other forms of relational bullying.
  - » Cyber-bullying.
  - » Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- In addition, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging do not fall within this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, appropriately, in accordance with the SU's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a child or young person.

#### Types of Bullying

- **Physical aggression** - This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.
- **Intimidation** - This behaviour may take the form of aggressive body language or facial expressions which convey aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/Exclusion** - This behaviour occurs where a person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored.
- **Cyber-bullying** - This behaviour is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out using information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chatrooms, and other online technologies. Cyber abuse is a growing concern and can have a significant impact on the welfare of children or young people. It is very important that this is stopped as soon as it is discovered for the sake of both the victim and the abuser, for whom it could become a dangerous habit. The sooner you act, the more likely it is that the abuse will stop, and that the person under 18 will recover from their experiences.
- **Name-calling** - This behaviour is persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which

hurts, insults, or humiliates.

- **Damage to property** – Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour.
- **Extortion** - Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats.

#### Impacts of Bullying Behaviour

People under 18 who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be effective.

People under 18 who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied.

There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. People under 18 who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression.

#### Indicators of someone who is being bullied.

Indicators may include anxiety, unexplained changes in behaviour, distress, unexplained bruising or cuts, damage to clothes or personal property, missing possessions, and a reluctance to say what may be troubling the child or young person in question.

#### Key Principles of Best Practice

SU is fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. These include:

- Establishing a positive culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity. This encourages people under the age of 18 to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and promotes respectful relationships, empathy, and resilience.
- Effective leadership and a team-wide approach to bullying.
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)
- Addressing the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of people under the age of 18.
- Training and support for staff.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

#### Who is Responsible for Doing What?

- **Volunteers** should report any suspected bullying to the camp leader or SU staff in charge.
- The **camp leader or SU staff** who oversees the Scripture Union activity is responsible for investigating

and dealing with bullying.

- The **camp leader or SU staff** in charge will investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour at SU activities.