



## **SOUND CHURCH**

### **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

#### **1. Introduction**

This policy forms part of our wider commitment in ensuring that all children and young people and adults who are provided a service from Sound Church are safeguarded, and should be read in conjunction with our policies on:

- Child Protection Policy
- Adult Safeguarding Policy
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy
- Staff Handbook
- Social Networking Policy
- Whistleblowing Policy

Sound Church is committed to providing a safe, caring and trauma recovery focused environment for all staff, volunteers and clients including children, young people and adults. We firmly believe that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, and this policy sets out:

- The strategies we use to prevent bullying
- What young people, parents/carers, and staff and volunteers should do if bullying arises.

This policy applies to all staff, volunteers, and clients of Sound Church. In addition, this policy also applies to all visitors.

#### **2. Definition of Bullying**

Whilst there is no legal definition of bullying, it is usually defined as behaviour which is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It takes many forms and can include:

- physical assault
- teasing
- making threats
- name calling
- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (for example email, social networks and instant messenger)

<https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition>



Moreover, types of bullying could include, but may not be limited to:

- Emotional - unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- Homophobic - focussing on the issue of sexuality or gender identity;
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, offensive remarks;
- Cyber - all areas of the internet (e.g. email & internet chat room misuse); mobile phone threats by text messaging & calls; misuse of associated technology (e.g. camera & video facilities).

Sound Church holds the view that all forms of bullying should be taken seriously.

### **Preventative strategies**

In all cases of bullying, in whatever form, early and effective intervention has an important part to play in preventing such behaviour. It may be necessary to explain to a child or young person that his/her behaviour is causing concern. Suggestions on how it could be modified would be made. Prevention will include:

- Close supervision from staff and relevant volunteers at all times to model appropriate interaction with others and 'nip inappropriate behaviour in the bud';
- Developing clear ground rules including respect for others;
- A curious and not furious approach to supporting individual children or a group of children/young people where there may be identified needs or vulnerabilities.

### **Roles**

All those involved with Sound Church are responsible for preventing and tackling bullying – young people, staff and parents/carers.

- Young people are responsible for their own behaviour and for reporting bullying (of themselves or others) to a member of staff. Sound Church will provide a safe and therapeutic environment which can help facilitate children and young people being able to share any concerns, worries or incidents verbally or through creative methods;
- Parents/carers are responsible for supporting Sound Church staff and relevant volunteers in dealing with any incidents of bullying, which concerns their child e.g. reporting incidents, attending meetings to resolve any difficulties etc.
- Sound Church staff are responsible for carrying out the procedures to prevent bullying and tackle any incidents of bullying quickly. They are also responsible for reporting and recording serious incidents.
- Designated Sound Church Staff are responsible for ensuring that all procedures in this policy are implemented;
- Designated Sound Church Staff are responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy and the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies.



## Procedures

- Children/parents/carers/staff members report bullying incidents to the Safeguarding Team (in accordance with our Whistleblowing Policy, if appropriate).
- All cases of bullying (as defined in this policy) will be recorded by staff in the incident book held by the HR Assistant
- In serious cases parents/carers will be informed and will be asked to come into a meeting to discuss the concerns.
- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying will be looked into and bullying stopped quickly;
- Restorative approaches and mediation may be used following the investigation
- Staff will endeavour to help the bully/bullies change their behaviour.
- Support will be available for the person being bullied.
- Serious incidents can be a criminal matter. In such cases Sound Church may involve the police if necessary.
- There will be monitoring by staff and relevant volunteers to ensure that the bullying has stopped permanently.
- Consideration will be given to the safety of all parties involved.

## Reporting Incidents

We will develop and maintain an atmosphere where anyone who is being bullied, or anyone who knows about it, feels that they will be listened to and that action taken will be swift and sensitive to their needs. Both bystanders and children, young people and being bullied must realise that 'not telling' means that bullying is likely to continue.

Children and young people will be encouraged to report bullying confidentially using a range of methods e.g. talking to a member of staff without fear of being overheard, reporting in writing, asking their parents to inform staff, using creative methods.

Staff will report serious incidents to the Senior Leadership Team.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The Anti-Bullying Policy and Anti-Bullying work is monitored and evaluated by the Senior Leadership Team and staff. Evidence for this will be gleaned from the incident book and through client reviews. The outcomes will be reported to the Senior Leadership Team annually.