



Anti-Bullying Policy

River Church recognises that:

- ◆ bullying is 'behaviour, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally.
- ◆ one person or a group can bully others
- ◆ bullying can include:
 - verbal teasing or making fun of someone.
 - excluding children from games, activities or conversations.
 - pressurising other children not to be friends with the person being bullied.
 - spreading hurtful rumours or passing round inappropriate photos/images/drawings.
 - shouting at or verbally abusing someone.
 - stealing or damaging someone's belongings.
 - making threats.
 - forcing someone to do something embarrassing, harmful or dangerous.
 - harassment on the basis of race, gender, sexuality or disability.
 - physical or sexual assault (although all sexual incidents and all but minor physical incidents constitute abuse as must be dealt with as such).
 - using mobile phone or social media to do any of the above.
- ◆ bullying causes real distress. It can affect a person's health and development and, at the extreme, can cause significant long-term harm.
- ◆ people are often targeted by bullies because they are different from others in one or more ways.
- ◆ we all have a role to play in preventing bullying and putting a stop to it.

The purpose of this policy is:

- ◆ to prevent bullying from happening as much as possible.
- ◆ when bullying does happen, to make sure it is stopped as soon as possible and that those involved receive the support they need.
- ◆ to provide information to all leaders, volunteers, children and their families about what we should all do to prevent and deal with bullying.

We seek to prevent bullying by:

- ◆ Develop a code of conduct that sets out the 'dos' and 'don'ts' in terms of how everyone is expected to behave
- ◆ Develop a plan that describes how we welcome new members and help them to be accepted and settle in.
- ◆ Plan regular opportunities to:
 - discuss the group members' responsibility to look after one another and uphold the code of conduct.
 - practice skills such as listening to one another.

- respect and celebrate that we are all different.
 - build up one another's self-esteem.
 - deal with problems in a positive way.
 - check the anti-bullying policy is working well.
- ◆ Develop a complaints procedure.

When bullying occurs, we will respond by:

- ◆ Provide support and training for all leaders and volunteers on dealing with all forms of bullying, including racial, sexist, homophobic and sexual bullying.
- ◆ Addressing the issue from the point of view of the person being bullied, the bully and the group as a whole.
- ◆ Take time to review the situation in order to ensure that the problem has been resolved.