



Anti-Bullying Policy

May 2018

School Statement

All children have the right to feel safe and protected in school. All adults in the school community have an obligation to support this principle, and all children should be encouraged to share in this responsibility for the safety and well-being of each other.

Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all members of the school community can identify and understand the seriousness of bullying and know ways of responding to it effectively. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school and will not be tolerated. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING* school. This means that *anyone* who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available in school.

Definition

“Bullying is a form of behaviour which can be defined as a repeated, prolonged attack on an individual or group. It may be physical, psychological, social or verbal in nature. It is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It is an abuse of power. Bullying is a form of peer abuse and often thrives on a bed of secrecy.” (DFE)

BULLYING IS NOT WHEN CHILDREN FALL OUT OR DON'T GET ON

Bullying can be carried out by individuals or groups. The characteristics of bullying are that:

- It is deliberately hurtful
- It is repeated over time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves
- It is usually hidden from adults or authority figures

Bullying can take several forms including:

- Teasing
- Name calling
- Use of prejudice based offensive language
- Spreading rumours
- Exclusion from the group
- Threats, including looks
- Extortion
- Damage to belongings
- Physical assault
- Racial harassment
- Sexual harassment (Including references to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T))
- Cyber bullying

Children are taught the ‘STOP’ acronym to help identify bullying – bullying is Several Times On Purpose.

Cyber Bullying

We recognise that bullying increasingly takes place in “cyber” environments, such as on the internet and through the use of mobile phones. In whatever form, we will take action to

prevent this and parents are informed of all incidents. In some cases these incidents can be treated as a Child Protection issue.

The Designated Persons for Child Protection are the Head teacher, The Deputy Head teacher; The Inclusion Manager and the SENCo (see Child Protection Policy).

We recognise and will act in accordance with guidelines set down by the DfES on cyberbullying as specified on www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying.

The effects of bullying

Bullying can be profound and have a long lasting affect on pupils and their families. Potential outcomes of bullying are known to include:

- Unhappiness
- Loss of confidence and self esteem
- Poor school attendance and achievement
- Feeling let down by adults
- Fear and self-blame

Possible signs of bullying to look out for include:

- Reluctance to attend school
- Asking to be accompanied to school or to change route
- Mysterious headaches or stomach aches
- Becoming withdrawn
- 'Losing' possessions
- Damaged possessions
- Hitting out at others or becoming aggressive
- Nightmares or sleeplessness
- Bed-wetting
- Unexplained bruises
- Refusing to talk about any of these problems
- Giving unlikely reasons for any of these problems

Children who are bullied tend to have very low self-esteem. They can feel guilty and worthless and, because they sometimes lack self-assertion skills, they are targeted by the kind of children who themselves bolster their own low levels of self-esteem by physically hurting, mocking and shaming "weaker" peers.

Class teachers and staff generally need to be aware of the ways in which school practices may enhance or diminish children's levels of self-esteem.

Sometimes an incident starts out of school only to be carried over into school time. Equally a problem which develops in school might escalate into trouble out of school. Incidents like this can take a great deal of time to sort out. Again, experience has shown that where school is involved, it will be easier to sort out a problem by approaching school first.

Bullying is found in all walks of life. It is an issue that is not diminished by being ignored. Ultimately bullying is learned behaviour and can be unlearned too.

We believe that:

- It is possible to counter bullying effectively
- Bullies need help and support to change their behaviour
- The person being bullied needs a balance between protection and empowerment

It is the aim of our approach to bullying at St Mary's Catholic Primary School to work towards achieving all three of the above statements.

Preventive Measures

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we:

- establish school rules which demonstrate caring behaviour, and ensure that they are understood by all children through whole school assemblies and class discussions/lessons
- specify clearly those types of behaviour which are considered to be "bullying" and therefore unacceptable
- specify clearly what sanctions and support will follow bullying behaviour
- tailor our curriculum to ensure the 'anti bullying message' permeates all aspects of school life and is thoroughly integrated into the more general curriculum wherever possible. Every member of staff has the responsibility to support and foster this curriculum (see curriculum statement)
- draw up individual educational programmes for those children experiencing interpersonal and peer relationship difficulties
- we use differentiated personal and social curriculum materials (eg: social skills curriculum and materials from the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning)
- teach children to 'STOP' – Start Telling Other People

Principles for the management of incidents

- A secure environment should be provided in which incidents can be reported confidently
- The pupil who has been bullied should be made to feel safe and listened to
- All pupils should be shown that bullying is taken seriously
- Teachers should respond calmly and consistently to incidents of bullying
- The school should protect and support all parties while the issues are resolved
- The person who has done the bullying, and those who may have colluded, should be encouraged to behave in a more acceptable way
- Interventions should be monitored and followed-up appropriately at the individual, group or whole school level.

Staff should:

- **be available** - break the code of secrecy. Make it known that you are ready to listen. Provide immediate support
- **listen to the child** - ask the bullied child who was involved and how she or he is feeling
- **record** - ensure the incident is recorded and forwarded to Senior leaders
- **respond** - ensure that responses are non-aggressive and provide models of positive behaviour.
- **identify vulnerable pupils** with long-term needs requiring a development programme.
- **follow up** - review progress and evaluate policies and intervention.

Working with parents

It is essential to involve parents where bullying has taken place. The most effective emphasis in meetings with parents is on joint problem solving. The aim of such a meeting is to minimise the likelihood of further bullying regardless of whether one is talking about the child who has bullied or the one who has been bullied.

Advice is offered to parents

- encourage your child to talk about what is worrying them, but be patient as she or he may be distressed

- stay calm but show that you are supportive
- avoid dwelling on sensitive issues
- reassure your child that you are sympathetic and will do something about it
- explain that it can happen to most people at some time or another
- try to help him or her to see the difficulty as a problem that can be solved
- ask your child if they can see ways of changing things
- talk to staff at school about bullying and work with them to improve the situation
- help him or her to develop coping strategies
- help everyone to keep a sense of proportion in the situation

School Procedures

- All incidents of suspected bullying are logged
- Incidents are recorded by the Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher in an incident record book and the matter investigated.
- Where judged necessary, parents of all the children involved should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem.
- Support will be given to help the child displaying bullying behaviour to change their behaviour.

Work with children

Work with an individual or a group of children is carried out for two reasons:

- to reduce the likelihood of instances of bullying occurring
- to respond to the needs of children who have been bullied and of those children responsible for the bullying
- This work may happen within class, through support from the Inclusion Manager or the Learning Mentor or from the Local Authority Behaviour Support Team

The child who is bullied

Work with children that follows any discovery or report of bullying must avoid aggravating the bullied child's physical or emotional distress. Teachers need to take particular care that in following up a complaint of bullying they do not expose the bullied child to the risk of even more bullying. They should take all reasonable measures to ensure that the bullied child is supported and protected. Interventions which appear to be particularly sensitive to the needs of all children are those in which more general problem solving strategies are modelled. Where a bullied child is suffering prolonged or intense anxiety or distress, referral to outside agencies should be considered.

We will:

- provide an opportunity for discussions with the child who has been bullied
- avoid embarrassing and shaming the bullied child by focusing on a particular incident when the child is present
- use "supportive" children to ensure that the bullied child is befriended and supported
- consider the appropriateness of referring the bullied child from specialist help, having consulted and secured the agreement of parents. Outside agencies which may provide this expertise include Relateen, the Education Welfare Service or a Family support worker (referral can be made through the Common Assessment framework where a children can be supported through "Team Around the Child" meetings).

The child who bullies

We work hard with children who bully others to ensure that they receive the help that will prevent further bullying. Bullies are:

- frequently victims of bullying themselves and may need help to see that bullying is not acceptable behaviour.
- children who have not learned appropriate ways of interacting with their peers.

Procedures for dealing with a reported incident of bullying

Each case must be treated as the unique incident that it is. Inevitably, there will be some occasions when it will be very unclear as to what has actually happened. In these circumstances the priority will be given to ensuring that no further incidents take place. Relevant staff including teaching staff, pastoral support staff, and lunchtime supervisors will be informed in order that the situation may be monitored closely.

The school has a number of strategies to deal with incidents and an appropriate method will be selected depending on factors including:

- The age of the children involved
- The severity of the incident
- Any previous history

Individual “chats”

Aim: To reach agreement that the pupil concerned is having a bad time in school and to agree individual action.

Include all the people directly involved.

- Welcome the pupil into the room.
- Offer a relaxed atmosphere.
- Don't speak until you have engaged eye contact.
- Remain neutral and calm.

Questioning may involve –

“I hear that you’ve upset X. Tell me about it.”

- Let the pupil talk.
- Don't ask any leading questions.
- Encourage them to answer your specific questions.
- WAIT if they don't say anything.
- Don't question if they complain about the bullied pupil.

: “I was wondering what you could do to make things better for X.”

- Accept suggestions.
- Don't discuss how.
- WAIT if they don't say anything.
- If the child is really stuck for ideas, say: “I've got an idea, would you like to hear it?”
- Mediation between both parties, supported by sensitive adults and peers.

“OK, I'll see you next week to find out how you are getting on.”

(NB The above questions will need to be re-phrased for the child who has been bullied:

“I hear that X has upset you. Tell me about it.”

“So, it sounds like you are having a bad time in school.”

“I was wondering what X could do to make things better for you.”)

Follow-up

Follow up to find out about the effectiveness of the individual action.

Celebrate success and, if appropriate, set new targets.

Discuss:

- What has been done well.
- What can be done if the bullying happens again.

It is important to emphasise that the children are going to be in school together for a long time. Conflict is most easily resolved when people in conflict have a sense of a long-term future together.

Outcomes

- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place according to the school's Behaviour Policy (see Behaviour Policy)
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.
- After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.