



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy [November 2021]

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy and school Mission Statement to:
Pray ~ Learn ~ Love ~ Enjoy

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. When all issues of bullying are addressed pupils will be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools.

Definition

The Department for Education makes the following description:

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

[Preventing and Tackling Bullying July 2017]

It is important that all involved recognise the difference between bullying and relational conflict which can happen frequently in school and is part of the developmental process of personal and social education.

Relational conflict	Bullying
Equal power	Imbalance of power
Happens occasionally	Repeated negative action
Remorseful	No remorse
Effort to solve problem	No effort to solve problem

Staff, pupils and parents are asked to think carefully about use of the term 'bullying' and whether or not the reported incident actually fits into that specific category.

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual or frequent absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lack of concentration or in extreme cases self harm.

Pupils are always encouraged to report bullying in school.

All school staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy.

If there are any serious concerns this may need to involve the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) *see also the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*

Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to technology has provided a new medium for ‘virtual’ bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience and more accessories as people are able to copy or forward content at a click. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Separate advice on teachers’ powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – see below for a link to this document.

At St Mary’s we have regular online safety lesson input which also deals with cyber bullying. We work hard to keep ourselves up to date with new hardware, apps and sites. We keep an open channel of communication to help parents and pupils alike.



Implementation of Policy

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately, in the first instance, by the member of staff who has been approached.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- The class teacher will speak to all concerned, record the incident and inform SLT.
- SLT may need to investigate further and if, on further investigation, bullying is confirmed, will document the incident in the ‘Hate Crimes’ Record and parents will be informed,.
- All relevant staff will be kept informed.
- Appropriate consequences will be decided (see below).

- Social strategies (circle time, social skills groups) will also be used as appropriate to support all those involved.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- being offered an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a teacher or member of staff of their choice
- reassuring the pupil
- offering continuous support
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- setting up peer support group
- restorative justice procedures

Pupils who have bullied will be helped by:

- discussing what happened
- discovering why the pupil became involved
- establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- helping them to develop an empathy towards others
- informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil
- inclusion in social skills groups
- restorative justice procedures

If these measures are unsuccessful then the following steps may be taken (See also Behaviour Policy)

- official warnings to cease offending
- Placing the pupil 'on report'
- exclusion from certain areas of school premises e.g. playground or field
- internal exclusion
- fixed-term exclusion
- permanent exclusion

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHE, circle time, RE, assemblies, pastoral care, ICT lessons and subject areas, as appropriate, so as to build, encourage and celebrate relationships based on Gospel Values in the school, home, parish and the wider community.