



St Mary's Catholic First School



Anti-Bullying Policy

At St Mary's we recognise the effects of bullying on general well-being and do not tolerate any form of bullying which we define as repeated, intentional and cruel behaviour towards others. We recognise that bullying takes various forms and can range from very subtle 'low level' behaviours such as repeated ignoring, removing and hiding personal possessions to repeated physical and verbal intimidation by an individual or group. The key difference between what is termed in this policy as 'unacceptable' behaviour and bullying is whether there is a repeated pattern in the behaviour towards the victim and whether it is intentional and cruel. We urge all children and parents to report any incidents of perceived bullying and these are followed up initially by the class teacher, then if necessary, the victim's class teacher, Assistant Heads and /or Head Teacher. We recognise that bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victim.

We ensure:

- All governors and staff will have an understanding of what bullying is and will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported
- All pupils and parents/carers will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs
- Pupils and parents/carers will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported
- Whole school initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies etc.) and pro-active teaching strategies (PSHE [Personal, Social & Health Education] lessons, circle time, I Can Problem Solve etc.) will be used throughout the school to reduce the occurrence of bullying. All incidences of bullying behaviours are recorded in the whole school system – CPOMS.

1. What Is Not Bullying?

1.1 It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose. Remember STOP – when it happens Several Times On Purpose.

1.2 Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We use restorative justice techniques to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

2. Where Does Bullying Happen?

2.1 It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the dining hall, in the playground and on the way to and from school.

2.2 At St. Mary's we are concerned for our children's conduct and welfare outside school and we will do what we can to support and address any bullying issues that occur outside the school premises. The following steps may be taken:

- Talk to the children about how to handle, or avoid, bullying outside the school premises.
- Discuss coping strategies with parents/carers/children.
- Talk to the Head teachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying outside school premises
- Talk to the local Community Police Officer about problems on the streets or between families e.g. cyber bullying.

3. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

3.1 A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he, or she, is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering/Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to under-perform in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Have possessions that go 'missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home hungry (snack/sandwiches have been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason
- Is bullying other children or brothers and sisters
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives excuses which seem implausible for any of the above
- Talks about suicide or runs away

3.2 These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be taken seriously and investigated without delay.

3.3 We have some children who have learning disabilities and/or communication difficulties. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are, therefore, particularly vigilant at all times.

3.4 High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying as seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

4. Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying Incidents

4.1 All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents. They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved. We list below a variety of options that could be taken in response and used for responding and reporting as appropriate to bullying allegations or incidents:

- Report all bullying allegations and incidents to the safeguarding team and staff to report on CPOMS
- Staff will make sure the victim is safe and feels safe
- Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s)
- Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately
- The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested using I can Problem Solve
- Staff will attempt to adopt a problem-solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour
- Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying
- Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable
- The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions or support applied.
- If possible, the pupils will be reconciled or plans for reconciliation made.
- An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on CPOMS and SLT will be notified.
- In serious cases parents/carers will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the matter
- After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place
- Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings
- The school's nominated Safeguarding Governor will present termly reports on serious bullying incidents to the Governing Body. The following Sanctions may be used:
 - Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing
 - Lose privileges
 - Undertake a 'helping activity'
 - Parents will be invited in to school to discuss the matter

- Be withdrawn from participation in clubs and events not essential to the curriculum or where other children's learning would be at risk
- Fixed-term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

5. Strategies for the Prevention and Reduction of Bullying

5.1 Whole school initiatives and pro-active teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the occurrence of bullying. These can include:

- Involving the School Council in reviewing this policy
- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Making national anti-bullying week a high profile event each year.
- Awareness raising through regular anti-bullying assemblies.
- PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) schemes of work and SCARF.
- Circle time on bullying issues
- I Can Problem Solve sessions
- Life Education van visits the school annually for all year groups
- Setting up a circle of friends support network where a small group of children volunteer to help and support an individual who is experiencing difficulties
- Using drama activities and role-plays to help children be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Introducing playground improvements and initiatives

Advice for Children

The following information is related to the pupils in 'pupil speak' and displayed around the school

6. What can you do if you feel you are being bullied?

6.1 Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you or making you feel uncomfortable or upset it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you. You can:

- Try to let the person know that he/she is making you feel upset
- Be assertive – stand up to them, look at them directly in the eye, ask them to stop the behaviour you don't like and mean it

- Move away from a situation as quickly as you can and seek an adult to help
- Tell someone you can trust – it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a midday supervisor, a parent, a friend, a brother, a sister or a relative
- If you are scared, ask a friend to go with you when you tell someone
- When you tell an adult about the behaviour that worries you, give them as many facts as you can (What, Who, Where, When, Why, How)
- Keep a diary of what has been happening and refer to it when you tell someone
- Keep on speaking out until someone listens and helps you
- Never be afraid to do something about it and quickly do it
- Don't suffer in silence
- Don't blame yourself for what is happening
- Call a helpline.

7. What can you do if you see someone else being bullied? (The role of the bystander)

7.1 Ignoring bullying or unfair behaviour is unfair to the victim. Staying silent means the bully has won and gives them more power. There are ways you can help without putting yourself in danger.

- Don't smile or laugh at the situation
- Don't rush over and take the person misbehaving or bullying on yourself, find and get an adult.
- Don't be made to join in
- If safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop behaviour
- If you can, let the bully know you do not like his or her behaviour
- Shout for help
- Let the victim(s) know that you are going to get help
- Tell a member of staff as soon as you can
- Try and befriend the person being bullied or feeling uncomfortable
- Encourage the person to talk to someone and get help
- Ask someone you trust about what to do

8. Cyber Bullying

8.1 At St Mary's we define 'Cyber Bullying' as the use of electronic information and communication devices to wilfully and repeatedly harm either a person or persons through electronic text, photos, or videos. Examples of this behaviour include but are not limited to:

- Sending false, cruel, vicious messages

- Creating websites that have stories, cartoons, pictures, and jokes ridiculing others.
- Breaking into an email account and sending vicious or embarrassing materials to others.
- Engaging someone in electronic communication, tricking that person into revealing sensitive personal information and forwarding that information to others.
- Posting of someone's picture without their permission.

8.2 Bullying of this nature outside of school creates a hostile environment within it and is a violation of a child's right to be safe and secure. Cyber Bullying and Harassment will not be tolerated. Actions deliberately threatening, harassing, intimidating or placing an individual or group of individuals in reasonable fear of harm will not be tolerated and will be dealt with in accordance with the provisions above.

8.3 The online activities and technologies often used by students engaged in Cyber Bullying include but are not limited to social networking sites, chat rooms and discussion groups, instant messaging, text messaging, computers, cell phones and personal digital devices, digital cameras, cell phone cameras, and web cams. As new technologies emerge, they too may be included with the above forms of electronic communication.

9. Monitoring and evaluation of the Policy

9.1 This anti-bullying policy was written in consultation with all teaching staff, governors and members of the school council. The policy is monitored and behaviour evaluated on an annual basis.

9.2 Informally the policy is monitored and its effectiveness evaluated on a daily basis by all staff.

9.3 The Policy is updated annually accordingly and presented to the Governors' Curriculum Committee for approval.

This policy should be read alongside the attachment awareness and relationship policy.

Review date: April 2025