

**ST MARY MAGDALENE CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



'Growing Together in Faith & Love'

September 2024

MISSION STATEMENT

“Growing together in faith & love”

As a Christian community school life is based on the Gospel and the teachings of the Catholic Church and consequently to fostering a commitment to justice and the equality of all people in the eyes of God. Every child is encouraged to high ideals and equal opportunity is given to all pupils to develop their talents to the full.

Anti-Bullying Policy

Challenging bullying effectively will improve the safety and happiness of our pupils, and make clear to bullies that such behaviour is unacceptable. We recognise that bullying can occur in all schools. Incidents of bullying in our school are rare. However, in order to address this issue the following guidelines have been drawn up to help support children, parents and staff.

Co-operation by staff, pupils and parents can ensure that our school is a secure and safe environment. Bullying **will not** be tolerated in our school. Our school is a **Telling School**.

What is Bullying

Bullying involves dominance of one person by another, or a group of others, is pre-meditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour. Bullying is therefore deliberately hurtful, repeated and often over a period of time.

It is if individuals or groups are:

- Name calling
- Isolating or excluding
- Making threats
- Pressure to give someone money or possessions
- Hitting
- Damaging possessions
- Spreading rumours about an individual or their family
- Using text, email or web space to write or say hurtful things (cyber bullying)
- All racist, LGBTQ+ phobic or any form of sexual harassment

It is also bullying if someone feels hurt because of things said about ethnic background, religious faith, gender, disability, special educational needs, appearance or issues in the family.

Bullying will be dealt with seriously. Pupils can and should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying. All pupils will be covered by this policy.

Aims of the anti-bullying policy

- To express our belief that all pupils should be included fully in the life of the school
- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- To ensure all parents, pupils and staff are aware of this policy
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and to enable them to learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support
- Provide a learning environment free from any threat or fear, which is conducive to the achievement, well-being and aspirations of any pupil

The values and beliefs underlying this Anti-Bullying policy may be considered in the context of the following:

- Any bullying is unacceptable, regardless of how it is delivered or what excuses are given to justify it
- The school recognises the detrimental effect on pupils who may be subjected to bullying and will work actively to minimise the risks
- Victims of bullying will be treated in a supportive manner, rather than being regarded as a burden to staff and peer groups
- The harmful effect on pupil performance which can arise by bullying is recognised and the school is committed to combating all bullying behaviour

Action to combat bullying

Among the activities which the school will establish and maintain in an effort to combat bullying behaviour are:

- Child friendly anti-bullying leaflet for all pupils
- Anti-bullying weeks held annually
- Circle time, assemblies, role play, stories to create an anti-bullying climate
- Developing appropriate responses to bullying incidents
- Teach pupils how to manage their relationships with others
- Allocation of specific roles and responsibilities, both at staff and pupil level, in order that incidents may be detected, behaviour monitored and appropriate after-care delivered
- The establishment of appropriate record keeping through which all incidents are collated and periodically reviewed and reported to the Governing Body

- Communication of the Anti-Bullying policy and periodic update, in order to ensure that staff and pupils are continuously aware of the policy and also of their individual responsibilities. Special assemblies, posters displayed around the school
- Posters around the school
- Effectively managed use of play spaces. We ensure that there is range of activities on offer for all children, shared through a rota system
- Identify differences between bullying behaviour and falling out with a friend and understanding the differences between the two
- Emphasis that those who watch bullying and do nothing are encouraging such behaviour. Teach children about how being a bystander who does nothing is actually giving 'silent approval'. Talk about how we are all responsible for keeping our school free from bullying behaviour, by our own actions
- Possibly give pupils involved in bullying behaviour constructive and challenging tasks to do during breaks
- Encourage all pupils to break the silence about bullying behaviour
- Examination of preventative measures such as alteration to the school environment procedures and practices, in an effort to reduce the risks of bullying behaviour occurring
- Displaying schools Code of Conduct to remind pupils of their rights and responsibilities
- Staff training to ensure that all responsibilities in respect of the Anti-Bullying policy can be delivered in a competent, caring and efficient manner
- Establishing an appropriate staff/pupil forum in order that current issues with regard to bullying can be discussed on a regular basis, such as school council meetings, PSHE, assembly, Key Stage/staff meetings

Guidance for pupils

If you are someone being bullied, take action, watching, doing nothing makes the bully think you are on their side.

Tell an adult at once

If you are being bullied or if someone tries to bully you, **TELL TELL TELL**

TELL your friends

TELL your teacher

TELL your parents

Please do not suffer on your own. We can and will help you.

Pupil Responsibilities

It is important that pupils recognise the difficulties which staff may encounter in ensuring that the purpose and intent of the Anti-Bullying Policy can be effectively introduced and enforced. In this regard, pupils are expected to:

- Report all incidents of bullying to an adult.
- Act in a respectful and supportive manner to their fellow pupils, reporting any suspected incidents which the victim may be afraid to report.
- Adhere to and promote the aims and objectives of this statement.
- Refrain at all times from any behaviour which would constitute bullying of fellow pupils.

Advice for Pupils

If you are being bullied:

- Understand you have done nothing wrong – being bullied is not your fault
- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can.
- Be firm and clear – look others in the eye and tell them to stop.
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away.

After you have been bullied:

- Tell a teacher or another adult in your school.
- Tell your family.
- If you are scared to tell an adult by yourself, ask a friend to come with you.
- Keep speaking up until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying.
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened.

When you are talking to an adult about bullying, be clear about:

- What has happened to you.
- How often it has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Who saw what was happening.
- Where it happened.
- What you have done about it already.

Advice for Parents and Families

Every school is likely to have some problem with bullying at one time or another.

Bullying behaviour includes:

- Name calling and nasty teasing.
- Being racist
- Threats and extortion.
- Physical violence.
- Damage to belongings.
- Leaving pupils out of social activities deliberately and frequently.
- Spreading malicious rumours.

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping us deal with bullying.

First – discourage your child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show how to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.

Second – ask to see school's anti-bullying policy.

Third – watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect symptoms of bullying, though sometimes school nurses or doctors may first suspect that a child has been bullied. Common symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability. It can be helpful to ask questions about progress and friends at school; how break times and lunchtimes are spent; and whether your child is facing problems or difficulties at school. Contact the school if you are worried.

If your child has been bullied

- Calmly talk to your child about it.
- Make a note of what your child says – particularly who was involved; how often the bullying has occurred; where it happened and what happened.
- Reassure your child that telling you was the right thing to do.
- Explain that any further incidents should be reported to a teacher immediately.
- Make an appointment to see your child's teacher and explain the problems.
- Do not take matters into your own hands, do not approach the child yourself or the parents, as this can often lead to an escalation of the problem.

Talking to teachers about bullying

- Try and stay calm – bear in mind that the teacher may have no idea that your child is being bullied or may have heard conflicting accounts of incidents.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened – give dates, places and names of other children involved.
- Find out what action the school intends to take.
- Ask them if there is anything you can do to help your child or the school.
- Stay in touch with the school – let them know if the situation improves as well as if problems continue.

If you think your concerns are not being addressed:

- Check the school anti-bullying policy.
- Make an appointment to meet the Headteacher.
- If this does not help, write to the Chair of Governors explaining your concerns and what you would like to see happen.
- Contact the Local Authority, who will be able to ensure that the Governors respond to your concern.

If your child is bullying other children

Many children may be involved in bullying other pupils at some time or other. Often parents are not aware. Children sometimes bully others because:

- They don't know it is wrong.
- They are copying older brothers or sisters or other people in the family they admire.
- They haven't learnt other, better ways of mixing with their school friends.
- They are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings.

To stop your child bullying others:

- Talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy.
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want.
- Show your child how to join in with other children without bullying.
- Make an appointment to see your child's teacher; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop them bullying others.
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school.

- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people.

Within our school teachers have been nominated to deal with instances of bullying.

They are: Mrs Rosemarie Jones
Mrs Kathryn Williams

You can go and talk to any of these teachers in confidence at any time, or to any member of staff.

Parents too can play a vital role by:

- Stressing to pupils the importance of sociable behaviour
- Reporting any misgivings they have concerning either victims of perpetrators of bullying.
- Actively endorsing and supporting the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Policy Ownership and Responsibilities

This Anti-Bullying Policy will be considered to be a living document. As such, it will be periodically updated and reviewed.

Ultimate responsibility for its introduction and implementation will rest with the School Governors/Headteacher. However, it is important to remember that all staff, pupils and parents have an active part to play both in the evolution, development and maintenance of this Anti-Bullying Policy.

The ultimate aim should be to provide a learning environment free of any threat or fear, thus being conducive to the attainment of individual aspirations.

Protocol for staff when dealing with incidents of bullying

Remember that it can take courage for a child to report a bullying incident, whether they are the victim or bystander or have used bullying behaviour.

- Show that you are listening so that the child feels listened to and that they are being taken seriously. Finding a quiet place to talk so that the conversation will not be disturbed, or witness by other classes, is good practice.
- At this stage it should be clearly established, using our school's definition of bullying that the incident reported is one of bullying. (This may take time and be confirmed once all facts have been ascertained). At this point incident referred to Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher. They will:
 - Consider whether there may be a child protection issue, if so then follow school's Child Protection procedures (Safeguarding Policy)
 - Investigate the incident to establish what has happened

- Use open questions when speaking with those involved, though closed questions are useful when you are clarifying a point
- Speak to each child individually; it can be useful to have another adult present to take notes
- Questions might include:
 - What has been happening?
 - Who has been involved?
 - How do you feel? Are you hurt?
 - Where/when did the incident take place?
 - What happened just before/after the incident took place?
 - Has this happened before? When? How often?
 - What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
 - What are you thinking/feeling since?
 - Is anyone else also being bullied?
- It is useful to summarise, at regular intervals, what has been heard, back to the individual you are speaking to. Feeling understood is very important.
- Consider asking the child to write down what happened.
- Investigate further/fact finding exercise (recorded).
- Decide on a response. Whatever response is chosen should be communicated clearly to all those concerned so that everyone is clear and misunderstandings are avoided.
- A written record should be kept and Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher informed about the situation.
- Decide on a course of action.
- Reassure the victims(s); don't make them feel guilty, inadequate or foolish. Remember they may be experiencing some or all of the following:
 - Isolation (real or imagined)
 - Self-doubt and uncertainty
 - Fear of reprisals
 - Self-blame
 - Fear of being bullied by others
 - Depression or sadness
- Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim. Show them the care, respect and concern needed to return them to normalcy.
- Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove of their **behaviour** and **why** choosing to behave in that way was a wrong **decision** on their part.
- Consider ways in which the bully can be encouraged to see the victim's point of view.

- Ask the bully what they think can be done to help the victim eg. an apology (in writing?), making a contract not to behave that way again on school premises or outside school, listing behaviours that need changing others that may be appropriate.
- Consider that the idea is not so much to punish the wrongdoer but to encourage the culprit to carry out some corrective action to improve relationships. Punish the bully as appropriate but be careful how this is done. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it is alright to bully if you have the power.
- Explain clearly the consequences of their behaviour and why selected sanctions are appropriate.
- It may be appropriate to involve parents.
- If parents are involved then staff should report the incident clearly and concisely and detail actions that the school is undertaking both to support the victim and to help the bully avoid repeating their mistake; reassure both sets of parents that the incident will not linger on or be held against anyone once actions/sanctions are completed. Since the first meeting with parents may take place immediately or soon after a particular incident it may not have been possible to identify actions required, or the meeting with parents may shape those actions.
- A further meeting may possibly be required at the closure of those actions (eg. to understand from the parent if the victim is now feeling better again after reintegration activity).
- Appropriate staff should be made aware so that they can exercise informed and assistive judgement around behaviour and academic performance of the victim while things return to normal.
- Inform parents of the very serious consequences should bullying behaviour continue.
- If necessary and appropriate consult police.
- Keep governors informed of serious incidents.
- It may be appropriate that the Headteacher needs to consider internal, fixed or permanent exclusions.

Support for a child who has been bullied

Depending on the severity of the bullying a plan of action for the victim should be in place. This can include:

- Regular meetings with a member of staff that the victim trusts to discuss their feelings and issues.
- Reassurance that what they share is important and will be treated confidentially, and, appropriate actions will be taken to prevent further bullying.
- Positive reversal of any ostracism that the victim may feel to restore their confidence enabling them to take part in class life and the wider school community.
- Strategies to help the victim with any issues of self-confidence, providing direction in how to be clear and assertive in rejection of being bullied.

- Giving academic support and catch up opportunities to the victim if they have fallen behind as a result of the bullying.

Final Steps

- Provide on-going support to all those involved in the incident who need it. Monitor the situation for an agreed period of time to ensure that the way it was resolved has been successful. If the incident has thrown up other issues the school may want to consider making referrals to an external provider.
- If a further incident involving the same children is reported the school will follow the same procedures above (ascertaining facts etc.) and decide what further action or different action needs to be taken.
- Once the agreed period of monitoring has passed and there has been no recurrence of the bullying incident, then the case should be formally closed and a note placed on the record to reflect the outcome.