



St Mary's Catholic Primary School

ANTI BULLYING POLICY – 2023/24

"Inspiring children to love learning in the light of Christ"

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School and Nursery values all children for their unique gifts and talents.

Each child is encouraged to reach his or her full potential, academically, socially and spiritually.

Children are nurtured and supported as they grow to become curious, confident and independent learners, who work hard and aim high.

INTRODUCTION

All aspects of school life at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School endeavour to foster the ethos that contributes to the building of not only the school community, but that of Southam. Bullying, aggression and any other types of anti-social behaviour are contrary to our Catholic ethos. We seek to provide a safe, secure and happy environment in which children and adults can grow and develop in fulfilment of our school mission.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF BULLYING

It is essential that adults are aware of the symptoms of bullying.

Signs of bullying can be extremely variable and will very much depend on the individual. It is important, however, that parents/carers are aware of the signs and symptoms associated with bullying so that they can identify possible problems. The more common signs include:

- Physical signs e.g. Physical injuries, damaged clothing with no convincing explanation and general ill-health due to stress
- Emotional signs e.g. mood swings, apparent changes in personality, constant anxiety/ nervousness or tearfulness for no apparent reason, lack of confidence, negative self-image, hostility and defensiveness.
- Behavioural signs e.g. withdrawn, frequent, unexplained absences, poor concentration, eating disorders, alcohol/substance misuse, evidence of self-harming and disruptive/challenging/bullying behaviour, damaged and incomplete work.
- General e.g. frequently 'lose' money/possessions, appears tired and lethargic, avoids entering/leaving school with others.



It should be stated that usually victims of bullying become so through no fault or action of their own. However, on occasion, it is important to recognise that there can be different types of victims because they:

- Are new to the class
- Are different in appearance, speech or background from other people
- Suffer from low self-esteem (but this is not clear whether this is the cause or the effect of bullying)

EFFECTS OF BULLYING

Bullying denies the dignity of the individual and can affect the victim in many ways some of which will be long lasting.

- unhappiness which can have serious consequences such as running away from home and self-harm
- reduced self-esteem and self-worth and exclusion from normal social experiences
- poor performance at school

A DEFINITION OF BULLYING

'Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to do harm to someone else, repeated over a period of time' It is unacceptable behaviour which occurs lots of times on purpose'.

Bullying can be short term or continuous over long periods of time.

'Kidscape' (www.kidscape.org.uk) suggest a range of behaviour that constitutes bullying:

- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, any form of violence, threats.
- Verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, persistent teasing.
- Emotional – tormenting, threatening, ridicule, humiliation, facial expression, exclusion from groups or activities.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, abusive comments, name-calling.
- Racial – taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Cyber-bullying (Facebook, Twitter, MSN, MySpace) This is more likely to take place outside school but, needs to be investigated with the support of parents. The school's Internet Safety Policy supports the responsible use of technology.

Bullying also has the following characteristics.

- It tends to be repetitive
- It involves an imbalance of power
- No real friendship
- Actions are purposeful
- One sided relationship.
- Sexist

Staff must remain vigilant about bullying behaviours and approach this in the same way as any other category of Child Abuse; that is, do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; because they may be too young or have a level of Special Educational Needs which means that they may be unable to realise what others may be doing to them.

Staff must also be aware of those children who may be vulnerable pupils; those coming from troubled families, or those responding to emotional problems or mental health issues which may bring about a propensity to be unkind to others, or may make them more likely to fall victim to the behaviour of others.

TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can be of many types, the most common are listed below:

- Homophobic or Transphobic
- Racist
- Related to disability, SEN or health
- Related to home circumstances

PREVENTING BULLYING

Learning opportunities are planned across the curriculum and through relevant aspects of school life. The Religious Education and P.S.H.E curriculum in particular supported by Literacy, Drama, History and current affairs provide opportunities to explore bullying related issues. Our Anti-Bullying Policy is kept 'alive' through discussions with the School Council, House Captains, Circle time, Children's Questionnaires, class rules, Assemblies and the annual 'Anti-Bullying' week in November. Incidents in the playground should be used to explore difficult situations without using aggression, violence or offensive language.

The following issues are explored:

- What is bullying?
- What causes people to bully each other?
- How does it feel to bully or be bullied?
- What are the effects of bullying?
- What can we do if someone tells us bullying is taking place?
- What can we do to stop bullying and what moral dilemmas do we face when we are confronted by bullying?
- How to keep ourselves safe.
- How to react if something unfamiliar or threatening happens?

Positive behaviour which fosters good relationships with others should be modelled and praised at all times so that an atmosphere of consideration, unselfishness and empathy prevails.

All children should be aware of the following procedures if they feel they are being bullied:

- Be firm and clear – look them 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.
- If you are scared to tell on your own, ask a friend to go with you.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING

All allegations of bullying must be taken seriously and listened to. Bullying allegations can come from a number of sources:

Child, child's friends, parent/carer or staff member in a variety of ways.

When an incident of bullying has taken place, staff must be prepared to record and report each incident.

In the case of racist bullying, this must be reported to the Headteacher.

General incidences of bullying should be recorded in the Behaviour Log this would include incidents where staff have had to become involved and speak with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS (VICTIM)

When bullying has been reported or observed, the following steps will be taken to provide support to the victim.

Stage one:

1. Interview with the victim
2. Meeting with by-standers
3. Explain the problem to by-standers, friendship groups etc. and ask for suggestions as to how the victim could be made happier.
4. Leave it to them.
5. Meet them again.
6. Reconciliation with the perpetrator.

Perpetrator

1. Discuss effects of bullying behaviour.
2. Explore child's feelings.
3. Contact parents.
4. Allocate appropriate sanction.
5. Reconciliation with the victim – signs of remorse.

If the situation is not resolved after following this process and the behaviour continues, then the following stages are followed:

Stage two:

Convene a separate meeting for both sets of parents/carers and adapt stage one to the outcome.

Stage three:

Put a Pastoral plan in place

Stage four:

- Contact other agencies, e.g.
- Early Intervention Service
- Educational Psychologist
- Voluntary Organisations

Do Not:

1. Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
2. Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions, following the schools discipline policy will be followed. Each situation will require the professional consideration of staff. The following issues should be explored, particularly when dealing with a one-off incident:

- They are copying friends or family members
- They haven't learned how to relate appropriately with their peers and their feelings of empathy are under-developed.
- Their 'friend' encourages them to bully.
- They are going through a difficult time and they are acting out aggressive feelings.

Where children do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying the following sanctions will be taken:

- Withdrawal of break and lunch time privileges
- Removal from class
- Withholding participation from activities which are not an essential part of the school curriculum
- Fixed period exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

SUPPORT FOR THE VICTIM

Individual children will need different forms of support and are likely to need reassurance and monitoring for some time following an incident.

All members of staff need to be informed, including playground supervising staff if a child needs monitoring. In addition to child's school work, relations with peers will be carefully monitored.

RECORDING INCIDENTS

1. Who was involved?
2. When and where the incident happened?
3. What happened?
4. What action was taken?
5. How was it followed up?

General incidences of bullying should be recorded in the Behaviour Log this would include incidents where staff have had to become involved and speak with children, and/or where parents have raised concerns regarding bullying. See Behaviour log at the end of this policy.

PREJUDICE RELATED INCIDENTS

These incidents can be observed by children in the wider community and show the same types of behaviour but is not repeated, not intentional or not directed at an individual, but nevertheless must be regarded as serious and appropriate action taken.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE POLICY

The policy will form part of the everyday life of school. It will be maintained regularly through display of posters, PSHE and assemblies. It will be a regular item on School Council Agendas, at staff and governor's meetings. Its effectiveness will be monitored through annual parent, pupil and staff questionnaires and report incidents. The policy will be reviewed annually.

USEFUL CONTACTS

- **Childline 0800 1111**
A free confidential helpline for children and young people, offering advice and support by phone and online 24 hours a day.
- **EACH 0808 1000 143**
A Freephone helpline for children experiencing homophobic bullying.
Open Monday –Friday 10am-5pm
- **Parentline Plus 0800 7836783**
A free 24hour helpline for anyone caring for children or textphone 0800 783 6783 for the deaf or hard of hearing.

WEBSITES

- **Anti-Bullying Alliance**
www.Anti-Bullyingalliance.org.uk
- information, resources and advice related to bullying.
- **Beatbullying**
www.beatbullying.org
- resources and lesson plans looking at the issues of bullying for primary and secondary pupils.
- **Cybermentors**
www.cybermentors.org.uk
- a safe social networking site providing information and support for young people affected by bullying.
- **Kidscape**
www.kidscape.org.uk
- Advice, helpline, information, resources and training.
- **Need2know**
www.need2know.co.uk
- youth friendly site featuring tips on how to stop bullying, strategies.
- **NSPCC**
www.nspcc.org.uk
– advice on what to do if you are being bullied or see someone who is.

Policy reviewed by all staff: September 2023
To be reviewed: September 2024
By: John Brine



BEHAVIOUR LOG

Year Group:

Date:

Child(ren) displaying inappropriate behaviour:

Description of the incident:

Who was affected?

Action(s) taken:

By whom:

Date:

Conclusion – final outcome/reconciliation: