

St Mary's Catholic Primary School – Anti-Bullying Policy

St Mary's is a welcoming and inclusive community where the spiritual, moral, intellectual, social, emotional and physical development of children is nurtured in a secure environment based on Gospel values.

Aims of the school

We aim to create a safe, secure, warm and happy environment to enable each child to achieve his/her full potential. We believe that everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. Preventing and tackling bullying is a priority in the school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving.

At St Mary's, we acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time. It would be unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. We are a TELLING school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is seen as deliberately hurtful behaviour with the conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else. It is recognised that bullying behaviour is often repeated over a period of time and be carried out by an individual or a group.

(STOP – it happens Several Times On Purpose).

Bullying causes hurt on the inside and on the outside, until the person being bullied feels they can no longer cope. It results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victim/s.

We, along with the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), define bullying using the following definition:

"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace."

Bullying can take a variety of forms:

- Emotional - being deliberately unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture and religion
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments
- Homophobic & Transphobic - because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexual orientation, whether actual or perceived

- Anti-disability - bullying related to perceptions about disability and/or special educational needs
- Online/cyber- setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive text messages, emails and abusing the victims via their mobile phones/facebook, MSM, gaming technology

Bullying is a subjective experience and can take many forms. Children, young people and adults are capable of bullying. The nature of bullying is changing and evolving as technology develops. Bullying is harmful to all involved, not just the bullied, and can lead to self-doubt, lack of confidence, low self-esteem, depression, anxiety, self-harm and sometimes even suicide. Some individuals may feel that they are being bullied, even when there is no intention from others to cause them distress.

Child on Child Abuse

Child on Child Abuse – including harmful sexual behaviour - is taken very seriously and all staff recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Education settings are an important part of the inter-agency framework not only in terms of evaluating and referring concerns to Children's Services and the Police, but also in the assessment and management of risk that the child or young person may pose to themselves and others in the education setting. If one child or young person causes harm to another, this should not necessarily be dealt with as abuse.

When considering whether behaviour is abusive, it is important to consider whether there is a large difference in power (for example age, size, ability, development) between the young people concerned; or whether, the perpetrator has repeatedly tried to harm one or more other children; or whether there are concerns about the intention of the alleged perpetrator.

At St Mary's, child on child abuse will not be tolerated or passed off as 'joking around', 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'.

Child on child abuse may take different forms:

- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexting 'Sexting in schools and colleges;
- Initiating/hazing type violence and rituals.

We take a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence.

We will ensure that all incidents of sexual harassment and/or violence are met with a suitable response. Pupils are encouraged to report anything that makes them uncomfortable, no matter how 'small' they feel it might be. The school's response will be:

- Proportionate
- Considered
- Supportive
- Decided on a case-by-case basis

There are procedures in place to respond to any allegations or concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing. Please refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy for more details.

Bullying is not

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 becomes bullying if it is done several times on purpose (STOP).

Children sometimes fall out, hurt each other 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. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

Any form of bullying behaviour is unacceptable. Direct action against bullying will be taken at all times.

Guidelines

The school will always:

- Take the problem seriously
- Investigate the incident - who was involved (or alleged to be involved) where and when it happened, what happened
- Interview bully/ies and victims separately
- Interview any witnesses
- Decide on appropriate action, such as:
 - Speaking to individuals involved
 - Having a restorative conversation
 - Obtaining a verbal/written apology
 - Impose sanctions
 - Informing parents
 - Hold lessons / class discussions/assemblies about bullying
 - Provide a safe space during school hours for victims of bullying
 - Provide adult support
 - Support with behaviour/emotions (this may take the form of adult check ins, work with other agencies such as the resilience nurse, school counsellor)
 - Keep victim's parents informed of action taken
 - Inform members of staff about the incident and action taken
 - Use CPOMS and Arbor to record incidents and actions taken

Parents are encouraged to contact school if they are worried that their child might be involved in bullying others or being bullied. It is important that all staff, including lunchtime supervisory staff, act on incidents witnessed as well as challenging the bullying behaviour.

Support will be given to the pupil and the situation further investigated sensitively and calmly.

Lunchtime supervisory staff should report incidents to class teachers and/or the SLT.

As a caring and inclusive school, we encourage children to actively take a stand against bullying. This includes the following:

- Not allowing someone to be deliberately left out of a group
- Not smiling or laughing when someone is being hurt in any way
- Reporting to a member of staff if they have concerns about the behaviour of a child
- Speaking up when they see a child being unkind
- Including and supporting pupils who are being left out
- Telling the bullying pupil to stop what they are doing
- Showing the bullying pupil that they disapprove of his/her actions

The curriculum will be used to raise pupil's awareness and understanding of what bullying is:

- Raise awareness about bullying behaviour and the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Participate in anti-bullying week themes and focuses.
- Challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils and help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school.
- Use role- play, presentations and stories pupils can be shown what they can do to reduce and prevent bullying behaviour.
- Provide opportunities for discussing issues through RE, PSHE, RSE, Internet Safety, Health and Wellbeing opportunities.
- Themes such as friendship, conflict and trust will be used in assemblies/Class discussions to promote the anti-bullying policy of the school.
- Work with NHS school nursing team (Decider Programme Y5/Y6), PCSOs, Clennell Safeguarding Consultant and LA SEMH Team to provide supportive opportunities for relationship education.

Members of the Senior Management team will regularly monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

Reporting

Bullying incidents or concerns should be reported by the appropriate member of staff using the CPOMS system. An assessment of the incident will be made and designated staff will investigate further.

Confidentiality

Due to the sensitive nature of all bullying concerns, confidentiality will be paramount.

Complaints

We recognise the emotional impact on parents where their child is a victim of, or perpetrator of, bullying. We encourage parents to work with the school to resolve any issues with compassion and understanding. As a faith school, we aim to support all parties – victims and perpetrators; recognising that our children make mistakes. We ask that you share any concerns as soon as they arise so that we can deal with them swiftly.

If parents are dissatisfied with the way any bullying allegation has been handled, complaints should be made in accordance with the BWCET Complaints Procedure.

The Headteacher will monitor the implementation of this policy and will report regularly to the Governing Body and Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust through the termly Headteacher Report.

This policy was updated January 2024 and will be reviewed in June 2025 or earlier if required.

Helpful Information

Useful information can be accessed:

<https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk>