

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
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Anti-Bullying Policy

2015-17

POLICY DETAILS:

Legal Status: Statutory

Adopted:

Version Date: September 2015

Last Review:

Next Review: September 2017

Responsible Person: Governing Body

(Any reference to 'Governing Body' and 'Governors' is applicable to the Governing Body or Interim Executive Board of St Mary's Catholic Primary School and their respective appointed members.)

Our Mission Statement:

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School we strive to create a stimulating environment so that learning, playing and working together, we openly follow Christ's teachings. We seek to offer every person the opportunity to be a unique and valued individual, sharing and developing belief in the teachings of Jesus through everyday relationships and mutual respect in our dealings with one another.

Aim:

All schools have a duty to prevent bullying under the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

The Equalities Act 2010 also places a duty on schools to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relationship between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety. This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

The aims of this policy extend to all people working within the school, to create an atmosphere where bullying is discouraged and each individual feels cared for and valued. The policy is reflective of the schools vision and is embedded within the religious education programme of the school. We aim to give strong moral and spiritual guidance in accordance with the teaching of the Gospel.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school Equalities Policy which details our commitment to equality in the areas of gender, disability, race, religion, sexual orientation and community cohesion.

The Law

The bullying actions of harassment, discrimination, victimisation, physical abuse, emotional abuse, verbal abuse and sexual abuse can mean that the perpetrator is breaking the law. Other forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying and homophobia, can also lead to serious criminal proceedings. The police service will be informed of cases where the school suspects criminal acts may have taken place.

Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives headteachers the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on the school premises. This means that any acts of bullying that take place outside school can be dealt with under the school's bullying procedures.

Safeguarding

Under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, a bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. In these cases, the school will inform the Brent Social Services Team.

Definitions

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racist	racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber	All areas of internet such as email & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology , i.e. camera & video facilities (see Appendix 1)
Homophobic	because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality (see Appendix 2)

We do not consider bullying to be:-

- An isolated incident
- A falling out
- A 'one off' disagreement

All bullying is damaging to those who experience it and to those who perpetrate it. At St Mary's school we find all behaviour of this sort unacceptable and will do our best to prevent it through ensuring that all children in the school are well aware of how dangerous and damaging it is, by rewarding girls and boys for caring and considerate behaviour, by supporting all victims of bullying and by taking firm action against those who are responsible for bullying.

Signs and Symptoms:

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

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings

- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Prevention Strategies:

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur. These can include:

- All staff making pupils aware of the problems that can be caused by bullying
- The theme of bullying is integrated into circle time through the PSHE curriculum using the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) documentation
- A regular themed week takes place each year to highlight the effects of bullying (Anti-Bullying Week)
- Class rules are established at the beginning of the school year which promote positive behaviour and agree class expectations.
- The school council discussing issues around bullying and preparing materials for anti-bullying week
- Displaying materials which promote the school as an anti-bullying school e.g. displays, posters, children's work
- Producing a 'child speak' version of the policy for children
- Promoting positive behaviours through whole school strategies e.g. house points, merit certificates
- On-site therapeutic facility for children to discuss problems with a trained professional

It is difficult to predict which specific groups may experience bullying so staff are aware that anyone can be a victim or perpetrator of bullying. However, the OFSTED evaluation schedule for inspections identifies some groups that could be more vulnerable:

- disabled pupils, as defined by the Equality Act 2010, and those who have special educational needs
- groups of pupils whose prior attainment may be different from that of other groups
- those who are academically more or less able
- pupils for whom English is an additional language
- minority ethnic pupils
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children
- looked after children
- pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
- lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils
- transgender pupils
- young carers
- pupils from low income backgrounds

Strategies for dealing with bullying:

It should be remembered that the whole purpose of any action taken by staff against bullies is to enable all pupils to come to school and to enjoy a happy and secure environment. Parents, pupils and staff should be left in no doubt that bullying, in all its forms, will not be tolerated.

1. All staff will watch out for early signs of distress, which may include deterioration of work, unexplained illness, isolation, the desire to remain with adults and erratic attendance. Staff will understand that whilst these behaviours may be symptomatic of other problems, they may be early signs of bullying.

If bullying does occur:

- Pupils are encouraged to find the help of an adult they trust and to stay where there are plenty of other pupils about and where an adult can see them
- In the first instance, staff will deal with incidents of bullying in the classroom and then report instances of bullying to the Senior Leadership Team who will take action where deemed necessary. This may include discussion with the whole staff or an individual teacher, establishing additional strategies to overcome the difficulties caused by bullying and a discussion with those pupils involved within a peer group support approach

2. Pupils who are bullying will be made aware that their actions are making other pupils unhappy in coming to school and that this goes against our school's mission and the school rules.

3. Pupils who have bullied need to know that these actions are not tolerated and should find ways to make amends through negotiation and discussion with the staff of the school.

If bullying persists:

- The bully, or groups of bullies, will be withdrawn from the playground or classroom for a period of time and their parents will be informed of the action that has been taken
- Their behaviour will be monitored for a period of time so as to enable the school and home to work together to overcome problems
- Ultimately, an exclusion from school may be given if the bullying behaviour does not stop – in line with the school's exclusions policy

The role of the Governors:

The governing body supports the Executive Headmistress in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body will not condone any bullying in our school and any incidents of bullying that do occur will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly. The governors require the Executive Headmistress to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

A parent who is dissatisfied with the way the school has dealt with a bullying incident can ask the Chair of Governors to look into the matter. The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the governing body notifies the Executive Headmistress, and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case, and to report back to a representative of the governing body.

The role of the Executive Headmistress:

It is the responsibility of the Executive Headmistress to implement the school anti-bullying strategy, and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy, and know how to identify and deal with incidents of bullying. The Executive Headmistress reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Executive Headmistress ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Executive Headmistress draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Executive Headmistress may decide to use an assembly as the forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong and why a pupil is being punished.

The Executive Headmistress ensures that all staff, including lunchtime staff, receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with all incidents of bullying.

The Executive Headmistress sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

The role of the Teacher and Support Staff:

Teachers attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

All staff in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place.

If adults witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied then after consultation with the Executive Headmistress, the class teacher informs the child's parents.

If adults become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, they deal with the issue immediately, this may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying through the peer support group approach, and sanctions for the child who has been carrying out the bullying.

We spend time talking to the child who has bullied: we explain why the action of the child was wrong, and we endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future.

If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, the Executive Headmistress is informed. The child's parents are invited into school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Executive Headmistress may need to contact external support agencies.

The role of Parents:

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. If they are not satisfied with the response, they should contact the Executive Headmistress. If they remain dissatisfied, they should follow the school's complaints procedure.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy, actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school.

Monitoring and Review:

This policy is monitored by the Executive Headmistress, who reports to governors on request about the effectiveness of the policy.

Sources of further information, support and help:

There is a vast amount of information and guidance available about bullying that can provide a wide range of support and help. The following list is just a small selection of the support available that teachers, parents and children have found useful.

Name of Organisation	Telephone Number	Website
Act Against Bullying	0845 230 2560	www.actagainstbullying.com
Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA)	020 7843 1901	www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
Anti-Network	0131 651 6103	www.antibullying.net
Beatbullying	0845 338 5060	www.beatbullying.org.uk
Childline	0800 11 11 (helpline for children)	www.childline.org.uk
Childnet International	020 7639 6967	www.childnet-int.org
Kidscape	020 7730 3300 (General enquiries) 08451 205 204 (Adults only)	www.kidscape.org.uk
Mencap	0300 333 1111	www.mencap.org.uk
NSPCC	020 7825 2500	www.nspcc.org.uk
Parentline Plus	0808 800 2222	www.parentlineplus.org.uk

Appendix 1 – Cyberbullying

Definition of Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.

Mobile, internet and wireless technologies have increased the pace of communication and brought benefits to users worldwide. Unfortunately, however, their popularity provides opportunity for misuse through 'cyberbullying'.

There are seven main categories of cyberbullying:

- Text message bullying
- Picture/video bullying via mobile phone cameras
- Phone call bullying via mobile phone
- Email bullying
- Chat room bullying
- Bullying through instant messaging
- Bullying via websites.

Unlike other forms of bullying, cyberbullying can follow children and young people outside of school hours and into their own homes, which have previously been a refuge for those being bullied. Cyberbullies can remain unseen and unidentifiable.

Prevention

Currently at St Mary's Catholic Primary School, all mobile phones are banned. Children are not allowed to bring their phones into school.

All chatrooms and social networking sites are blocked from the school network and cannot be accessed on any computers within the school. Our school network has strong filters and we are confident that programs such as MSN are not accessible here at St Mary's.

Lessons are given to all pupils on the dangers of cyberbullying and the necessity to inform parents/teachers of any incidents.

Sanctions

St Mary's Catholic Primary School has a zero-tolerance to bullying.

Cyberbullying is not acceptable and the procedures and sanctions for all forms of bullying are explained in full in the main text of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Appendix 2 – Homophobic Bullying

Definition of Homophobic Bullying

Homophobic bullying can involve physical or mental abuse. Like other forms of bullying, it is often aimed at someone who has poor defences and who, as a result, may be significantly upset. Both boys and girls may be subjected to homophobic abuse.

What distinguishes it from other forms of bullying is the language that is used. Words like “batty,” “poof” and “queer” are probably the most common, particularly in the area we live in, and have been used abusively for many years. Unfortunately, they have now been joined by words such as “gay” and “lesbian” which were *formerly* descriptive but are now used as general insults, in a derogatory manner, sometimes having no connection whatsoever with homosexuality.

Prevention

As a Catholic School, St Mary’s has a strong Catholic ethos which is fully accepting of everyone, regardless of race, colour, gender, size, religion and sexual orientation. We endeavour to provide a safe, inclusive, happy environment and help our children to understand that though we are all different, we are all equal and individual.

Sanctions

St Mary’s Catholic Primary School has a zero-tolerance to bullying.

Homophobic name-calling, though extremely rare at St Mary’s, will be challenged in the same way as racist or sexist behaviour.

Homophobic bullying is not acceptable and the procedures and sanctions for all forms of bullying are explained in full in the main text of the Anti-Bullying Policy.