

St Matthew's RC High School

Anti-Bullying Policy



Reviewed: July 2017

To be reviewed: July 2019

We Pray, We Care, We Achieve

Rationale: *St Matthew's RC High School is dedicated to promoting a distinctive Catholic ethos by upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church. This means that everything we aim to achieve will be based on the teachings and practice of the Catholic Church.*

Our motto is "Quaerite primum regnum dei" - "Seek first the Kingdom of God" - and our aim is to achieve this motto in our school life. We will work to build God's Kingdom and be happy together because we believe that Jesus died and rose again for us and that He is always present in our school and in our world.

We are committed to developing the full potential of every individual, regardless of culture, race, religion, disability, or special need by creating a safe, orderly environment where all members of the community work diligently in a spirit of co-operation and treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times.

Our primary role is to educate children and we uphold the principle outlined in the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales (2000) that:

"Education is holy ... the process of teaching and learning is a holy act"

Everyone at St. Matthew's views bullying as a very serious issue. All staff, pupils, parents, families and visitors should be aware that bullying will not be tolerated at the school and that we strive to ensure that St. Matthew's is a safe, supportive and understanding environment for all our pupils and staff, where everyone understands and promotes the belief that bullying is unacceptable. All incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a professional, consistent and positive manner.

Aims and Responsibilities

All Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/carers should have an understanding of what bullying is.

All Governors, teaching, and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.

All pupils and parents/carers should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they can do if bullying arises.

As a school, we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents/carers should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as deliberate targeted hurtful behaviour, which is repeated over a period of time. Bullying makes the victims feel uncomfortable, worthless, powerless and excluded.

POSSIBLE FORMS OF BULLYING

Emotional	being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), intimidation, spreading rumours
Physical	pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racist	racist comments, taunts, graffiti and/or gestures
Sexual	unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic	focusing on the issue of another pupil's sexuality
Verbal	name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, racist and homophobic comments
Cyber	all areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse
Social Media	mobile phone threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities, inappropriate use of Whats App, and other social media

There are various types of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberate targeted hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated over time
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves

There may sometimes be misunderstanding about the meaning of the term 'bullying'. One-off incidents, whilst they may be very serious and must always be dealt with, do not fall within the definition of 'bullying'.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these changes to normal patterns of behaviour and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school;
- does not 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;
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares;
- feels ill in the morning;
- begins to do poorly in school work;
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing";
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay a bully);
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost";
- has unexplained cuts or bruises;
- comes home hungry (money / lunch has been stolen);

- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable;
- is bullying other children or siblings;
- stops eating;
- is frightened to say what is wrong;
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above;
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone;
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received.

Strategies To Develop A Positive And Safe Climate

- Anti-bullying curriculum content in Form Time/RE/English/ Humanities/Drama
- Anti-Bullying policy promoted throughout the curriculum and through notices on corridors and classrooms
- Proactive behaviour for learning strategies used by staff
- Staff training to include all support staff
- Progress Leaders to be responsible for co-ordinating anti-bullying policy in their year group
- Use of pastoral support staff to support pupils
- Promotion of peer support and student leadership programmes
- Support groups in conflict management/relationships/life skills for those vulnerable to bullying or identified as a bully
- Monitoring and evaluation of current policy
- Policy shared with pupils and parents via website and other school communication

Anyone reporting that they are being bullied will be:

- supported by their Progress Leader/Pastoral Manager/pastoral support staff and Form Tutor;
- listened to in a confidential and safe environment;
- assured the incident will be investigated, recorded and a response given within two school days;
- kept informed at all stages of any action being taken against the person who has bullied them.

The school will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to children who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular child's individual needs and may include:

- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do;

- reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully;
- informing parents at the earliest opportunity;
- strategies to prevent further incidents;
- counselling;
- befriending/creation of a support group;
- extra supervision/monitoring;
- peer mediation/peer mentoring;
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim which is sometimes referred to as a restorative conversation (provided this does not increase the victim's vulnerability);
- arrangements to review progress.

Anyone identified as bullying will be:

- interviewed by a member of the Pastoral team;
- given a copy of the interview within three school days;
- offered a restorative programme if appropriate (written apology/making amends to the person, attending an anti-bullying class promoting the school's anti-bullying policy);
- dealt with following the school's disciplinary policy if appropriate (letter/meeting with parents, interview with Pastoral Team, detention, short term exclusion);
- informed that a record will be kept of the incident and outcome.

Persistent bullying behaviour will be treated in line with the school's behaviour policy with consequences leading up to, and including, permanent exclusion.

Cyberbullying And Bullying Of Staff

It is not acceptable under any circumstances for pupils, parents or colleagues to use social media to denigrate and bully school staff, in the same way that this would not be tolerated face to face.

Parents have a legitimate right to raise any concerns about the education of their child, however, they should do so in an appropriate manner by contacting the school directly.

Where cyberbullying occurs, the following actions should be taken;

- Incidents should be reported and the victim should not respond or retaliate
- Evidence of the abuse should be saved
- If the perpetrator is an adult, in most cases, they will be invited to attend a meeting with a senior member of staff to address their concerns and to ensure that they understand how to raise it appropriately
- In extreme cases, where comments are threatening, abusive, sexist or of a sexual nature or constitute a hate crime, school may consider involving the police.

Incidents Where It Is Unclear Who Is Right Or Wrong

In many incidents of bullying, it is hard to identify who is right or wrong. In these circumstances, it is advisable to listen to and support those involved in a non-judgemental manner, encouraging them to reach an agreement between themselves as to future

conduct. This should where possible be a written agreement supported and monitored by peer supporters or school buddies.

The Reporting And Recording Of Incidents

All reporting and recording of incidents of bullying will be entered into the electronic behaviour reporting system IRIS, including details about the nature of the bullying and who the victims and offenders are. All follow-ups relating to the incident reported, including reviews will be added as an attachment to the original incident.

Following two reviews where there has not been a need to take action an incident slip stating 'no further action' will be added.

All records will be reviewed regularly by an Assistant Headteacher alongside the relevant Progress Leader and Pastoral Manager.

Implementation Of This Policy

This policy has been developed and evaluated with a view to safeguarding and promoting the wellbeing of all our pupils.

It links with the following policies, which can be read in conjunction;

- Behaviour Policy
- Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

Responsibility for monitoring and review of the policy will lie with a nominated member of SLT.

Appendix 1

DfE Guidance on Cyber Bullying

CYBERBULLYING AND BULLYING OF STAFF

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