

Anti-Bullying Policy

Our Mission Statement

We come together as Saint Mary’s family,

To learn, share our faith, and do our best to follow in the footsteps of Jesus

**INTRODUCTION**

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over a period of time. This can be name-calling, violence, threatened violence, isolation, ridicule or indirect action such as spreading unpleasant stories about someone. It is one of the things that prevent young people from being healthy, feeling safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being.

We believe that St. Mary’s is a community where everyone should feel safe, secure and valued. Bullying of any sort prevents this from happening and will not be tolerated. We work hard to ensure that all children know the difference between bullying and simply ‘falling out’. This is reinforced through our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Education) scheme of work and our SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) curriculum. Through this an appropriate attitude towards bullying behaviour is explored and discussed within the school year and through assemblies.

This policy takes into account the Education and Inspections Act 2006, Department of Education Guidance 2012 ‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for head teachers, staff and governing bodies’ and the Equality Act 2010.

**Definition of Bullying**

At St. Mary’s we pride ourselves on being totally committed to inclusion and consider ourselves a fully inclusive school, therefore we will not tolerate any bullying behaviour towards pupils with disabilities or racist, sexual or homophobic bullying. (See Single Equality and Equal Opportunities Policies)

**There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be**

deliberately hurtful (including aggression)

repeated often over a period of time

difficult for victims to defend themselves

physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings

verbal and written – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks

indirect- spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups

Cyber bullying (the Education Act 2011 gives teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Separate advice on teachers’ powers to search (Childnet International: Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves)

**Different forms bullying can take:**

Homophobic

Racist

Sexist

Other prejudice-motivated

**The role of the ‘Bystander’**

At St. Mary’s we recognise the role of the ‘bystander’ and the impact they can have on an incident of bullying. A bystander is an observer, onlooker or witness to bullying.

The ringleader – those leading the bullying, but not always the person ‘doing’ the bullying.

Assistant(s) – those involved in ‘doing’ the bullying.

Reinforcer(s) - support the bullying, might laugh or encourage other people to collude with what is going on.

Outsider(s) - ignore any bullying and doesn’t want to get involved. This can actually include adults too!

Defender(s) - stand up for someone being bullied. Know that bullying is wrong. Feel confident enough to do something about it. We recognise and reward defenders of bullying.

When investigating incidences of bullying, we will ensure that all individuals concerned are dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.

**AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

We aim to provide pupils with a safe, caring and friendly environment where all can learn without anxiety.

We ensure a ‘zero tolerance approach’ towards bullying, ensuring bullying behaviour is unacceptable and always challenged.

Reports of bullying will be recorded and taken seriously.

Pupils will be listened to, will know that it is “ok to tell”, who to tell and how to tell.

We ensure pupils understand not to fight back or retaliate.

We endeavour to provide a clear and swift response to any report of bullying behaviour.

Parents/carers will be informed of any incident, listened to, and will be kept appraised of how their concerns are being dealt with.

Parents/carers of a pupil who is a perpetrator of bullying will be informed immediately and will have a responsibility of supporting school in their child facing and accepting the consequence.

**We ensure there is a consistent whole school approach to bullying.**

Our Anti bullying Policy dovetails and should be read in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding policy, PSHE Policy and Equality and Diversity Policy.

**INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION**

As outlined in our Behaviour policy we have many strategies in place: including circle time, whole school assemblies, an active school council and clear day to day procedures as well as many cross curricular links to promote an anti-bullying school where emotional health and well-being is seen as paramount in developing a healthy and successful school learning community.

All members of staff work together to develop all pupils’ self-esteem and confidence and promote a listening ethos where all pupils know it is alright to tell.

**PROCEDURES**

**St. Mary’s takes a ZERO-TOLERANCE approach to bullying.**

At St. Mary’s we believe in direct action, immediate intervention and constantly reinforcing to pupils that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Early involvement of parents is essential and following up any incidents is crucial, as pupils who expect follow up are unlikely to start bullying again. Accurate records of any incidents will be kept. Pupils are aware that they will be listened to and know that is ok to tell, who to tell and how to tell. Our main aim is to encourage pupils to tell staff about bullying rather than retaliating. The responsibility of monitoring and recording incidents of bullying lies with the Head teacher. The Head teacher reports incidents of bullying in the termly report to governors and will also provide a termly report to governors outlining any trends or patterns of bullying incidents. Class teachers have a responsibility to ensure children have channels in which to report incidents of bullying. This is provided through caring relationships and opportunities in PSHE lessons to consider and discuss behaviour towards others.

**Information for children**

If you are being bullied

• Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can

• 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 as quickly as possible

• 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

• Don’t blame yourself for what has happened

**REMEMBER – BULLIES DEPEND ON YOUR SILENCE. ALWAYS TELL AN ADULT. WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU.**

**Information for staff**

• If a child reports bullying, reassure them that they are behaving appropriately

• Do not promise confidentiality

• Dealing with the issue without reference to individuals in a class discussion may be helpful

• If the class teacher is not the adult initially approached by the child, then the class teacher must be informed

• The class teacher may judge that the incident is one which could be dealt with within normal classroom procedures and policies. If not, then the following strategies will be followed:

a. Mrs Cowburn will be notified as a member of the senior leadership team.

b. The Head teacher will be notified by Mrs Cowburn and will discuss the issues with relevant parties, i.e. class teacher, midday assistants, etc.

c. We will contact the parents of the children involved and the details of the incident(s) will be explained to them.

d. We will give support to the victim. The nature of the support will be appropriate to the needs of the child.

e. We will work with the bully to help them understand their behaviour and so change it. Some of the strategies outlined above will be used, and arrangements will ensure

that this is done sensitively so as not to compromise the support given to the victim.

f. We will work with the bystander to help them understand their behaviour and so change it. Some of the strategies outlined above will be used, and arrangements will ensure that this is done sensitively so as not to compromise the support given to the victim and/or bully.

g. We will put in place sanctions that are appropriate and which may include:

i. apology to the victim

ii. loss of playtimes

iii. loss of privileges

iv. weekly reports

v. and as a last resort – lunchtime exclusion

vi. fixed term exclusion

vii. permanent exclusion

**Incidents outside the school’s premises**

School is not directly responsible for bullying incidents off the school premises however we encourage our pupils not to suffer in silence and it’s ok to tell and we support pupils and parents/carers by providing advice on a range of steps to be taken. Any incident and advice given will be recorded. The Education and Inspection Act 2006, gives head teachers the ability to discipline pupils for poor behaviour, outside of the school premises.

**THE ROLE OF GOVERNORS**

The governing body support the school in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body does not allow bullying to take place in our school, and agree that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors incidents of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The governing body require the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and these are reviewed and signed off by the Chair of Governors. The Headteacher reports to governors the number of incidents of bullying that term.

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 Headteacher 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 PARENTS/CARERS**

**Information for parents**

• Watch for signs of distress in your child. There could be an unwillingness to come to school, unexplained illness or equipment that has gone missing.

• Take an active interest in your child’s friendships and how playtimes are spent

If you think your child is being bullied

• Calmly talk to your child about what has happened.

• Reassure your child that telling you was the right thing to do. Tell them that there is nothing wrong with them.

• Make an appointment to see your child’s teacher or Mrs Morris -headteacher. Do not be deterred by your child asking you not to tell anyone. Early intervention is better than hoping things will sort themselves out.

• Explain in detail to the teacher what has happened. Be specific regarding who, what, where and when.

• Do not encourage your child to hit back. It will only make matters worse. Such behaviour could be contrary to your child’s nature. More positively, encourage your child to recruit friends. A child who has friends is less likely to be bullied.

• Advise your child not to try to buy the bully off with sweets or other ‘presents’ and not to give in to demands for money.

• Stay in touch with school.

If you think your child is bullying other children

• Talk calmly to your child about what is happening, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy

• Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using force or aggression to get what they want

• Show your child how to join in with other children without bullying

• Discuss with your child’s teacher how you and the school can stop the bullying

• Regularly check with school how your child is behaving

Parents/carers who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspects that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child’s class teacher or school immediately.

Parents/carers of a pupil found guilty of being a perpetrator of bullying will be contacted immediately and will be expected to support school in the consequences that follow.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to support the school’s anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Inappropriate behaviours between children that are abusive in nature including physical, sexual, or emotional abuse, exploitation, sexual harassment, all forms of bullying, coercive control, hazing/initiation rituals between children and young people, both on and offline (including that which is within intimate personal relationships) can be defined as child-on-child abuse.

(Adapted from Keeping Children Safe in Education)

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between children and young people. Downplaying certain behaviours (for example, dismissing sexual harassment as “just banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”; or not recognising that emotional bullying can sometimes be more damaging than physical harm and should be taken equally seriously) can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, and an unsafe environment for children. Allowing a culture that normalises abuse often discourages children and young people from reporting it. All staff should understand that even if there are no reports of child-on-child abuse in their setting, it doesn’t mean it isn’t happening. It’s more likely that it is just not being reported. At St. Mary’s incidences of child-on-child abuse will not be tolerated and will be investigated in the first instance and reported and recorded as per our policy. Parents of all children involved will be contacted and the DSL will take the appropriate action.

**MONITORING AND REVIEW**

All members of St. Mary’s team monitor this policy on a day-to-day basis. This anti-bullying policy is the governors’ responsibility and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by examining the school’s incident books, and by discussion with the Headteacher. Governors analyse information with regard to gender, age and ethnic background of all children involved in bullying incidents.

Reviewed Annually

Reviewed September 2025