

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement

By working together at St Mary's CVA we aim through Jesus Christ to share God's love, helping our community to learn, grow and make a difference.

Objectives of this Policy

- As a school we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated, this includes bullying on social media sites.
- That it will be understood that everyone needs to take responsibility for bullying
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents 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 should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated over a period of time. Ofsted defines bullying as aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over a period of time that intentionally hurts or harms. It is difficult for victims to defend themselves against it.

We understand that 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
- *Homophobic* because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- *Verbal* name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- *Online/Cyber* All areas of internet, such as social media, email & chat room misuse
Mobile threats by text messaging & calls
Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities
- *Indirect* the exploitation of individuals such as false friendships, criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation and radicalization

Bullying can take place between:

- young people
- young people and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

Behaviour often associated with bullying

Baiting

Baiting can be used in bullying both on and offline. It can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonize those who might be bullying others to get them to bully. Sometimes baiting is used secretly to try and get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly so that they get into trouble.

Banter

The dictionary describes banter as: 'the playful and friendly exchange of teasing remarks'. Bullying is often justified as being just banter. It may start as banter, but some types of banter are bullying and need to be addressed as bullying.

Types of Banter

- Friendly Banter- There's no intention to hurt and everyone knows its limits
- Ignorant Banter- crosses the line with no intention to hurt, will often say sorry.
- Malicious Banter- Done to humiliate a person-often in public

Peer on Peer Abuse

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying);
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm
- Sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.

We will challenge and respond to any concerns related to the above.

Sexist and sexual bullying

Sexual Harassment -unwanted contact of a sexual nature which can occur on and offline This behaviour is considered to violate a child's dignity and /or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and /or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent - if it fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyberbullying and peer on peer abuse. If the target or alleged perpetrator might be in danger, then intervention is urgently required including a safeguarding referral.

Why is it important to respond to bullying?

- Bullying hurts.
- Bullying ruins lives
- No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.
- Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- So that people will know what to do and bullying can be dealt with
- The school will be a better place
- To make our school a safer place
- To stop people being bullied and help the bullies become better people
- So that everyone is confident about school

Specific types of bullying include:

Prejudice Related Bullying

Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a trans person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller heritage
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex /gender
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'

As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, schools must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disabilist in nature. We will record these types of bullying, even that which represents a one-off incident.

Other vulnerable groups include

- young carers
- looked after children
- bullying related to home circumstances
- bullying related to appearance or health

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious. Our FLO supports young carers and looked after children and will liaise with staff and children to ensure that they are supported and know where to go for help. There is no hierarchy of bullying - all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Prejudice Related Language

Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disabilist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling, or friend who is; because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language is generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are perceived to be different in some way or their friends, family members or their parents/carers are perceived to be different.

Dismissing such language as banter is not helpful as it is being used to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of prejudice related language in our school even if it appears to be being used without any intent. Persistent use of prejudice related language and/or bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

The Prevent Duty

From 1 July 2015 all schools are subject to a duty under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, in the exercise of their functions, to have "due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism". This duty is known as the Prevent Duty.

A Prevent Duty plan is in place to protect our children from the risk of radicalisation. There is no single way of identifying an individual who is likely to be susceptible to a terrorist ideology. School staff should use their judgement in identifying children who may be at risk of radicalisation and act proportionately.

By promoting the fundamental British Values, we aim to build pupils' resilience to radicalisation and enable them to challenge extremist views. It is important to emphasise that the Prevent Duty is not intended to stop pupils debating controversial issues. On the contrary, we aim to provide a safe space in which children, young people and staff can understand the risks associated with terrorism and develop the knowledge and skills to be able to challenge extremist arguments.

Hate crime and bullying

There is no legal definition of a hate crime. However, the police and the CPS (Crown Prosecution Service) have an agreed definition of hate crime as:

"Any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's race or perceived race; religion or perceived religion; sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation; disability or perceived disability and any crime motivated by hostility or prejudice against a person who is transgender or perceived to be transgender."

There is a distinction between a hate crime and a hate incident.

"A hate incident is any incident which the victim, or anyone else, thinks is based on someone's prejudice towards them because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or because they are transgender."

However, a hate incident does not necessarily break the law. Where a hate incident amounts to a criminal offence, and is based on one of the five protected characteristics, it is known as a hate crime.

The type of conduct which will be considered as a hate incident is wide ranging and includes the following:

- verbal abuse;
- harassment;
- bullying or intimidation;
- physical attacks;
- threats of violence;
- hoax calls, abusive phone or text messages, hate mail;
- online abuse;
- displaying or circulating discriminatory literature or posters;
- graffiti;
- arson;
- throwing rubbish in a garden; and
- malicious complaints.

Any concerns about hate incidents/crimes should be discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Information on how to report a hate crime can be found at <https://www.report-it.org.uk/home>

Cyberbullying

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims.

Cyberbullying can take many forms and bullying online can often start in school and then be progressed online or start online and influence behaviour in school.

Whilst most incidents of Cyberbullying occur outside school, we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat Cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying.

Cyberbullying can include:

- hacking into someone's accounts/sites
- Posting prejudice /hate messages
- Impersonating someone on line
- Public posting of images
- Exclusion
- Threats and manipulation
- Stalking

We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our online safety policy) and encourage good online behaviour.

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Signs and Symptoms of bullying

We think that children 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
- Is alone all the time

- Not doing well in lessons
- Doesn't want to talk to anyone
- Is aggressive
- Shows unusual behaviour
- Appears depressed
- Becomes withdrawn or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or regularly go missing
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has dinner or other monies continually lost
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Doesn't want to come to school
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Stays offline

Strategies to combat bullying

- SEAL groups
- Circle of friends
- Mediation by adults
- Mediation by peers
- One to One support with and adult if necessary.
- Ensuring that the school actively promotes the celebration of difference and diversity as part of our core British and Gospel values
- Anti-bullying lessons and Anti-Bullying Week annually in November.
- PSHE/Citizenship lessons,
- Celebration events
- Specific curriculum input on areas of concern such as Cyberbullying and internet safety
- Pupil Voice (e.g. pupil surveys)
- School Council
- Modelling of positive relationships
- Staff and young people are actively encouraged and supported to challenge prejudice related behaviour relating to all protected characteristics and vulnerable groups
- Ensuring that images and materials used reflect all groups in British society

Formal Action

If pupils do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, we will take formal action to stop bullying behaviour. These sanctions are in line with the school's discipline policy and will include: -

- Withdrawal of break or lunchtime privileges
- Parental Involvement
- Banning the pupil from a school trip or sports event if these are not an essential part of the curriculum

- In school exclusion
- Fixed period exclusion
- Persistent and violent bullying can lead to permanent exclusion.

Dealing with bullying incidents

In dealing with bullying incidents, we will observe five key points.

- We will not ignore bullying.
- All allegations of bullying are brought to the Headteacher's attention
- Staff should not make premature assumptions.
- All accounts of the incidents should be listened to fairly.
- We will make every effort to adopt a problem-solving approach, which encourages pupils to find solutions rather than simply justify themselves.
- We will follow up to check bullying has not resumed.

Records

The school will keep records of all incidents and the school's response.

Advice to bullied pupils

We will tell our children not to suffer in silence. This will be reinforced through general day-to-day teaching and specifically PSICHE ethos.

During a bullying incident, pupils will be advised to:

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as they can
- Be firm and clear and look the bully in the eye and tell them to stop
- Get away from the situation as quickly as they can
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away

After they have been bullied, pupils should:

- Tell a teacher or other adult at school
- Tell their family
- Take a friend with them if they are scared to tell an adult by themselves
- Not blame themselves for what has happened

When they talk to an adult about the bullying, pupils should be clear about:

- What has happened to them
- How often it has happened
- Who was involved
- Where it happened
- Who saw what happened
- What they have done about it already

The role of adults in school

- Employees must take care for the reasonable care for the health and safety of others at work, this includes pupils and other members of staff.
- Employees must co-operate with the Working in Partnership Policy.
- Employees must be aware of their responsibility in using social media appropriately and sensibly.

The role of parents

Bullying is everyone's problem. All governors, staff, pupils and parents should be aware that bullying can exist and share a commitment to combat it and to make the school a happier place for everyone.

When, after discussion, we confirm a child has been bullying we will contact the parents to discuss the issues. We will ask parents to

- Talk to the child and explain that bullying is wrong and makes others unhappy
- Show the child how to join in with others without bullying
- Make an appointment to see the child's teacher/Headteacher as soon as possible, and explain the problem and discuss how the school and the parents together can stop the bullying
- Talk to the child regularly about how things are going at school
- Give the child lots of praise and encouragement when they are being kind and considerate to others.

We will also contact the parents of the child being bullied, with explanations of the situation and what we are doing to resolve it.

From this sanctions and outline plans will be agreed.

We will follow up the bullying child's behaviour and further bullying will result in exclusion.

We will ask parents to contact the school if they suspect their child is being bullied.

Parents of a bullied child should:

- Talk to the child calmly about it and reassure the child that telling them about it was the right thing to do
- Make a note of what the child says
- Explain that the child should report any further incidents to a member of staff/Headteacher straight away
- Make an appointment to see the child's teacher/Headteacher as soon as possible
- Regularly review the websites children are accessing to ensure their use and practice on-line is safe. (Please refer to the E-Safety Policy which can be sought from the school website and/or the main school office for further information)

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