

Anti- Bullying Policy

Statement of Intent

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all members of our school community so that we can all learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, everyone should be able to know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

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. The aim of this policy is 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 and to make all those connected with the school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

We believe that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell staff.

Objectives

- All governors, members of staff, pupils and parents/carers should have a clear, shared understanding of what bullying is.
- All pupils, parents/carers, governors and all members of staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises and follow the correct procedures when bullying is reported.
- Pupils and parents/carers should know we take bullying seriously and should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the deliberate use of aggressive or unkind actions to hurt another person physically, emotionally and/or verbally, usually **over a sustained period of time**.

Bullying results in pain, fear and/or distress to the victim.

Generally, it is difficult for the victim to defend him/herself.

Bullying can be:

- Indirect/emotional being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, nipping or any use of violence
- Verbal name-calling, sarcasm, racist or sexist remarks, teasing

Bullying can be face to face, through others and via online devices and/ or mobile phones.

Bullying is not occasionally falling out, arguing or fighting. It is **persistent** unkind actions on the same person or group of people (victim(s) by the same person or group of people (perpetrators).

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying may be defined as 'the use of electronic communication, particularly mobile phones and the internet, to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature: children and adults may be reluctant to admit to being the victims of cyberbullying.

It can take a number of different forms:

- threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages)
- sexting (e.g. sending and receiving sexually explicit messages, primarily between mobile phones)
- vilification/defamation – (the act of saying or writing unpleasant things about someone or something in order to cause other people to have a bad opinion of them)
- exclusion/peer rejection
- impersonation – (the act of intentionally copying another person's characteristics such as their behaviour, speech appearance or expressions)
- unauthorised publication of private information/images
- 'trolling' (abusing the internet to provoke or offend others online).

It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the perpetrator/s with another route to harass their victim/s.

However, it differs from other forms of bullying in several significant ways:

- by facilitating a far more extreme invasion of personal space. Cyberbullying can take place at any time and intrude into spaces that have previously been regarded as safe and personal.
- the potential for anonymity on the part of the bully. This can be extremely distressing for the victim
- the potential for the bully to play very rapidly to a larger audience so the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than for other forms of bullying.
- through the knowledge that the data is in the world-wide domain, disproportionately amplifying the negative effect on the victim, even though the bully may feel his/her actual actions had been no worse than conventional forms of bullying
- the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages as more people get drawn in as accessories. By passing on a humiliating picture or message a bystander becomes an accessory to the bullying.

- the profile of the bully and target can be different to other forms of bullying as cyberbullying can take place between peers and across generations including members of staff.
- many cyberbullying incidents can themselves act as evidence so it is important the victim saves the information.

Cyberbullying and the Law

Bullying is **never** acceptable and the school fully recognizes its duty to protect all of its members and to provide a safe, healthy environment for everyone.

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA 2006) outlines some legal powers which relate more directly to cyberbullying. Headteachers have the power 'to such an extent as is reasonable' to regulate the conduct of pupils when they are off the school site.
- The Act also provides a defence for staff in confiscating items such as mobile phones from pupils.

There is not a specific law which makes cyberbullying illegal but it can be considered a criminal offence under several different acts including Protection from Harassment Act (1997), Malicious Communications Act (1988), Communications Act (2003) Obscene Publications Act (1959) and Computer Misuse Act (1990).

Preventing Cyberbullying

As with all forms of bullying the best way to deal with cyberbullying is to prevent it happening in the first place.

The school will do the following as a minimum to impose a comprehensive and effective prevention strategy:

- educate the children about the appropriate use of technology and how to stay safe and keep others safe online and the positive use of information technology
- keep up to date with games, social media platforms, Apps that the children are using regularly.
- keep parents updated on Internet safety by regular School App updates and parent information evenings.
- ensure pupils, who have mobile phones, hand them into the school office every morning.

Guidance for Pupils

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/carer, or a member of staff in your safety network.

- Do not answer abusive messages, but save them and report them

- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your parents/carers or a member of staff at school (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal details or contact information without the permission of a parent/carer (personal data)
- Be careful who you allow to become a friend online and think about what information you want them to see. People are not always who they say they are online.
- Protect your password. Do not share it with anyone else and change it regularly
- Always log off from the computer when you have finished or if you leave the computer for any reason.
- Always put the privacy filters on to the sites you use. If you are not sure how to do this, ask a teacher or your parents/carers.
- Never reply to abusive e-mails
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Always stay in public areas in chat rooms
- The school will deal with cyberbullying in the same way as other bullying. Do not think that because it is online it is different to other forms of bullying.
- The school will deal with inappropriate use of technology in the same way as other types of inappropriate behaviour and sanctions will be given in line with the school's Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy.

Guidance for Parents/Carers

It is vital that parents/carers and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Parents/carers must play their role and take responsibility for monitoring their child's online presence.

- Parents/carers should set parental controls on all family devices.
- Parents/carers should ensure that their children are playing age appropriate games/ accessing age appropriate sites.
- Parents/carers should be able to see what their pupils are accessing and be aware of their online activity.
- Parents/carers can help by making sure their child understands the school's policy and, above all, how seriously the school takes incidents of cyber-bullying.
- Parents/carers should also explain to their children legal issues relating to cyber-bullying. If parents/carers believe their child is the victim of cyber-bullying, they should save the offending material (if need be by saving the offensive text on their computer or on their child's mobile phone) and make sure they have copies of all relevant information before deleting anything.
- Parents/carers should contact the school as soon as possible should their child be the victim of cyberbullying or the perpetrator of cyber-bullying.
- If the incident falls in the holidays the school reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school both in and out of term time.
- Parents/carers should attend school's training on online safety.

- Parents/Carers should download the school app to keep abreast of online safety advice and support.

Why is it Important to respond to Bullying?

Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.

Bullying hurts.

No one deserves to be a victim of bullying.

Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

As a school we have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

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 unwilling to go to school
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- becomes clingy to adults
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- lacks concentration
- 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

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

Procedures for The Prevention Of Bullying

- clear policies and procedures for action
- positive, caring and considerate behaviour and attitudes will be encouraged and promoted through the school's strong Catholic ethos and the school's Behaviour Policy and procedures

The children's awareness and understanding of bullying will be raised through:

- The PHSE curriculum
- Circle Time
- Reflection Time

- Assemblies
- Anti-Bullying Week
- House meetings

The children will be taught 'friendship' skills and other skills through:

The PSHE, RE, SRE and ICT curriculum

Assemblies

Reflection Time

Visiting Theatre Workshops

Modelled behaviour by staff, House Captains, School Ambassadors and Play Buddies

We will raise the awareness of parents through:

- The school app
- Anti-Bullying Week
- Circulating the Anti-Bullying Policy in Welcome Pack
- Documents and policy shared on the School Website
- Ensuring that the playground environment is safe and stimulating with: a variety of physical, social and creative activities for the pupils to engage with; quiet areas; good quality supervision; staggered playtimes; ongoing training for lunchtime supervisors; open access to the school's SaFE Officer in the community room and trained play buddies supporting and modelling friendship and positive play.

The role of governors

The governing body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the governing body does not allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The governing body monitors the incidents of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The governors require the Headteacher 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.

The governing body responds within ten days to any request from a parent/carer 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 the Headteacher

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

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

The Headteacher ensures that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying.

The Headteacher 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 and caring school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

The role of the teacher

Teachers in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. They keep their own records of all incidents that happen in their class and that they are aware of in the school.

If teachers witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied. If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the Headteacher, the teacher informs the child's parents.

The Senior Learning Mentor keeps a log of all bullying and potential bullying and monitors and updates this (as required) on a day to day basis. The Learning Mentor communicates any incidents of bullying to the class teacher of the victim and perpetrators and also to the parents of all those involved.

If any adult witnesses an act of bullying, they should inform the Senior Learning Mentor and if she is absent the Headteacher.

If, as teachers, we become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, the issue will be dealt with immediately and the Senior Learning Mentor will be made aware and logs the incident (s).

Support is offered to those involved and may involve counselling. 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, we inform the Headteacher and the SEND Lead. We then invite the child's parents/carers into the school to discuss the situation. In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Headteacher may contact external support agencies such as the social services. Perpetrators are given suitable punishment.

Teachers routinely attend training, which enables them to become equipped to deal with incidents of bullying and behaviour management.

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.

The role of parents/carers

Parents/carers 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.

Parents 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.

Parents have a responsibility that their child is safe online and report any online/cyber bullying involving pupils at St Thomas More Catholic Primary School immediately.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Headteacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request.

This anti-bullying policy is the governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by examining the school's bullying and potential bullying incidents, and by discussion with the Headteacher. Governors analyse information with regard to gender, age and ethnic background of all children involved in bullying incidents.

Linked policies:

Safeguarding Policy
ICT policy
Behaviour policy
Code of Conduct
Home/School Agreement
Whistleblowing Policy
Grievance Policy

Reviewed: January 2022

To be reviewed: January 2023