

## ANTI BULLYING POLICY (INCLUDING EYFS)

At St Mary's we believe that every child has the right to learn in a school free from bullying of any kind and in which they feel safe and supported in an environment of good behaviour and respect, with helpful examples set by staff and older pupils.

We aim to provide a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school, and will not be tolerated. Our school needs to play a part in creating a society in which we all treat each other with dignity and respect. It is our responsibility to protect the well-being of some of the most vulnerable young people and to promote stronger communities in which diversity is valued and the weak are protected.

Providing a safe and happy learning environment is integral to achieving the wider objectives of school improvement: raising attainment, improving school attendance; promoting equality and diversity; and ensuring the mental health and well-being of all members of the school community. Pupils who feel safe at school are in a much better position to realise the five outcomes of Every Child Matters – they can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, and achieve economic well-being.

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally which may cause psychological damage. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a

person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention is crucial in setting out clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and in stopping negative behaviours escalating.

### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves e.g. those with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities maybe more likely to experience bullying because of difference. Pupils going through a personal or family crisis can also be in need of greater support.

St Mary's teaching and ancillary staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in line with school policy. It is the responsibility of the Principal to draw up these procedures to prevent bullying among pupils and to bring them to the attention of staff, parents and pupils. There is no 'hierarchy' of bullying – all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. If the school feels that an offence has been committed the Principal will seek assistance from the police.

If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell someone, and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly, firmly and effectively. Disciplinary sanctions will be imposed.

### Anti-Bullying Strategies and Procedures

The following strategies and procedures are intended to prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour. We intend to react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way which reflects the seriousness of an incident enabling us to safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying. Disciplinary sanctions will be applied to the pupil causing the bullying, to ensure that they learn from the experience.

We will try to prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through:

- assemblies
- PSHEE and Citizenship curriculum lessons
- Anti-bullying awareness week
- projects
- drama
- stories
- literature
- current affairs
- historical events etc

It is important to discuss with the girls the differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language.

In addition, the school will endeavour to raise awareness of staff through training, so that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems, and sources of support are available; where appropriate, schools can invest in specialised skills to understand the needs of their pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, and 'lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender' (LGB&T) pupils.

The school believes that for pupils who experience bullying:

- they are heard
- they know how to report bullying and get help
- they are confident in the school's ability to deal with the bullying
- steps are taken to help them feel safe again
- they are helped to rebuild confidence and resilience
- they know how they can get support from others

All incidents must be properly recorded on a Bullying/Cyberbullying Incident Sheet (found on the staff shared area) and handed to the Designated Safeguarding Lead who will investigate the incident further (a copy of the Incident Sheet is located at page 7).

If a cyberbullying incident is reported to a member of staff they must:

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone
- Make sure the child knows not to retaliate or return the message
- Help the child to keep relevant evidence for any investigation (e.g. by not deleting messages they've received, and by taking screen capture shots and noting web addresses of online cyberbullying instances).

The school will take steps to identify the bully, including looking at the school systems, identifying and interviewing possible witnesses, and contacting the service provider and the police if necessary. The police will need to be involved to enable the service provider to look into the data of another user and/or if the school suspects an offence has been committed.

The Education Act 2011 amended the power in the Education Act 1996 to provide that when an electronic device, such as a mobile phone, has been seized by a member of staff who has been formally authorised by the Principal, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. Parental consent does not need to be sought for the school to search through a pupil's mobile phone.

If a staff member, following a search, finds material that they do not suspect contains evidence in relation to an offence, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete or retain the material as evidence of a breach of school discipline.

At St Mary's the pupils are encouraged to follow the guidelines below if they have been bullied. (This includes all forms of bullying including cyber-bullying and bullying outside school. Records are kept to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach taken or to enable patterns to be identified.)

- tell your class teacher, or another teacher/adult in school
- tell your family
- If you are frightened to tell a teacher/adult, ask a friend to help and go with you
- keep speaking until someone listens to you and stops the bullying
- don't blame yourself

When talking to the teacher be clear about

- What has happened to you
- how often it has happened
- who was involved
- who saw what was happening
- where it happened; and
- what you have done about it already

As well as immediate short-term monitoring, the school will review, whether the action has prevented recurrence of the bullying and ensure that the pupil being bullied feels safe again.

### **At the Senior School**

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- a clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Principal or Director of Senior School.
- the Principal or Director of Senior School will interview all concerned and will record and log the incident – so that patterns may be observed.
- form tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the form tutor will advise the appropriate subject teachers
- parents will be kept informed as appropriate
- punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned

### **At the Lower School**

All incidents of behaviour that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or mentally will be reported to the Director of Lower School/Principal. The incident will be recorded on the incident form, so that patterns may be observed. Parents will be informed. If the behaviour continues against the same individual or group this will be deemed as bullying and disciplinary sanctions and learning programmes will be put into place. Sanctions will be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special

educational needs or disability that the pupil may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

If there is no change in behaviour then this could result in exclusion for the pupil.

These disciplinary penalties have three main purposes, namely to:

- impress on the perpetrator that what she has done is unacceptable
- deter her from repeating that behaviour
- signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it

Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold to account, for their behaviour, pupils who bully and to ensure that they face up to the harm that they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused.

### **Strategies which may be imposed**

- 1) The bully (bullies) may be asked to make a genuine apology. Other consequences may follow. A list of possible sanctions is given in the school's Behaviour Policy.
- 2) Suspension or even exclusion will be considered in cases of severe and persistent bullying.
- 3) If possible, the pupils will be reconciled
- 4) After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- 5) Support will be given to both the victim and the bully.

### **Whole School**

Some pupils who have been subjected to bullying are provoked into violent behaviour. A pupil can be excluded for violent behaviour; it is a matter for the Principal's judgement, taking account of the evidence available, all of the circumstances of the case and the need to balance the interests of the pupil concerned with those of the whole school community.

### **Bullying outside of school**

Any incidents reported to school regarding bullying will be investigated and acted upon. The Principal will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

Please note: In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the Principal/member of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under lawful control of a member of staff.

### **Involving Parents, Staff and Pupils**

Parents, staff and pupils (even if only involved as bystanders) should know that the school will not tolerate bullying, and takes a positive, active approach to educating the girls to reject it. Parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate.

Parents are kept informed of the school's policies and procedures and are expected to support the school's approach to bullying. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Behaviour Policy.

This policy has been written in line with DfE guidance July 2017 Preventing and Tackling Bullying.

**Related Procedures/Policies**

- Acceptable Use Agreement
- Safeguarding Policy
- ICT/eSafety Policy

Reviewed/Approved: May 2020  
Next Review: Summer 2021



## **Incident Report Form – (including e-Safety and Bullying)**

All incidents should be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of person reporting incident:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pupil(s) involved:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Location of incident**

- In school (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- Outside of school (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Type of concern:**

- Cyber bullying/harassment
- Bullying
- Deliberately bypassing security
- Accessing unsuitable content
- Racist, sexist or homophobic material
- Radicalisation or extremism
- Material of a sexual nature
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

### **Nature of incident:**

#### **Deliberate access:**

The material was:

- created                       viewed                       printed                       shown to others
- transmitted to others                       distributed

#### **Accidental access:**

The material was:

- created                       viewed                       printed                       shown to others
- transmitted to others                       distributed

