



School Motto

'God shines within our hearts.
Jesus walks by our side.
The Holy Spirit gives us strength.'

Anti-Bullying Policy 24/25

To be reviewed May 2025

Statement of Intent

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy we are committed to providing a warm, caring and safe environment for all our children so that they can learn and play in a relaxed and secure environment. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school. We take all incidents of bullying seriously. Bullying hurts. No-one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and pupils who are bullying others need to learn different ways of behaving. At St Mary's CVA, we acknowledge that bullying does happen from time to time – indeed, it would unrealistic to claim that it does not. When bullying does occur, everyone should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with our anti-bullying policy. (See also child friendly anti-bullying policy/behaviour curriculum/KCSIE)

Aims and Objectives of this Policy

The aim of this policy is to try and prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying. The implementation of this policy will create an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in. All members of the school have a responsibility to recognise bullying when it occurs and take appropriate action in accordance with the school policy. This will happen in the following ways:

- The school will meet the legal requirement for all schools to have an anti-bullying policy in place.
- The school will work closely with other professional agencies to ensure that children stay safe as stated in The Children Act 1989, The SEN and Disability Act 2001, The Government Green Paper 'Every Child Matters' 2003 (outcome 2) and The Children Act 2004.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians will have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff will know what the school policy is on bullying and will consistently and swiftly follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents/guardians will know what the school policy is on bullying and what they can do if bullying occurs.
- Pupils and parents/guardians will be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Whole school initiatives (staff training, celebration assemblies etc.) and proactive teaching strategies (PHSE [Personal, Health & Social Education] lessons, circle time etc.) will be used throughout the school to reduce the opportunities for bullying to occur.
- A positive, caring ethos will be created within the school environment where everyone can work, play and express themselves, free from the fear of being bullied.

What Is Bullying?

The school has adopted the following collaborative definition of bullying which is our shared understanding of what bullying is:

'Bullying is any deliberate, hurtful, upsetting, frightening or threatening behaviour by an individual or a group towards other people. It is repeated over a period of time and it is very difficult for the victims to defend themselves (remember STOP – it happens Several Times on Purpose). Bullying is mean and results in worry, fear, pain and distress to the victims.'

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), ridicule, humiliation
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, making rude remarks, making fun of someone
- Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching, throwing stones, biting, spitting, punching or any other forms of violence, taking or hiding someone's things
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, making fun of culture and religion
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive or sexist comments, sexual violence or sexual harassment. There is a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence or harassment; it is never acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Homophobic: because of/or focussing on the issue of sexuality
- Online/cyber: setting up 'hate websites', sending offensive text messages, emails and abusing the victims via their mobile phones
- Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying e.g. any unfavourable or negative comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability, gender, culture or special educational needs.

Bullying is not:

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose. Children sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the odd name calling or childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop social skills to repair relationships.

Parents should refrain from accusing another child of bullying without speaking to school staff. Parents should also avoid contacting other parents directly about behavioural incidents that occur at school. School staff are best equipped to deal with school-related incidents.

Where does bullying happen?

It can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, in the dining hall, in the playground or online. Bullying may also happen on the way to and from school. In such cases, the Headteacher is empowered by law to deal with such incidents but must do so in accordance with the school's policy.

At St Mary's CVA, we are concerned with our children's conduct and welfare outside, as well as inside, school and we will do what we can to address any bullying issues that occur off the school premises. The following steps may be taken:

- *Talk to the local Community police officer about problems on the streets*
- *Talk to the Headteachers of other schools whose children may be involved in bullying off the premises*
- *Work with the SRSCMAT to support joined up thinking.*
- *Discuss coping strategies with parents*
- *Talk to the children about how to handle or avoid bullying outside the school premises*

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate, by different signs or behaviour, that he or she is being bullied.

Adults should be aware of these possible signs and investigate further if a child:

- *is frightened of walking to or from school*
- *doesn't want to go to school*
- *changes their usual routine/route to school*
- *begins truanting*
- *becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence*
- *starts stammering*
- *attempts or threatens suicide or runs away*
- *cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares*
- *feels ill in the morning*
- *begins to under perform in school work*
- *comes home with clothes torn or books damaged*
- *has possessions go "missing"*
- *asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)*
- *has unexplained cuts or bruises*
- *comes home starving (money/snack/sandwiches have been stolen)*
- *becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable*
- *starts swearing or using aggressive language for no apparent reason*
- *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 taken seriously and investigated as soon as possible.

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe. Nobody has the right to make you feel unhappy. If someone is bullying you, it is important to remember that it is not your fault and there are people who can help you.

Strategies that could be employed, based on evidence from previous incidents in school, advice from the school council, pupils, staff and parents could be:

- *Try not to let the bully know that he/she is making you feel upset.*
- *Try to ignore them.*
- *Be assertive – stand up to them, look at them directly in the eye, tell them to stop and mean it.*
- *Stay in a group, bullies usually pick on individuals.*
- *Get away as quickly as you can.*
- *Tell someone you can trust – it can be a teacher, a teaching assistant, a midday supervisor, a parent, a friend, a brother, a sister or a relative.*
- *If you are scared, ask a friend to go with you when you tell someone.*
- *If you don't feel you can talk to someone about it, write it down and post it in the 'Worry' box.*
- *When you tell an adult about the bullying give them as many facts as you can (What? Who? Where? When? Why? How?).*
- *Keep a diary of what's been happening and refer to it when you tell someone (see Appendix 1).*

- *Keep on speaking out until someone listens and helps you.*
- *Never be afraid to do something about it and quick.*
- *Don't suffer in silence.*
- *Don't blame yourself for what is happening.*
- *Call a helpline.*

What can you do if you see someone else being bullied? (The role of the bystander)

Ignoring bullying is cowardly and unfair to the victim. Staying silent means the bully has won and gives them more power. There are ways you can help without putting yourself in danger.

The strategies that could help cope with this situation are listed below:

- *Don't smile or laugh at the situation.*
- *Don't rush over and take the bully on yourself.*
- *Don't be made to join in.*
- *If safe to do so, encourage the bully to stop bullying.*
- *If you can, let the bully know you do not like his or her behaviour.*
- *Shout for help.*
- *Let the victim(s) know that you are going to get help.*
- *Tell a member of staff as soon as you can.*
- *Try and befriend the person being bullied.*
- *Encourage the person to talk to someone and get help.*
- *Ask someone you trust about what to do.*
- *If you don't feel you can talk to someone about it, write it down and post it in the 'Worry' box.*
- *Call a helpline for some advice.*

Bullying of children with Special Educational Needs

St Mary's CVA is an inclusive school. We provide a secure, accepting, safe and stimulating environment where everyone is valued for who they are.

We have some children who have learning disabilities and/or communication difficulties. Everyone involved in the school is very aware that these children can be especially vulnerable to bullying and we are therefore particularly vigilant at all times.

High attainers, gifted or talented pupils can also be affected by bullying. Staff will treat this type of bullying seriously and in the same way as any other type of bullying.

Procedures for reporting and responding to bullying incidents

All staff will respond calmly and consistently to all allegations and incidents of bullying at St Mary's CVA . They will be taken seriously by all staff and dealt with impartially and promptly. All those involved will have the opportunity to be heard. Staff will protect and support all children involved whilst allegations and incidents are investigated and resolved.

The following step-by-step procedure will be used for reporting and responding to bullying allegations or incidents:

1. *Report all bullying allegations and incidents to staff.*
2. *Staff will make sure the victim(s) is, and feels, safe.*
3. *Appropriate advice will be given to help the victim(s).*
4. *Staff will listen and speak to all children involved about the incident separately.*

5. *The problem will be identified and possible solutions suggested.*
6. *Staff will attempt to adopt a problem solving approach which will move children on from them having to justify their behaviour.*
7. *Appropriate action will be taken quickly to end the bullying behaviour or threats of bullying.*
8. *Staff will reinforce to the bully that their behaviour is unacceptable.*
9. *The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise. Other consequences may take place and appropriate sanctions applied (see next section).*
10. *If possible, the pupils will be reconciled.*
11. *An attempt will be made, and support given, to help the bully (bullies) understand and change his/her/their behaviour.*
12. *In any cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on My Concern.*
13. *In **serious cases** parents will be informed and will be invited to come into school for a meeting to discuss the problem.*
14. *After the incident has been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.*
15. *Bullying incidents will be discussed regularly at staff meetings.*
16. *If necessary and appropriate, the Child Protection Officer, Social Services or police will be consulted.*

The following sanctions/strategies may be used:

- Apologise to the victim(s) verbally or in writing
- Lose privileges
- Nurture or small group work
- Individual target setting and monitoring
- Use of ARM cluster play therapy
- Intervention from outside services eg. Behaviour Support Worker.
- Lose playtimes (stay with class teacher or do extra work)
- Stand outside the Headteacher's office
- A behaviour tracking chart/ Star chart
- Spend playtimes and lunchtimes with an adult
- Parents will be invited in to school
- Be removed from class and asked to work in isolation
- Report to the Headteacher, Head of School or member of SLT
- Be withdrawn from participation in school visits, clubs and events not essential to the curriculum.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

Strategies for the prevention and reduction of bullying

Whole school initiatives and proactive teaching strategies will be used throughout the school to develop a positive learning environment with the aim of reducing the opportunities for bullying to occur.

These can include:

- Dedicated lessons on 'Social and Emotional' wellbeing
- Involving the whole school community in writing and reviewing this policy.
- Undertaking regular questionnaires and surveys to monitor the extent of bullying in the school and the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Each class agreeing on their own set of class rules
- Making National Anti-Bullying Week a high profile event each year
- NSPCC assemblies and classroom workshops
- Awareness raising through regular anti-bullying assemblies
- The PHSE (Personal, Health & Social Education) scheme of work from Reception to Year 6 will be used to support this policy
- Circle time on bullying issues

- A Star Chart to improve pupil behaviour
- Setting up of a circle of friends support network where a small group of children volunteer to help and support an individual experiencing difficulties
- Children writing stories and poems and drawing pictures about bullying
- Children being read stories about bullying
- Using drama activities and role-plays to help children be more assertive and teach them strategies to help them deal with bullying situations
- Prominently displaying anti-bullying posters produced by the children around the school
- Introducing playground improvements and initiatives
- Training Y5 or Y6 pupils to be Playground Buddies
- Well-being buddies in every class
- Using praise and rewards to reinforce good behaviour
- Encouraging the whole school community to model appropriate behaviour towards one another
- Organising regular anti-bullying training for all staff

Monitoring and evaluation of the policy

To ensure this policy is effective, it will be regularly monitored and evaluated. Written feedback from parents and informal feedback from children will be used to gauge the effectiveness of this policy, moving forwards. Parents are invited to inform the Senior Leadership Team, via email at:

joxley@nmm.srscmat.co.uk of any changes, modifications or improvements they feel are needed to this policy. These suggestions will be considered by the Headteacher and if appropriate, changes will be made to the policy as a result of the feedback. An annual review will take place and amendments will be made to the policy, as required.

Sources of further information, support and help

There is a vast amount of information and guidance available on the internet about bullying. As a school we will happily signpost parents to useful sites and resources, if required.

Good starting points for children and parents would be:

- The National Bullying Helpline: <https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/>
- The NSPCC website and helpline <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>
- Childline is also available for confidential support and advice: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/>

This policy will continually be reviewed alongside the Behaviour Policy. An up-to-date paper copy can be obtained from the school office, if required. An online version will also be available on the school website.

Data will be processed to be in line with the requirements and protections set out in the UK General Data Protection Regulation.