

# Anti-Bullying Policy

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## Statement of Intent

St Michael's Church of England High School will not tolerate bullying of any kind and will deal with any reported incidents promptly and effectively. Support and counselling will be offered to the victim and strategies to deal with the bully will be sought. Issues relating to bullying are regularly discussed in PSHE, appropriate lessons, assemblies as well as other forums. A 'pupil speak' version of this policy will be issued to all pupils.

This policy aims to:

- develop a culture where bullying will not be tolerated and any incident of bullying can be reported
- encourage pupils to support each other and be actively involved in making the school a bully-free zone
- work closely with pupils, parents, staff and outside agencies to minimise incidents of bullying
- involve Student Voice in developing and implementing this policy
- provide pupils with the opportunity to make a positive contribution and achieve emotional wellbeing by creating a safe and healthy environment

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Headteacher

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of Governors

## **Bullying: A Definition**

A repeated act which is often deliberate causing distress to the victim. This may be the result of a thoughtless act, or a wilful and conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten.

## **Types of Bullying**

There are many different types of bullying that children may experience. Some may be obvious to identify, whereas others may be more subtle. Ways that bullying may be identified could be as follows:

- Physical
- Verbal
- Social
- Cyber

### *Physical Bullying*

Physical bullying is often the most obvious and easily identified and includes; hitting/punching, kicking, tripping, pinching, pushing, nudging. Physical bullying can cause both short term as well as long term damage, which in turn may also harm a child's emotional well-being even when the physical bullying has stopped.

### *Verbal Bullying*

Verbal bullying can include name calling, insults, intimidation, teasing, and can consist of homophobic/cultural/sexist or racist remarks. In some instances this may start off harmlessly but it can soon escalate to a level that can affect an individual's emotional well-being.

### *Social Bullying*

Social bullying is often non-direct and can be hard to identify as it takes place in a way that can exclude the person who is being bullied. This includes where the activity is carried on behind the bullied person's back. This type of bullying is often with the intent to harm an individual's social reputation and/ or to cause humiliation. Social bullying may include;

- Lying to and/or spreading rumours
- Negative physical or facial gestures, threatening or disrespectful looks
- Ignoring a person or group intentionally
- Socially excluding someone and/or encouraging others to socially exclude someone
- Intentionally damaging someone's social reputation and/or social acceptance
- Intending to embarrass or humiliate someone i.e. mimicking, obscene gestures

### *Cyber Bullying*

Cyber bullying is bullying that take place using digital technologies, including; mobile phones, iPad's/ tablet's, computers and/or using software such as social media, instant messaging, websites, text messages and other online platforms. It can be in public or in private, that is where a group is involved or between just the two parties. With the advent of modern day technology and device use, the person being bullied can feel this to be a constant threat with opportunity to be 24/7. Cyber bullying may be identified as follows:

- Abusive and/or hurtful text messages, emails, posts, images and/or videos
- Gossip and spreading of rumours online
- Imitating other people online and/or using their account/log in
- Blocking or excluding people online

There has been a dramatic increase in the use of social media and instant messaging by young people including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc. The school will use assemblies, PSHE and form time to highlight the potential for misuse of social media and to increase pupils awareness of the negative issues that can arise with social platforms. Pupils will be encouraged to use social media sensibly and with regard for e-safety. The school will endeavour to investigate issues that arise through the misuse of social platforms and aims to raise awareness amongst parents<sup>1</sup> of this relatively new phenomenon.

## **Symptoms of Bullying**

Some pupils will openly raise their concerns about being bullied. However, others may be unwilling to talk about it for fear of not being understood and making the situation worse.

Parents may notice signs such as:

- Bed wetting in a previously dry child
- Vague tummy aches and headaches
- School refusal/reluctance to go to school
- Being frightened of walking to and from school or changing their usual route
- Arriving home with books or equipment missing
- Arriving home hungry because lunch money has been taken
- Becoming withdrawn or lack in confidence
- Becoming distressed and anxious

School staff may notice:

- A decline in the standard of work
- Poor punctuality/attendance or truancy
- Falling out with a previously good friend
- Unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches
- The pupil becoming aggressive and behaving unreasonably
- Reluctance to go out at break or lunch
- Hanging around classes with the excuse of staying to help

## **Rights and Responsibilities**

- It is the right of all pupils in the school to be free from humiliation, fear and abuse. It is therefore the responsibility of all adults and pupils in the school to ensure that the atmosphere for learning is caring and protective.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should be involved in implementing the Anti-Bullying Policy
- The PSHE programme, assemblies and School Council will inform pupils and staff of the procedures that are in place to combat and deal with bullying
- The school will identify areas that pose a high level of opportunity for bullying

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the term parent in this document is intended to include all adults with parental responsibility for pupils such as carers and legal guardians

- All vulnerable areas of the school should be visited on a regular basis by all staff
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should demonstrate understanding of pupil's feelings and be aware that sometimes throw-away comments may make a situation worse
- All staff should act swiftly when incidents of bullying are reported
- Pupils should be allowed the opportunity to discuss their worries and fears about any aspect of school life. This can be done through the strong support networks that are in place including the Student Voice, peer mentors, learning mentors and other staff

## **Guidelines**

### **Pupil Guidelines**

If pupils are being bullied, or know/suspect that a peer being bullied, they should approach any of the following staff in school to raise their concerns as soon as possible:

- Subject teacher
- Form tutor
- Head of Year (HoY)
- Pastoral support staff
- Senior staff (assistant heads, deputy headteacher, headteacher)
- Academic coaches
- Admin staff/school nurse/lunchtime supervisors

If pupils tell friends, peer mentors or prefects about bullying the recipient should pass the information to a member of staff as soon as possible.

### **Staff Guidelines**

- All staff share a responsibility to create a safe and trusting school environment where pupils feel confident that they can raise their concerns about bullying for either themselves or their peers
- Promote the school's policy on bullying wherever possible
- Make appropriate use of school policies including Anti-Bullying
- Use form tutor time to raise awareness about bullying and to encourage positive relationships between peers and staff to address issues and encourage understanding of differences
- Pupils should receive guidance through PSHEE, assemblies and School Council about the different forms of bullying and what to do if they or someone else is a victim of bullying
- Staff should take seriously any disclosures about bullying
- Staff should report incidents of bullying to the appropriate Pastoral Head or Senior Leader
- When bullying is suspected, the victim should be spoken to and offered support and advice at the earliest opportunity in confidence
- Use the school's referral system to inform other staff about incidents

When dealing with any form of bullying, the action taken will follow Ofsted guidelines, 'swift, proportionate, discreet, influential and effective. The victim must feel confident that the situation will be resolved effectively. Bullying will be reported through the school's referral system on SIMS/Go 4 Schools. This will be recorded by any member of staff who deals with the issue. Incidents will be recorded appropriately and will be reported to the Governing Board.

### **Governor Guidelines**

There may be situations where parent governors are made aware of bullying incidents. The following procedures should be followed:

- Governors should encourage parents to speak to the appropriate HoY to resolve the situation in the first instance
- Make a telephone call to the appropriate HoY to inform them of their contact with parents
- If the bullying has not been resolved, the governors should contact the headteacher or deputy headteacher, who should report back once the issue has been resolved

### **Parent Guidelines**

Parents are in a prime position to pick up the early warning signs that their children may be the victims of bullying. If parents are concerned that their children are being bullied, they should contact the relevant pastoral team member immediately. Often incidents can be dealt with before they get out of hand, so that they are brought to a swift conclusion.

Parents know their children better than anyone else. Any changes in behaviour or attitude towards school which is not in the child's usual manner, may be a warning sign that bullying is taking place. Where possible parents should monitor their child's use of social networking sites. Parents should check on a regular basis the content of what is being said and take appropriate actions. This should include informing the school.

### **Procedures**

The definition of bullying at the start of the policy makes it clear that bullying is a repeated act, therefore, 'one-off' incidents such as fights are not deemed as 'bullying'. However, these incidents will be recorded on SIMS. The situation will be closely monitored in case they become more serious. Serious incidents will be dealt with by HoY or a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Where a member of staff is concerned that bullying is taking place, they should gain as much information as possible and pass it on to the HoY or a member of SLT. Any information should be recorded on SIMS and/or Go 4 Schools. The following strategies may be used during any investigation and preventative work. The strategies employed will depend on the seriousness, frequency and type of bullying. It will also depend on whether the bully has been involved in other bullying. If an incident were to arise, the school would typically investigate and resolve as follows;

- Pupil interview/ incident report/statements
- Parental involvement: contact with parent
- Letter home
- Discussion with/support for the victim
- Discussion with and verbal warning to the bully, information placed on file
- Consequence
- Letter of apology
- Involvement of HoY, Pastoral Support Team and outside agencies
- Fixed term or permanent exclusion from school
- Use of outside agencies (including the police)

The level of severity of an incident will determine what processes are required to support and resolve the situation. However, in all cases the incident details should be recorded on SIMS and/or Go 4 Schools by the investigating person(s).

## **Support for the Victim of Bullying**

The school prides itself on a pastoral team that are able to give considerable time and help to the victims of bullying and encourage a partnership between parents, pupils and school. Their wealth of experience mean that pupils are able to feel safe and secure in school and address the issues.

## **Support for the Bully**

We must not forget the person who is the bully or has exhibited bully-like behaviour. Sometimes, bullies may not realise that they are causing harm or displaying bully-like behaviour. In some cases, the pupil does not accept that their behaviour is unacceptable. In other cases, the pupil may have been or is being bullied themselves (either inside or outside of the school environment) or have experience of an environment where bullying or bully-like behaviour is accepted. Because of this, the bully may also need help and support so that they can recognise their behaviour and the effect it is having on others. The following help is available for students who display bully-like behaviour to help them to modify their behaviour:

- Emotional and social well-being support i.e. counselling, referrals to external agencies
- Peer/relationship restorative intervention
- Involvement from external agencies
- Parental support and involvement
- Alternative provision

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher in agreement with the governing board.



