

St Matthew's RC Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy



Approved by:	Governors	Date: April 2024
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Introduction

Catholic belief is that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and as such, should all be treated justly.

*“The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God.”
Catechism of the Catholic Church*

At St Matthew’s we strive to ensure that this belief is put into practice so that all are welcome. We work to ensure that each person, in all their uniqueness, is able to thrive in our Catholic school, irrespective of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, physical appearance, disability or the actual or perceived sexual orientation of themselves or of their parents/carers.

“Because all people are equal in God’s sight, every person possesses the same dignity and has a claim to the same human rights. Hence every kind of social, racist, sexist, cultural or religious discrimination against a person is an unacceptable injustice.” YOUCAT 330

At St Matthew’s School we endeavour to create a safe and stimulating environment where everyone knows that they are valued as God’s children. Every person has the right to be treated with respect and each person has the responsibility to treat others in the same way. Our mission statement is lived out so that children are enabled to have the confidence and strategies to speak up and tell of any bullying experiences, knowing that positive and fair action will be taken.

St Matthew’s Mission Statement

Welcome to our happy school, where everyone is valued and given the opportunity to ‘let their light shine.’ With Jesus in our hearts, we encourage love and respect for all. We strive to reach our goals, as we learn, and grow, in a safe and enjoyable environment.

Aims and objectives

- To provide a secure, safe and positive Christian environment free from threat, harassment or any type of bullying behaviour, where children and adults can grow and develop.
- To create a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- To produce a consistent whole school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- To work with all members of the school community (staff, children, parents/carers and governors) to foster productive partnerships which help maintain a bullying-free environment.
- To celebrate diversity and the uniqueness of individuals.

What is bullying?

At St Matthew’s Catholic Primary School, our definition of bullying is:

“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online”



Bullying can take many forms and can be experienced in many different ways.

DCSF 'Safe to Learn' 2007 defines bullying as

'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as

'The intentional repetitive or persistent hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power'

DFE 'Bullying at school' November 2014 states that there is no legal definition of bullying. However, it states that bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- *repeated*
- *intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally*
- *often aimed at certain groups, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation*

It takes many forms and can include:

- *physical assault*
- *teasing*
- *making threats*
- *name calling*
- *cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (eg email, social networks and instant messenger)*

The DFE 2014 guidance states that schools should have their own definition of bullying. Bullying is defined by our school community as *any repeated action which causes distress to a group or individual and which means our school is no longer a 'safe and enjoyable environment' for that group or individual.*

Types of Bullying

Bullying can be categorised into seven main types:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities
- Bullying related to gifts and talents
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying related to gender

Bullying related to race, religion or culture

Racist, faith-based or cultural bullying is bullying based on a person's background, colour, religion or heritage. This form of bullying has a negative impact on a child's sense of identity, self-worth and self-esteem. It also can be negative about the child's family, and about their ethnic or faith community as a whole.

Bullying related to home circumstances

The home circumstances of children can make them vulnerable to bullying. This may include obvious signs of affluence or lack of it, being a looked after child, being a young carer or having a family member with a disability or special need.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Children with health or visible medical conditions, or perceived physical characteristics, such as size and weight may be vulnerable to bullying.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

Children with SEN and disabilities are vulnerable to bullying. Their differences can be used by bullies to isolate them from friendship groups.

Bullying related to gifts and talents

Children and young people who are gifted and talented can be vulnerable to bullying. Their achievements and abilities can set them apart from their peers. This may lead to resentment and jealousy among their peers which may make them targets for bullying behaviour.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

Homophobic bullying involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of their perceived or actual sexual orientation. Homophobic bullying includes all forms of bullying but in particular it can include homophobic language. This is terms of verbal abuse used towards lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people or those who are perceived LGBT. It can be used as an insult or to refer to something or someone as inferior eg derogatory use of the word 'gay'.

Bullying related to gender

Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying affects both genders. Sexist bullying is based on sexist attitudes that, when expressed, demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Both sexes may be victims and each may be a victim of their own sex. Children who feel that they belong to another gender or do not conform with the stereotypically defined roles often ascribed to particular genders, can also become a target of bullying.

Forms of Bullying

Different forms of bullying can be seen within the seven identified types of bullying. Forms of bullying include:

Physical

This can include physical harm such as punching or pushing, being made to give money or belongings, or forcing a child to act against their will.

Verbal

Verbal bullying can include being teased in a nasty way, being called 'gay' in a derogatory way, being insulted about race, religion or culture, being called names or being the subject of offensive comments.

Indirect

This can include being deliberately excluded from groups or ignored, or being the subject of tales or rumours.

Electronic /'cyberbullying'

This form of bullying includes verbal or indirect bullying via text message, email, instant messenger services or social network sites or images spread via the internet or mobile phones.

Our Approach to Bullying

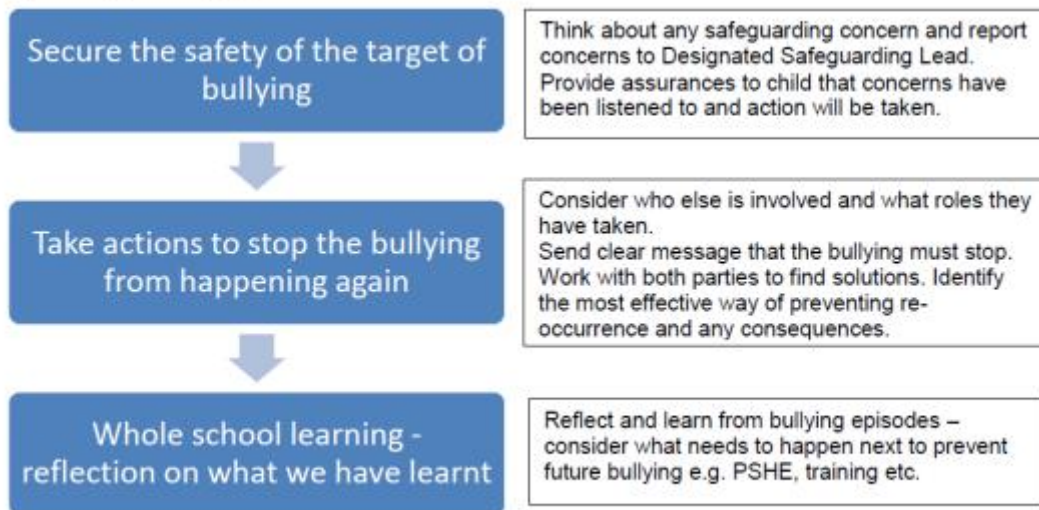
Our approach to bullying is informed by the Catholic faith.

"Every human being is created in God's image and likeness and therefore is valuable and worthy of respect."
Christ at the Centre

Key Principles

- The school leadership will work with all in our community to prevent all forms of bullying, including prejudice based bullying, and to fully address incidents of bullying as they arise.
- All bullying in its variety of forms and types will be taken equally seriously and addressed appropriately.
- We will address bullying within the framework of Catholic beliefs and Church teaching and in a way which is age-appropriate.

Responding to Bullying



When responding to incidents of bullying we aim:

- to make the child who has been bullied feel safe
- to encourage better behaviour from the child who has displayed bullying behaviours
- to ensure the immediate safety and well-being of the children
- to protect and support all parties while the issues are being resolved
- to respond calmly and consistently
- to take the necessary steps to resolve the issue by listening to the child/children with sympathy and concern, discussing the incident and subsequent consequences, considering a range of strategies to ensure the bullying does not occur again.

Homophobic bullying and using homophobic language

Homophobic language can be used as an insult or to refer to something or someone as inferior such as the derogatory use of the word 'gay'. The derogatory use of homophobic language in our school will always be challenged even if it appears to be being used without any homophobic intent.

Children with SEN or disabilities

Our school is committed to actively promoting the equality of opportunity for all children with SEN or disabilities. Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, in most cases (except those related to specific conditions) school will expect the same standards of behaviour as those which apply to the rest of the school community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

Staff training

Training of all staff including all teaching and support staff takes place annually and attendance is logged. All adults working in the school know the anti-bullying policy and the procedures, protocols and pro-formas used for the reporting of incidents. Training on anti-bullying is part of the induction of new staff.

All staff receive training about being sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied. Those being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems or changes.

Staff are expected to take preventative measures. This includes being aware of where and when bullying might take place. The staff training includes equality training to raise awareness among staff of potential prejudicial behaviour and how not to reinforce stereotypes.

Curriculum

As a Catholic school Religious Education is the core subject of our curriculum. There are opportunities within RE to make links to reinforce the principles of human rights, Catholic social teaching and the uniqueness of the individual, made in God's image and likeness. Our curriculum as a whole is planned and delivered to enable children to develop empathy, to understand the effect bullying has on people and to take responsibility for trying to prevent bullying. Through a variety of planned activities across the curriculum such as circle time, role-play, class performances, celebration assemblies, our children gain in self-confidence and develop strategies to speak up for themselves and express their own thoughts and opinions. Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity and an assortment of strategies to protect themselves from bullying. This is explicitly planned within the PSHE and Citizenship programmes delivered in school and through the annual celebration of Anti-bullying week. Staff are also expected and encouraged to take advantage of unplanned opportunities to celebrate diversity and to reinforce the principles of anti-bullying.

Pastoral structure

Children are elected to the school council each year. The elected school council regularly meets with Mrs Sinead Longster (Lead teacher for PSHE and RSE) to discuss topics raised by children in school such as safety, behaviour, playtime activities.

The house system provides a structure of support for all children and helps to create an atmosphere where our children know that they will be listened to and where their problems and worries are taken seriously and responded to with sensitivity.

The school counsellor provides support through therapeutic counselling.

Liturgical Prayer

In Liturgical Prayer, themes and values play a part in challenging prejudice and promoting justice for all. The timetable of Liturgical Prayer includes specific opportunities throughout the year eg Youth Friday, CAFOD Fast Days, Holocaust Memorial Day, Anti-bullying week, Ten Ten liturgies, which support work in anti-bullying (see Liturgy file). The Mini Vinnies group promote justice by reaching out to those in need. All children are encouraged to live the gospel values by following Christ's example.

Reporting and recording of incidents of bullying

Our school has a clear and well publicised system for reporting bullying. Staff have annual training and children and parents/carers are explicitly reminded of the school's procedures each year during anti-bullying week.

Staff record all incidents within their category using the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS). This online management recording and reporting system provides staff and all school leaders with relevant details for all incidents recorded.

Reporting to the Local Authority

All incidents of racist bullying are reported to the local authority.

The Role of the Governing Body

The governing body monitors the incidents of bullying that occur and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. This is done through a monitoring log provided through CPOMS. 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.

Procedures for parents:

- If a parent has any concerns about their child they should speak to the class teacher immediately. If a parent thinks bullying is the issue, the matter will be referred to the headteacher. The headteacher is always informed of any bullying concerns at St Matthew's and monitors the situation carefully.
- If a parent feels unable to talk to the class teacher, they can make an appointment to speak directly with the Headteacher.
- The school will work with both the child and the parents to ensure that any bullying is stopped and that support is given where needed.
- Parents should not confront the bully or their parents. This can complicate the situation and distress the pupil.
- The school will deal directly with all children involved and their parents directly. Parents will be kept informed of any actions the school is taking.
- If parents are not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation, they may wish to make a more formal complaint. In order to do this, they should follow the procedure set out in the BCCET Complaints Policy.

Monitoring the Policy

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy termly. To discover the extent to which bullying exists in school and to monitor the extent to which our anti-bullying policy is effective, the log and strategies will be reviewed.

It is the responsibility of the school governing body to review the effectiveness of this policy. This is done by examining the school's anti-bullying records, and through the report of the headteacher. Governors will analyse information with regard to the types and forms of bullying.