



Loving to Learn; Learning to love like Jesus

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date approved by Governors	22.07.26
Next review	Summer 2027
Agreed by Committee	Education

Rationale

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. As a Catholic school endeavouring to foster the gospel values, a focus on the quality of relationships is at the heart of the school's ethos. St Monica's, therefore, has a zero tolerance attitude to bullying.

The school has a legal duty of care towards pupils and must determine measures with a view to encouraging good behaviour and respect for others on the part of pupils and, in particular, preventing all forms of bullying among pupils. These measures must be published in writing to all parents, pupils and staff at least once per year.

Definition

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.

There is no legal definition of bullying

Bullying can be one or more of the following:

Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, and using threatening gestures;

Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or use of violence;

Racist – Using racial taunts, graffiti, gestures;

Gender and sexual – making unwanted physical homophobic contact or sexually abusive comments because of, or focusing on, the issue of sexuality;

Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing;

Disability related – name calling, using gestures, tormenting or threatening, because of, or focussing on, the issue of disability or special need;

Cyber – all areas of the internet, such as e-mail and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Hate Crime - A **hate crime** is when someone breaks a law by hurting another person because of prejudice against a group the victim belongs to. Normally, a hate crime is not caused in any way by something the victim did or said, but just because of who they are. People often commit hate crime because of prejudice about the victim's sex, ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender identity, class, sexual orientation, age, or other things about them.

This policy is designed to ensure that as a school we are alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying can seriously disrupt an individual's personal, social and educational progress and achievement. Bullying hurts and no one deserves to be bullied. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and children who bully need to learn different ways of behaving. Bullying can cause stress and can affect a child's health; therefore, schools and

parents have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. Children should also be encouraged to report incidents of bullying.

Particularly vulnerable to bullying are those who have physical or learning disabilities, young people who experience abuse or neglect, gay and lesbian young people, children / young people from minority ethnic communities and Looked After Children. Others perceived to be different may also be picked on for instance, in terms of their size or shape or because they wear glasses. Some children are bullied for no apparent reason and may be bullied by former friends. Sometimes the pupil who bullies at school may be bullied in another context (*Ref: Disability Discrimination Act 2005*).

More Guidance on Bullying can be found in Appendix 1

Aims

This policy aims to:

- Promote a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure all teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Inform children and parents of the school's expectations and to foster a productive partnership, which helps maintain a bully-free environment.
- Show commitment to overcoming bullying by practising zero tolerance.
- Identify and deal with incidents of bullying consistently and effectively.

Prevention

To fulfil our aims, the following strategies are used:

- Pupils are taught with structured programmes to raise self-esteem in pupils; PSRHE lessons and Circle Time; RE topics; Behaviour Policy; Life to the Full lessons (RHE scheme)
- Constant monitoring of school buildings and grounds to ensure a safe and secure environment is maintained;
- Rigorous monitoring and tracking of behaviour/ conflict/ bullying incidents; Regular staff training;
- Raising awareness through information assemblies, sessions and special weeks specifically on keeping safe, anti-bullying, e-safety are scheduled into the annual assembly planner (includes work with outside agencies like the NSPCC);
- Involvement of all school staff to ensure a consistent approach is in evidence;
- Pupil Voice annual exercises to gain information of the current pupil experience; eg. school heat map exercise, pupil questionnaire on feeling safe
- An open door policy in the school;
- Encouraging pupils and parents to report bullying;
- Establishment of peer support systems

Procedures

It is recognised that incidents of bullying occur in all schools. Therefore, at St Monica's, it is essential that all such incidents are taken seriously and dealt with in an appropriate manner. A pupil or parent may report an incident to any member of staff, but the responsibility for ensuring all incidents are consistently dealt with lies with the class teacher.

The class teacher is responsible for recording and tracking all incidents relating to negative behaviours among the children in their care, for taking appropriate action to address issues and ensuring that concerns regarding persistent and ongoing behaviours are reported to the headteacher.

All other staff, who become aware of or deal with issues have a responsibility to report incidents to the class teacher of the child (ren) concerned.

The headteacher will be responsible for embedding anti-bullying awareness in the policies and practices of the school and will support staff with issues that are prolonged or have become difficult to manage.

The Governors are responsible for ensuring that the Anti-bullying policy is reviewed annually and that the duties entailed are discharged effectively.

The Local Authority monitor bullying incidents in schools and the school has a duty to report termly on incidents that have occurred in school using the form provided as Appendix 3.

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.
- The Staff member should investigate the alleged bullying by consulting with the young person who has been bullied.
- The Staff member should report on CPOMS the incident and how it has been dealt with to the class teacher concerned.
- MDAs should report to staff at the end of lunch using post it notes or verbal reporting as appropriate, using the guidance in **Appendix 2**
- The member of staff and the class teacher should reach agreement as to whether this incident constitutes bullying or should be addressed as an incident of poor behaviour.
- If it is felt that an incident of bullying has taken place, then it will be taken seriously and investigated.
- If the incident is deemed to be bullying, the class teacher will speak to the pupils involved, including witnesses and bystanders, and proceed accordingly.
- The headteacher will be informed. Such incidents and actions should be raised by the class teacher without delay.
- If the incident is deemed to be bullying, communication with parents is required or if it is a parent raising a concern about bullying, the headteacher will be informed.

Support

Giving children and young people the confidence to tell

It is imperative that children and young people have the confidence to tell adults about bullying behaviours they witness or experience, if bullying in our school is to be eradicated. Very early on, even in Nursery, children can unfortunately learn that telling an adult that they are being teased / bullied may rebound on them and this may lead them to feel vulnerable.

All staff should encourage young people to report bullying cases and should be mindful that the rates of telling will not increase unless the children believe that they will be supported.

Establishing that trust can be made easier by:

- listening to young people
- consulting with young people
- responding to all incidents of bullying in a consistent manner
- research also shows that young people who feel they could exercise some control over their situation felt more competent and effective.

Support for the young people who have been bullied

Support for the young people who have been bullied is essential both immediately following the incident and during an agreed period of review. Peer support, staff support, parental support and outside agency support may all be essential to ensure that the young people who have been bullied do not suffer any long term effects.

After a period of time, staff will meet with the young people who have been bullied to reassess the situation and the relationship between those involved.

Children who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice.
- Reassuring the pupil.
- Giving assurance that you are taking this seriously.
- Remaining empathic and showing your trust.
- Offering continuous support.
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Helping the young person plan a response that is positive and realistic.
- Developing a child's ability to be assertive and take control of situations where they feel vulnerable.
- Signposting the person to other sources of help or guidance.
- Should anyone talk about or threaten suicide or running away, alert the headteacher as professional help may need to be sought.

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PSHCE, assemblies and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.

Young People who bully/display bullying behaviour

Anyone who bullies should be made aware of the effect of their actions. It should be made clear to them that they are bullying, that their behaviour is unacceptable and that it will not be tolerated. It should also be recognised, however, that often young people who bully need help and support and that we have a duty to ensure they receive it. Understanding why they have engaged in bullying behaviour and knowing how to respond differently, in similar situations, will reduce the risk of repeated behaviour.

Disciplinary procedures against the young people who bully/display bullying behaviour are intended to change or modify behaviour rather than label anyone as a bully. Such procedures may include:

- Positive behaviour strategies.
- Establishing the support of parents/ guardians in actions taken to address issues and effect modifications in behaviour.
- Withdrawal of activities.
- The establishment of mentoring or a buddy system.
- Discussion about the effects of bullying.
- Peer mediation.
- Behaviour Agreement Plan being written and shared with parents, pupil and school - monitored and reviewed over agreed time periods
- Involvement of other agencies and services.

Peer support schemes

Establishing peer support provides a safe opportunity for young people to share concerns and explore their own solutions to a range of difficulties. In order to be effective, there must be adult involvement.

At St Monica's we use:

- Peer education - sharing knowledge and skills in a formal setting e.g. during Circle Time and PSHCE lessons.
- Peer mentoring - a supportive, organised relationship between children or young people e.g. Playground friends.
- Conferencing between children involved in incidents (young people who have been bullied, witnesses and young people who bully/display bullying behaviour) – adult led.

Additional Staff Responsibilities

All staff will be kept abreast of current thinking with regard to anti-bullying and if required, support will be given to implement this policy. All staff will be made aware of the implications of the school policies on bullying and racism.

Key staff will be offered training on tackling bullying throughout the year or through professional development courses. In-house training on tackling bullying and school policy will be given as part of the induction process for new staff.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Senior Leadership team (DSLs) will monitor CPOMS entries and actions regularly. The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The review will be reported to the designated Governor for Safeguarding. The revised policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

Further Links:

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-and-support>

Appendix 1:

Bullying: Signs and Symptoms

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 frightened of walking to or from school
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens self-harm, suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares/bedwetting
- regularly feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or go “missing”
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay the bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually ‘lost’
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home very hungry (money/ lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- becomes unreasonable when dealing with school issues
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what’s wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone

Transition can precipitate problems which, without early intervention, can lead to disaffection or vulnerability. For example, transition between:

- home and primary school;
- classes within school;
- primary and secondary school;
- home and school after a long absence, for example, due to illness or living abroad;
- returning to school after a period of exclusion;
- those entering school outside the normal year of entry. Children who have attended a large number of schools, or who may not yet be able to speak English, may also experience heightened levels of bullying.

Reasons why children and young people don’t report bullying

- They believe parents, teachers or leaders cannot do anything about it.
- They believe parents don’t understand about school life.
- They feel that peers expect them to stand up for themselves and to be able to cope.
- They believe that telling adults only makes it harder.
- They feel ashamed of being unpopular.
- They feel they must deserve it.

- They are too frightened to tell.
- They believe they just have to put up with it; it's part of life.

Factors which may encourage children to bully

Bullying behaviour amongst children and young people can be a result of individual characteristics, home experiences and school life. Factors that may predispose young people to become bullies include:

- Home - little social status available – little verbal interaction, high physical / verbal aggressions.
- Individual is charismatic and / or dominant within the peer group.
- Limited interpersonal skills.
- Likely to have been a victim of bullying in the past.
- May have a high degree of stress in their own lives.
- No effective 'Whole School' approach to self-review.
- No clear rules / boundaries / interventions.
- No school anti-bullying policy.
- Models of teachers / other adults bullying – covert support for bullying.
- Opportunities to bully – breaks, lunch, waiting for a teacher or supervisor, in a changing room.
- Geography of the building – hidden corners, unsupervised areas.
- Poor communication with parents.

Factors which may make a child or young person more likely to be bullied include:

Home

- Possibly overprotective – not allowing independence – non-assertive models.
- Lack of awareness about growing up.
- Lack of "street cred" – appearance / social life that is 'different'.
- Too frightened to tell, scared of repercussions / escalation.
- Individual minor disabilities.
- Clumsiness.
- Physical features / colour of skin / colour of hair / dress / speech / height / weight.
- Unassertiveness.
- Sensitivity – highly sensitive or apparently insensitive.
- Few friends, difficulty in forming relationships.
- Low self-esteem – few attributes esteemed by peer group.

School

- No acknowledgement of difficulty.
- Little or no security.
- No effective policy in place, weak pastoral system, nature of school or other culture within school.
- No or poor communication with parents.

Other

- Anything that marks a child out as being different e.g. religious conviction, culture.

The behaviour of bystanders

Young people may fail to help someone who is being bullied for a variety of reasons. Research suggests that this is not apathy, rather a feeling of not knowing what to do as well as having fears that they, themselves, will be teased or bullied. Children and young people may also be apprehensive that they will not receive the support of peers and teachers. Schools and other settings would benefit by making explicit the vital role of bystanders in helping to eliminate bullying.

Appendix 2: Checklist for investigating an incident

This guidance can be used by e.g. MDAs and support staff when investigating an incident prior to reporting to class teachers. It details the information you would need to ascertain in order to be able to feedback to class teachers effectively.

In the first instance, speak to individuals involved separately. You may feel that a conference approach between children is required at a later stage.

Talk slowly and don't insist on information; show concern; start a general conversation and be prepared for expressions of guilt, shame, anger, fear and other emotions and encourage the person to explore their feelings. Be aware of any hints or red herrings.

- Who was involved – is there or are there young people who have been bullied?
- If so who is it/are they?
- In what way did the young people who have been bullied suffer?
- How did the incident start? Was it spontaneous or premeditated?
- What is alleged to have happened, from the perspective of all those involved?
- When did the incident take place?
- Where did the incident take place?
- Who witnessed the incident (pupils, parents, staff and others)
- Who reported it to whom and when?
- Is there any background to this incident?
- Is there any other reason for considering this to be bullying behaviour?
- Why does the reporter or investigator of the incident perceive this to have been a bullying incident?
- To what extent did the incident affect others?
- What was the response of the young people who have been bullied-if such exist?
- What does/do the young people who have been bullied wish to see resulting from the investigation?
- A 'first offence' of e.g. name calling or abusive language should be challenged, the nature of the unacceptable behaviour explained and the school policy on such matters outlined. The pupil should be told that any further occurrences will be logged against them as a bullying incident.