



SSMJ POLICY FOR

Anti-Bullying

Following the example of Jesus, together we learn, love and respect one another to be the best we can be.

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Anti-Bullying Policy

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‘Treat others as you would like people to treat you.’

Luke 6:31

Introduction

At St Michael & St. John's Roman Catholic Primary School, we aim to secure the best for all pupils as individuals. We strive for them to be the best that they can be. This approach means that every effort is made to promote a positive school climate that recognises the rights of all pupils. We endeavor to embrace the ethos of inclusion.

We believe that every child is a Child of God with his/her own dignity and worth. Bullying can diminish a person's perception of these qualities and therefore has no place in our Catholic School.

This policy is rooted in the belief that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and is therefore deserving of dignity, respect and compassion. Through Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching, we promote a culture where everyone feels safe, valued and able to flourish.

We provide a safe and secure environment for all people within our school. We expect children and adults to behave with courtesy and respect, which are exemplified in the Gospel values. Therefore, we will not accept acts of bullying or intimidation by individuals or groups of pupils upon another.

Our school takes an active approach to promoting excellent behaviour, respect for others and to tackling all forms of bullying, including prejudice driven bullying and cyberbullying (Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE, July 2024), Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2026), Online Safety Act 2023, Education Act 2002, Children and Families Act 2014, Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010).

St Michael & St. John's, with the support of parents, the wider community, the local authority and young people themselves, strives to take effective action to prevent bullying happening in the first place. A preventative approach helps to safeguard the well-being of pupils and staff, as well as helping to create a society in which all are treated with dignity and respect. (DCSF Safe to Learn 2007 <https://archive.antibullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/bullyingand-law/dcsf-safelearn-guides>) in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Aims

At St Michael & St. John's Roman Catholic Primary School, the aim of the antibullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

This policy will:

- Ensure all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and pupils have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Ensure that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and pupils know what the school policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- Show that bullying in any form is unacceptable and that everyone has a shared responsibility in promoting a safe and secure environment.
- Promote a positive ethos where respect, relationships and responsibilities are key to developing social and emotional well-being.
- Ensure a consistent response to bullying with effective support in place for the person being bullied and the person doing the bullying.

Definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can be physical, verbal or indirect.

Bullying is deliberately hurtful behaviour that is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power. Bullying differs from isolated incidents of unkindness, arguments, friendship difficulties or occasional conflict, although these behaviours will still be addressed through the school's behaviour policy.

- Physical bullying can include hitting, kicking and/or taking belongings.
- Verbal bullying can include name calling, insults and/or racist/sexist remarks.
- Indirect bullying can include spreading nasty stories or excluding someone from a social/peer group.
- Cyber bullying includes all areas of internet misuse, such as misuse of social media platforms, messaging services, gaming platforms, artificial intelligence tools, online forums and mobile technology.

The school will work with parents, external agencies and, where appropriate, the police when online behaviour constitutes bullying, harassment, abuse or a safeguarding concern.

Bullying may be related to protected characteristics including race, religion or belief, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, family circumstance, looked-after status, young carers, socio-economic factors or any perceived difference.

What is Bullying? (from 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' DFE July 2017)

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. 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.

Cyber-bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying 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.

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 headteacher, that staff member can examine data or files, and delete these, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

Further information on how to respond to cyber-bullying and how pupils can keep themselves safe is available on www.childnet.com and www.antibullyingalliance.co.uk.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be bullied. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Dealing with Bullying

Our school has measures in place to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and poor behaviour.

These measures are part of the school's behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy which are communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents and are available on our school website.

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any bullying

incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises and is particularly pertinent to regulating cyber-bullying.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The head teacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or antisocial behaviour coordinator in their local authority 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 should always be informed.

Further information related to the duties of Governing Bodies, head teachers and teachers can be found in the DFE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying' guidance July 2017.

Effect of Bullying

Being bullied can be a frightening experience. The victim may become withdrawn, unhappy, insecure and desperate for the bullying to stop. We should not underestimate the traumatic effects that bullying can have. It may also be the case that the child displaying bullying behaviour" in any situation will also need support to help to change their behaviour and may need direct teaching on how to do so.

Signs and Symptoms

Many children and young people do not speak out when being bullied and may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of going to school
- Changes their usual routine
- 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
- Uses excuses to miss school (headache, stomach ache etc.)
- Begins to suffer academically
- Has possessions which are damaged or " go missing"
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises or shows signs of being in a fight
- Comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Changes their eating habits (stops eating or over eats)
- Goes to bed earlier than usual

- Is unable to sleep
- Wets the bed
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives unlikely excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a text message or email is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but can be a sign of bullying and should always be investigated.

Preventing and Reacting to Bullying

We understand how difficult it can be if your child comes home upset and tells you they feel like they are being bullied. If a situation like this arises it is really important to work with school to resolve the problem. We all want the same thing, for your child to be as happy as possible and the best way to achieve this is by working together. We promote an open and honest anti-bullying ethos. School staff strive to demonstrate positive behaviour and set a positive context for anti-bullying work in the school. St Michael & St. John's will take a preventative approach to bullying in a range of ways, including: talking to pupils about difference through lessons and assemblies, dedicated projects and events such as annual anti-bullying week, our anti bullying charter and having pupils as anti-bullying ambassadors. In line with our mission statement, we expect an ethos of excellent behaviour and one where all in our school community (children and adults) treat one another with respect because it is the right way to behave. Values of love, respect and forgiveness are central to our school community as is a clear understanding of how our actions affect others. At SSMJ we have a strong Catholic ethos where 'treating our fellow brothers and sisters as we would wish to be treated' is central to our core principles of behaviour.



Staff will:

- Use both formal and informal learning opportunities to communicate our policy and provide advice to pupils on what they should do to prevent bullying or if they experience bullying or have knowledge that someone else is being bullied.
- Be vigilant in their assessment of the relationship and interaction between children inside and out of the classroom and record concerns and incidents in the pastoral record.
- Develop positive relationships with the children so that children will feel more able to approach them with any problems.
- Have a worries and wishes box in class so children can put any 'worries' or 'wishes' in it if they don't feel comfortable with or confident enough to approach an adult.
- Make a log of and report any incident or suspicion of bullying to the Head Teacher.
- Make sure that children are well educated about bullying and know what to do if they are being bullied.
- Use the school reward and celebration strategies to encourage pupils to behave well and take good care of each other.
- Celebrate achievements and diversity through Mass, festivals and focused events.
- Record any incidents necessary (in accordance with CPOMs Training) on CPOMs so an accurate record is kept.

The class teacher will:

- Act promptly upon any incident or suspicion of bullying by interviewing the bullied pupils concerned to establish the nature of the bullying and who is concerned.
- Keep a log of all incidents of bullying and report on incidents to members of the SLT/designated safeguarding leads as appropriate.
- Encourage pupils to report any further incident of bullying.
- Take action on findings of pupil interviews and surveys about bullying and safety.
- Interview the pupil(s) who are bullying, (separately if more than one), making it clear that such behaviour is totally unacceptable, setting appropriate sanctions and explaining that future behaviour will be monitored very closely.
- If appropriate, speak to parents.
- Follow up on incidents and check on children/parents/anyone involved as appropriate.
- If a pupil continues to bully, then sanctions and positive strategies for further interventions through an individual behaviour plan will be put in place, with advice

sought from the LA Behaviour Support Service. The child will be included in drawing up the plan.

- Work with Children's Services to ensure that partner agencies are engaged with anti-bullying work and pupil safeguarding has a high priority.
- Make information or professional development opportunities available for all staff and governors as appropriate.
- Review sanctions to ensure that they address bullying behaviours in a way which does not lead to escalation but resolution and which gives the best chance that bullying will not be repeated. (In accordance with Behaviour Policy)
- Use exclusion as a sanction, when other strategies and sanctions do not resolve the problem.

Visitors and volunteers will:

- Treat all children and adults in school with respect.
- Provide an example of good conduct.
- Respect a young person's right to personal privacy.
- Encourage children and adults to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like, in line with school approaches.
- Challenge unacceptable behaviour, in line with school approaches, and report all concerns to a member of staff.

General guidelines for staff If you come across bullying:

- Remain calm.
- Take the incident or report seriously.
- Find out as much as you can about what has been going on.
- Take action as soon as possible.
- Think carefully about whether your action needs to be private or public; who are the pupils involved.
- Reassure the victim(s) they were right to tell.
- Offer advice and support to the victims
- Make it clear to the bully that the behaviour is not accepted, without taking away the bully's dignity as this can lead to further bullying.
- Encourage the bully to see the effect he/she has on the victim
- Sanction the bully calmly and clearly. Make sure the child knows what the punishment is and why it is being given.
- Always inform the Class Teacher.
- Inform colleagues if incident arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant.

- Make sure the incident does not live on through reminders.
- In consultation with colleagues, consider the range and level of support needed by all pupils involved in an incident.

Above all:

1. Treat all examples of anti-social behaviour seriously.
2. Never dismiss a pupil's complaint that she/he is being bullied or intimidated believing that the child is 'over-sensitive', that she/he brought the incident upon her/himself or that she/he should stand up for her/himself more.

Prevention- What the school does to stop bullying taking place

- The school Mission Statement promotes respectful relationships and positive behaviour.
- The School Rules provide a clear framework for behaviour. The rules are shared by all in school and with parents. They provide a consistent framework for expected behaviour, rewards and sanctions. The Behaviour Policy sets out a strategy to speak to children about their behaviour and develop their understanding of the incident. Staff embed the behaviour policy across school which encourages a positive environment.
- Class work and workshops from partner agencies help pupils to understand what constitutes bullying in its different forms, its impact and the roles of those involved in bullying behaviour including bystanders.
- Regular focus weeks and assemblies address bullying and online e-safety with pupils.
- Supervision between lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes is provided. A range of activities provide safe places for vulnerable groups at breaks and lunchtimes.
- Celebrations and curriculum events recognise and celebrate diversity.
- The school holds activities and events, including Anti-Bullying Week, that address bullying.
- Pupil Anti Bullying Ambassadors are in place and all of the children in school know who they are.

Engaging parents/carers

Understanding Bullying

We recognise that parents naturally want to protect and support their children. When children report concerns at home, it is important that we work together to understand what has happened and respond appropriately.

Parents and carers should be aware that not all incidents between children are bullying.

Bullying is behaviour that is:

- Deliberately intended to hurt someone.

- Repeated over time.
- Involves an imbalance of power.

The following, whilst still taken seriously and addressed by the school, are not usually considered bullying in isolation:

- A one-off disagreement or argument.
- A single act of unkindness.
- A friendship fall-out.
- A misunderstanding or accidental upset.
- Mutual conflict where both children have equal power.
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We encourage parents and carers to use language carefully when discussing incidents with their children. Referring to every disagreement or friendship issue as "bullying" can sometimes increase children's anxiety and make it harder to identify genuine bullying behaviour.

Staff will always listen to concerns, investigate thoroughly and determine the most appropriate response in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy and safeguarding procedures. If concerns are identified as bullying, appropriate action and support will be provided for all those involved.

We ask that parents/ carers support work with the school to help support any child who is being bullied. If any parent/carer is concerned that their child (or any child) is being bullied, they should record the incidents and let the class teacher know. All reports will be taken seriously, recorded by the class teacher and investigated. The class teacher will pass this on to the other members of staff i.e. the headteacher/designated safeguarding leads if appropriate.

Any parent/ carer who feels that an incident has not been properly investigated or dealt with should refer this to the head teacher.

Communicating the Policy

As a school, we plan to share the behaviour and anti-bullying policies with staff and governors, on the school website and include them within induction programmes for all staff. The policy is always accessible to parents and carers and can be referred to in school.

Pupils are made aware of the policy through a range of means including:

- Whole school and key stage Assemblies & Worship
- Themed days/weeks i.e. Anti-Bullying week [PSHE, Catholic Socialist Teaching and RHE lessons] Anti-Bullying Ambassadors i.e. delivering assemblies.
- Display boards.

Parents/carers are made aware of the policy and school practice at class induction meetings in September, through school newsletters, letters to parents from the class teacher at the start of each half term and through individual discussion with the class teacher.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Child-on-Child abuse is defined as abuse between children under 18 years of age. St Michael and St John's RC Primary School has a zero-tolerance approach to abuse, including child-on-child abuse. St Michael and St John's RC Primary School will refer to the specific guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education Part five: Child on Child Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment and Lancashire Procedures Peer Abuse (proceduresonline.com).

All staff will be aware that child-on-child abuse can occur between pupils of any age and gender, both inside and outside of school, as well as online. All staff will be aware of the indicators of child-on-child abuse, how to identify it, and how to respond to reports. All staff will also recognise that even if no cases have been reported, this is not an indicator that child-on-child abuse is not occurring. All staff will speak to the DSL if they have any concerns about child-on-child abuse.

Some incidents of child-on-child abuse may constitute bullying behaviour. Where behaviour involves sexual violence, sexual harassment, prejudice-based abuse or harmful behaviour, the school's safeguarding procedures will take precedence and appropriate referrals will be made

Recording and Reporting

All incidents of bullying, alleged bullying and outcomes of investigations will be recorded on CPOMS. Patterns and trends will be monitored by senior leaders to inform preventative action and staff training.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Headteacher and Governing Body will monitor:

- Number and nature of bullying incidents.
- Protected characteristic-related incidents.
- Attendance linked to bullying concerns.
- Pupil voice and survey outcomes.
- Parent feedback.
- Effectiveness of preventative strategies.

Findings will be reported to governors annually.

This policy operates within the framework of:

- Education Act 2002
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE)
- Human Rights Act 1998
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child