

St Michael's Catholic Primary School



Anti Bullying Policy 2023-24

Anti Bullying Policy

Mission Statement

'Learning together, in faith and love. We shine as children of God.

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. Michael's Primary School 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. Michael's Primary School we endeavour to create a safe and stimulating environment where everyone knows that they are valued as God's children. Every person understands that they have 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.

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?

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, e.g. 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 (e.g. 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

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

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 e.g. 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.

Mental/Emotional

This can include attempts to control, isolate, manipulate or scare someone else. This form of bullying may be in statements or threats and are seen as regular, persistent behaviours.

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.

Peer on peer abuse

Peer on peer abuse occurs when a young person is exploited, bullied and / or harmed by their peers who are the same or similar age; everyone directly involved in peer on peer abuse is under the age of 18.

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 ensure that the child who has been bullied feels safe
- to ensure everyone involved in the situation understands what constitutes bullying, in each specific instance
- to encourage better behaviour from the child who has displayed bullying behaviours
- to make explicit to the child displaying bullying behaviours what they should and should not do
- to model appropriate behaviours from all involved; the child exhibiting bullying behaviours; the child who is being bullied and the bystanders/witnesses

- to ensure all sets of parents are informed after two incidents involving the same children
- to inform AHT/HT
- AHT/HT to inform all staff to monitor
- All staff to remain vigilant to the situation and update relevant staff as needed
- Staff to log all further incidents on CPOMS
- Staff to log all serious incidents on CPOMS (whether it is the first incident or not)
- Notify to be completed when a child has received an injury (whether accidental or not), whether there is a visible injury or not
- to maintain regular communication with the relevant children, parents and AHT/HT

School Ethos

The Head teacher sets the school ethos of family; mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour. The Head Teacher, supported by the Assistant Head teacher and all staff, will demonstrate through words and actions that this is a school in which bullying is not tolerated. Children will be taught clearly what bullying is and what to do if it happens to you or if you see it happening to someone else. The Head teacher will establish the ethos that this school is a place of safety for all children, where everyone is valued; different qualities are celebrated and difficulties are worked through together. All members of staff recognise the signs and symptoms associated with bullying. They are familiar with this policy and consider themselves to be equipped to identify bullying and deal with it effectively.

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. All incidents of homophobic bullying and use of homophobic language will be recorded on CPOMS and both/all sets of parents will be informed. These incidents may result in a fixed-term or permanent exclusion.

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

All adults working in the school understand the anti-bullying policy and the procedures and pro formas used for 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. Staff will be pro-active in situations where a child demonstrates upon these changes e.g. chatting to the child; raising concerns with AHT/HT; raising concerns with parents. 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. This awareness is informed by discussions with children. The staff training includes equality training to raise awareness among staff of potential prejudicial behaviour and how not to reinforce stereotypes. The staff must keep the AHT/HT informed of any concerns/incidents.

Curriculum

As a Catholic school, Religious Education is the core subject of our curriculum. There are opportunities within RE to make links with Fairtrade, the global community, CAFOD and Mini Vinnies to reinforce the principles of human rights and the belief in 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. Staff are also expected and encouraged to take advantage of unplanned opportunities to celebrate diversity and to reinforce the principles of anti-bullying. Senior Leaders will also liaise with parents at different points throughout the year via meetings; drop-in sessions and assemblies.

Pastoral structure

The anti-bullying team (Bully Busters) is elected and meets regularly to discuss ways of promoting their message throughout the school. They lead activities in anti-bullying week. They are designated people within each class for peers to report any incidents of bullying to. With support from the senior leadership team, these children will establish and reinforce an anti-bullying ethos. The Assistant Head teacher will lead the 'Bully-Buster' group through regular meetings and focus-groups. These will enable the children to establish a culture of recognising what bullying is and to develop the use of effective intervention strategies. Children are elected to the school council each year. The elected school council regularly meets; playground rules/behaviour/special friends are discussed, as appropriate. 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.

Collective Worship

In collective worship themes and values play a part in challenging prejudice and promoting justice for all. The timetable of collective worship includes specific opportunities throughout the year e.g. Statements to Live By, Anti-bullying week, which support work in anti-bullying (see collective worship file). The children are encouraged to live the gospel values by following Christ's example. Specific anti-bullying assemblies will happen throughout the school year with input from the AHT and the Bully Buster Team. Parents and children will be invited to these.

Reporting and recording of incidents of bullying

Our school has a clear and well publicised system for reporting bullying. When any bullying has taken place between members of a class, the teacher will deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim, and punishment for the offender. Time is spent talking to the child who has done the bullying, explaining to them why their action was wrong and how they should change their behaviour in future. If a child exhibits one serious incident of or continued low level bullying-behaviours, their parents will be informed and asked to support their child to understand why this behaviour is not acceptable. The senior leadership team will be informed at this stage. Any further incidents will be logged on CPOMS and parents will be asked to come into school. A behaviour plan may be put in place at this time. If an allegation of bullying is made against a child, their parents will be informed and the allegation thoroughly investigated by staff. Senior leaders must be informed. If needed, the Head teacher may contact external support agencies, such as the social services or the LA anti-bullying team. Repeated incidents of bullying may result in a fixed-term or permanent exclusion. Parents will be informed of this risk.

Parent View

Annual parent surveys will always include a question about how the school deals with bullying. Senior leaders will address any significant concerns that arise from the parental survey. Any parent reporting an incident of bullying or with concerns regarding bullying will be invited into school to meet with the AHT and class teacher.

Reporting to the Local Authority

All incidents of racist bullying are recorded appropriately within school reported to the local authority. These may result in a fixed-term or permanent exclusion.

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. 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.

Monitoring the Policy

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy. 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 in CPOMS, and through the termly report of the headteacher. Governors will analyse information with regard to the types and forms of bullying.

Review Date: September 2024.