



Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy applies to
St Thomas More Catholic Academy
&
Sixth Form College

part of The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC

Policy Ratified by the Education Standards Committee on:

Full Board/Committee:

Next Review:



Rationale

We are committed to placing Christ at the centre of everything that we do and, in doing so, provide a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We encourage students to be disciples of Christ by showing compassion for others in both their words and actions. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all students know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

The aim of this policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied, and that staff are free from fear of bullying by students. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Policy Objectives:

- All ESC members, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All ESC members and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is any behaviour that makes someone feel upset, uncomfortable or unsafe. This is usually deliberate and repetitive and can take many forms such as verbal, indirect and physical (The Diana Award).

Bullying can be:

V – Verbal bullying

Hurtful words, offensive language, swearing, discriminatory language

I – Indirect bullying

Isolating someone, rumours, sharing someone's secrets, cyber-bullying, damaging/taking someone's property and physical intimidation

P – Physical

Hurting someone intentionally, kicking, punching, pinching, spitting, slapping

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

What Does the law State?

Under the Children Act 1989, bullying incidents should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.

Whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment, threatening behaviour and communications: for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; the Malicious Communications Act 1988; the Communications Act 2003, the Public Order Act 1986. If the Principal feels that an offence may have been committed, they will seek assistance from the Police.

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination ('protected characteristics')

It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or on maternity leave
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex

KCSIE, September 2020, reinforces that peer on peer abuse can include bullying (including cyber-bullying), gender-based violence, sexual violence and harassment and sexting.

Such incidents, where there is evidence of significant harm, would be referred to the appropriate LA's Social Services team, in accordance with the School's Safeguarding policy;

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
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- 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 suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- 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 bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises

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comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)

- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- 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
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber-message is received

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Practice and Procedures

Identifying and reporting concerns about bullying

All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

Students who are being bullied may not report it. However, there may be changes in their behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. School teaching and ancillary staff will be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this policy.

Students who are bullying others also need support to help them understand and change their behaviour.

Students who are aware of bullying (“bystanders”) can be a powerful force in helping to address it and will be encouraged to do so in a safe way.

All students will be encouraged to report bullying by:

- talking to a member of staff of their choice
- writing / giving details of the incident

Staff who are being bullied will be encouraged to report it to a colleague of their choice.

Parents will be encouraged to report concerns about bullying and to support the school in tackling it. If parents or carers try to resolve bullying themselves by speaking directly to other students or their families, this can lead to problems escalating and should be discouraged. It is better for school to take action and mediate where necessary.

Responding to reports about bullying

School

The school will take the following steps when dealing with concerns about bullying:

- Staff will not turn a blind-eye to bullying
- If bullying is suspected or reported, it will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been made aware of it, by reporting it on CPOMS to the relevant Head of Year.

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- The relevant Head of Year will interview everyone involved and keep a detailed record, including further action and contact with parents. Student statements will be recorded on incident record forms. Once the investigation has been concluded, these incident forms will be stored securely in student's confidential files. The incident will also be recorded electronically on CPOMS in line with the school's data protection policy/practice
- The Head of Year will record decide whether or not an incidence of bullying has occurred only after conducting a thorough investigation. It is the Head of Year's responsibility to make this judgement and record it accordingly on CPOMS using the bullying tab. Advice will also be sought from the relevant SLT line manager.
- Learning Mentors and Form tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the Head of Year will advise the appropriate subject teachers and decide upon further actions that may be required.
Parents and other relevant adults will be kept informed by the Head of Year.
- Heads of Year and Learning Mentors should be aware and act on any pattern emerging from several such referrals and incidents. Incidents of bullying should be discussed with the link member of the Leadership Team as appropriate.
- Where bullying occurs outside the school, any other relevant schools or agencies (eg youth clubs, transport providers) will be informed about the concerns and any actions taken
- Sanctions and support interventions will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties involved

Bullying outside school premises

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives Principals the power to regulate students' conduct when they are not on school premises and are not under the lawful control of charge of a member of school staff. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops etc.

Through section 89 clause 5 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 Principals have the power to discipline their students for any bullying incidents outside of school 'to such an extent that is reasonable'.

Students and Staff

Students and staff who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- Providing protection, support and the reassurance that the bullying will be addressed
- Offering continuous support
- Restoring self-esteem and confidence
- The use of specialist interventions and/or referrals to other agencies eg educational psychology, in-school counselling, Care First Service (staff) where appropriate

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened
- Discovering why the student became involved
- Establishing the wrong doing and need to change

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- Informing parents to help change the attitude of the student
- The use of specialist interventions and / or referrals to other agencies where appropriate

The following sanctions can be taken:

- Official warnings to cease offending
- Withdrawal from lessons
- Detention
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Confiscation of mobile phones, in line with our Acceptable Use (internet safety) policy
- Internal isolation
- Super isolation
- Fixed-term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion

Parents

- Most concerns about bullying will be resolved through discussion between home and school. However, where a parent feels their concerns have not been resolved, they are encouraged to use the formal Complaints Procedure.
Where a student is involved in bullying others outside school, eg in the street or through the use of the internet at home, parents will be asked to work with the school in addressing their child's behaviour, for example restricting/monitoring their use of the internet or mobile phone.
- Referral of the family to external support agencies will be made where appropriate.

Preventative Measures

Students will be encouraged to:

- Take Notice
- Take Action
- Speak Up
- Be Kind
- Be Aware

As outlined in the School's Anti-Bullying Charter (see appendix A) staff and students have agreed on the key principles to ensure the School is a safe and happy place for all.

The school will:

- Raise awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PD, form tutor time, assemblies, subject areas and informal discussion, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behaviour.
- Participate in national and local initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week.
- Seek to develop links with the wider community that will support inclusive anti-bullying education
- Consider the use of specific strategies, for example member of ABA (Anti-Bullying Ambassadors) on a regular basis and implement them if appropriate, subject to available resources.

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Promotion of this policy

The policy and methods for reporting bullying concerns will be promoted throughout the school, for example in information to new students and staff and through regular awareness raising activities with existing students and their families.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

A senior member of the school staff will be identified to lead on the implementation of the policy and act as the link person with the local authority.

An annual report will be made to the Education and Standards Committee, including statistics about:

- The number of reported concerns
- Monitoring information about the students involved
- Motivations for bullying
- Actions taken and outcomes

Statistical information will be provided to the local authority as required.

The school will review the policy and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and Online Safety and ICT Acceptable Use Policy.

APPENDIX A

School's Anti-Bullying Charter

1. We will do all we can to prevent bullying from taking place and will not allow it to happen without doing something about it. We are “upstanders” not “bystanders”.
2. We are a “telling” school – bullying is far too serious not to report it. We will talk to a member of staff of our choice.
3. When we report bullying to teachers , we will be listened to and helped, whether it happens at school, outside school or online. Bullying will always be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been made aware of it. Staff will not ignore it.
4. Everyone in school has a right to feel comfortable and secure at all times without being afraid of bullies.
5. We will not “put others down” or do anything which is deliberately hurtful.
6. We will not judge others by their appearance alone.
7. We will accept everyone as an equal regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, race, religion, culture, disability or background.
8. We will create an environment where people are kind, courteous and respectful at all times.
9. We are all part of a caring and sharing community, in which we try to follow Christ's example in the way that we treat others. We all have a part to play in creating and maintaining a compassionate school community.
10. We are not alone and when we act together we can always stamp out this unacceptable behaviour and ensure bullies are dealt with properly and promptly.