



St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Rationale

It is a regrettable feature of the modern world that bullies can be found in many areas of life. Bullying is not confined to any particular age, nationality or job. In schools in the UK, bullying is thought to affect many thousands of pupils. The school wishes to 'live' the sentiment expressed in our Mission Statement.

OUR School seeks to provide a high standard of education within a caring, family environment.

WE are a Catholic School and all our teaching reflects our Christian faith.

WE recognise the needs and value the contribution of each member of our school community.

WE welcome the active involvement of parents, Governors and friends in the daily life of the school.

WE aid to develop good habits of work within a disciplined atmosphere.

WE encourage children to grow spiritually, socially and academically and to show respect for each other and the world in which we live.

It aims to provide pupils with a secure and caring environment in which bullying is not ignored, condoned nor tolerated. The school cannot do this alone; staff, parents and governors, as well as pupils - have a responsibility to show that they believe that any form of bullying is unacceptable and to set an example which reflects that view.

2. Definition

There are various definitions of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour
- It is repeated over time
- There is often an imbalance of power.

Sometimes bullying is just thoughtless. It can sometimes hurt to be different, or to be made to feel different.

Bullying is identified as behaviour which harasses, humiliates, intimidates or oppresses other people. It may take the form of abuse of person or property, verbal criticism, teasing or taunting, or psychological pressure.

Examples of physical bullying may include: fighting; damaging or hiding someone else's belongings or clothes; setting up someone else to get the blame for a breach of school rules.

Examples of psychological bullying may include: excluding someone from a group, activity or place; aggressive name calling; unpleasant e-mails, texts or social media messages. Telephone calls, racism, negative remarks about appearance, nationality, gender.

Any such behaviour which a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and may well constitute bullying. Sanctions of any kind against a pupil are the responsibility alone of staff (in conjunction with parents), and not other pupils.

3. The effect of bullying

Bullying causes fear and distress for the victim and may distract him or her from school work. It often affects other children who witness the bullying. It may damage the atmosphere of a class and even the climate of a school. It may impact school attendance.

4. Implementation

All members of the school should help to create an atmosphere in which bullying will be spoken of openly, taken seriously and responded to with appropriate action. Anyone who is being bullied should tell his or her parents, and preferably his or her teacher or another member of staff. It is important that any cases of bullying are reported by the victim or the victim's parents to someone whom the victim feels able to talk to. The important thing to remember is: **the school wants to help.**

In particular the school expects staff and pupils to:

- Treat each other with respect and sensitivity
- Think carefully before speaking/acting in ways which may cause argument
- Respect differences and variety of origin, personality and interests - remembering that everyone has rights.
- Realise that sometimes what may seem fun to some (especially a group) may seem much more threatening to others (especially an individual)
- Work together to create a school in which people live harmoniously
- Help protect and build up those who are unhappy or vulnerable
- Make a stand against those who ignore or go against these aims.

Positive values of mutual respect and concern will be promoted in a wide range of contexts from assembly and formal lessons in PSHE to informal discussion during Circle Time. Teachers will also remind pupils at the start of each term of their responsibility to ensure that bullying, including on-line bullying does not occur and to talk to a member of staff if they see or suspect bullying. There are two PSHE days in September, one in January and one in April where the notion of a 'bully-free' class is discussed.

In the event of an observed or reported instance of bullying, the facts will be ascertained from victim(s), perpetrator(s) and witness(es). A record will be made of who was involved, what happened, when and where. This will then be passed to the relevant teacher(s). Parents are asked to let the school (normally the teacher in the first instance or the Head) know directly if they have cause for concern, on behalf of their own children. The school always tries to handle information discreetly, and while it likes to follow up such matters it does not do so without careful consultation first. It is much easier to counter problems at an early stage.

Every effort will be made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties, which will seek to support the victim(s) and change the behaviour of the perpetrator(s). In all serious cases and most less serious cases parents of both the victim and bully will be informed and consulted. However the school retains the right to have some discretion in this matter. This process of consultation will normally be carried out by the classteacher, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Appropriate sanctions, such as for example, apologising verbally and/or in written form, monitoring behaviour through a daily or weekly record of behaviour, will be carried out by the classteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.

February 2019