

ST THOMAS AQUINAS RC SECONDARY SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



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■ RATIONALE

Glasgow City Council and St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School are committed to providing a safe, supportive environment for all young people in its educational establishments.

At St Thomas Aquinas, our school values are curiosity, love, equality, aspiration and respect. We understand that bullying is never acceptable and that children and young people have the right to learn in a safe, secure environment.

The following policy does not only recognise the importance of dealing with bullying behaviour but incorporates this in the context of sustaining a positive ethos. If we promote a positive ethos in our school based on curiosity, love, equality, aspiration and respect, we can help tackle the issues that lead to bullying in the first place, making St Thomas Aquinas a safe place for all children and young people.

This policy has been developed in partnership with a number of key stakeholders including the young people, parents, staff and the Anti-Bullying Committee of St Thomas Aquinas. The following stakeholders have provided close guidance throughout the creation of this policy:

- ***“Every child is included and supported: Getting it right in Glasgow, the nurturing city”*** Glasgow City Council (GCC) Anti-Bullying Policy
- ***RespectMe*** Scotland’s anti-bullying service.
- ***‘Respect for All’*** The national approach to anti-bullying for Scotland’s young people.
- SCES (Scottish Catholic Education Service) Charter for Catholic Schools.
- ***GIRFEC*** Getting it right for every child.
- ***SHANARRI*** Wellbeing indicators:
(Safe/Healthy/Achieving/Nurtured/Active/Respected/Responsible/Included)
- **CYPA** Children and Young People’s Act (Scotland) 2014

This policy is intended to be an overall guide to assist staff in working in partnership with parents and other agencies to help ensure that young people are learning in a safe educational environment and are treated well by their peers. The main components within the policy framework are:

1. Clear definition of bullying
2. Bullying and the law
3. Positive ethos- a proactive approach
4. A procedure for handling bullying incidents
5. Recording, monitoring and evaluating

SCHOOL VISION, VALUES AND AIMS

Our Anti-Bullying Policy is driven by our school vision.

Our Vision is as follows:

We are a culturally inclusive Roman Catholic school where there is a deep commitment to each young person in our care. Every person in our community – pupils, staff, parents/carers & partners – is listened to, included and valued. By honouring the teachings of Christ, we will ensure that all our young people are witnesses who are equipped to promote healthy mental and physical well-being whilst developing their spirituality and discovering and exploiting their God-given talents to achieve excellence emotionally, morally and intellectually.

Our Values and Aims underpin all of our work at St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary. Our Values and Aims are:



Each of our house groups, with their house captains, selects and promotes a specific value with the aim of modelling and demonstrating that value in every day life in St Thomas Aquinas.

■ **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

In Scotland, Bullying is defined as:

‘Bullying is both behaviour and impact; the impact is on a person’s capacity to feel in control of themselves. We call this their sense of ‘agency’. Bullying takes place in the contexts of relationships; it is behaviour that makes people feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out. This behaviour happens face to face and online.’ (RespectMe 2015)

Not only does bullying make people feel hurt, frightened or left out, is it also a clear breach of children’s rights (refer to page 5 for more information).

Bullying can be categorised into several different types of behaviour as demonstrated below:



■ BULLYING AND THE LAW

UNCRC (United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child)

It is essential that all staff understand what children's rights are in relation to bullying so that they can be afforded to all children and young people. Bullying is a breach of children's rights and knowledge and understanding of children's rights is essential to good practice for all staff.

According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children need to be protected so that they can survive, develop and participate in a fulfilling life. Staff share a responsibility to address any behaviour that can harm the development of children. Numerous articles published by UNCRC can be directly linked to children's rights and bullying.

The UNCRC is a comprehensive and internationally binding agreement on the rights of children. It is based on equality, dignity, respect, protection, development and participation. Glasgow City Council and St Thomas Aquinas RC Secondary School recognises that bullying is a breach of children's rights and this policy is firmly rooted in the UNCRC, most notably Articles 3,12,13,19,28,29,39. More information on the UNCRC can be found at the Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland website www.cypcs.org.uk/

EQUALITY ACT (2010)

The Equality Act 2010 act sets out rights which include legal protection from discrimination related to any of the nine protected characteristics.

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Race
4. Sex (Gender)
5. Pregnancy/Maternity
6. Religion/Belief
7. Sexual Orientation
8. Marriage/Civil Partnership
9. Gender Reassignment

Children and young people may be bullied as a result of prejudice. This could be due to perceptions and prejudice about one of these protected characteristics or because of socio-economic prejudice. A young person may not have one of the characteristics but may still be bullied because of perceptions about them, their friends or their family.

■ POSITIVE ETHOS

There are a range of proactive and preventative strategies available help to raise awareness of bullying and reinforce the message that bullying is never acceptable. Cultures that encourage respect, celebrate difference and promote positive behaviour are less likely to see bullying as an acceptable behaviour. All pupils in St Thomas Aquinas should feel a sense of belonging and are valued individuals in our school community.

School Initiatives:

- S1/6 Buddy system
- Promotion of the school's vision, values and aims
- Promotion of nurturing principles
- Promote positive behaviour, role model positive relationships and create a culture of praise
- Developing and maintaining a positive ethos which is proactive in the prevention of bullying.
- Promote the gospel values according to the Charter for Catholic Schools in Scotland.
- Stringent following of the school's Promoting Positive Relationships Policy
- Supporting young people who have been subjected to bullying and those who have displayed the bullying behaviour through restorative practice where appropriate.
- Ensuring that young people are aware of their rights towards each other in order to contribute to the positive ethos.
- Ensuring young people, staff and parents are involved in the development and implementation of the schools anti-bullying policy.
- Giving young people the platform to comfortably discuss bullying and the impact it can have on young people.
- Delivery of an informative and coherent programme of work in PSE to address current issues
- Pupil Parliament
- Promotion of our school bullying box and QR code on Twitter, placing emphasis on anonymity.
- "Tell us what you think" QR codes around school that young people can scan and share their views / opinions / ideas to be discussed at Pupil Parliament.
- One-off events throughout the year to promote school values

■ POSITIVE INTERVENTIONS

At St Thomas Aquinas we strive to uphold the Gospel Values, this is paramount when supporting young people to reflect on their choices, consider their emotional responses to difficult situations and to ask for forgiveness when they make mistakes. If a pupil is found to be displaying bullying behaviours we utilise a range of interventions that allow them time to understand the consequences of their actions and work to improve their relationships moving forward. These include:

- Reflection sessions supported by SLT
- Enhanced PTPC support
- Promoting Positive Behaviour Targets
- Restorative conversations
- Targeted support such as anger management
- Counselling

All interventions and supports are put in place in partnership and discussion with parents/carers.

■ **PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS**

In order to deal with instances of bullying quickly and effectively, it is imperative that our school has a clear and publicised procedure in place for handling bullying incidents which involves staff, young people and parents where appropriate. The procedure and subsequent actions must reassure parents that bullying is taken very seriously and the needs and voices of individual pupils are recognised and dealt with appropriately.

Responsibilities of Teaching Staff:

- Accurate completion of “*STA Bullying Incident Form*”
- Deal with any form of bullying in the first instance.
- Alert the pupil support staff linked to the pupils involved.
- SEEMIS (school data management system) referral if required to pupil support or SLT depending on severity of the impact and highlight the ‘Bullying’ tab.
- Raise awareness of how young people can report the bullying incident using the antibullying box or the online report form.
- Follow up on the incident with young person(s) involved.

Responsibilities of Pupil Support:

- Carry out a full investigation into the incident and interview all involved.
- Provide support for the young person experiencing bullying.
- Restorative practice where appropriate for all involved.
- Contact all parents involved depending on the severity of the incident and in consultation with young people.
- Must be recorded in pastoral notes and as a bullying incident on SEEMIS in all instances where an allegation of bullying is made.
- Escalate to SLT if necessary.
- Follow up with all young people involved.
- Making necessary staff aware of any ongoing disputes to help monitor the situation.

Responsibilities of Senior Leadership Team:

- Demonstrate leadership by reinforcing the school policy.
- Follow up referrals from pupil support and update pastoral notes
- Support pupil support

Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

- If parents/carers are made aware of a bullying incident then they can also report this by calling the school and asking to speak to their child’s pastoral care teacher

■ SEEMIS Reporting

Within SEEMIS Bullying and Equalities Module information is recorded about both the person experiencing the behaviour and the person displaying the behaviour. The nature of the incident and the specific perceived reason for bullying (formerly Characteristics) must be completed in all cases. The following information will be gathered:

- Nature of Incident
- Perceived Reason(s) for bullying

As well as recording that an alleged incident has been reported, detail about the incident should be recorded such as dates, times, locations etc. Information about how the situation is to be monitored and reviewed should be entered in the appropriate section and the views of the person experiencing, the person displaying, and, if appropriate the views of parent/carer should be recorded.

Monitor and review

- Do they feel their concerns were listened to?
- Do they feel satisfied with the outcome?
- Does the parent/carer feel satisfied with the outcome?
- Has some form of Restorative Action taken place? (If appropriate).

The Action Progressed section should then be completed outlining the actions taken and the conclusion of the investigation.

Incident Conclusion

- Being addressed
- Resolved
- Not resolved
- Unfounded

■ ROLE OF PARENTS AND CARERS

- Supporting in educating about impact of bullying behaviour
- Cooperation with school in addressing bullying behaviour
- Modelling positive social relationships
- Reporting concerns of bullying incidents to Pastoral Care or SLT