



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Mission Statement**

At St Mary's Primary School we are opposed to bullying and we will not tolerate it in any form. All members of our school community have the right to work in a safe, secure, caring environment. As a school, we actively promote positive interpersonal relationships between all members of our school community. As a result, if bullying behaviour does occur it should be reported to a member of staff, in the knowledge that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All reported incidents will be taken seriously, recorded and thoroughly investigated.

### **Policy Development and Consultation Process**

This policy has been developed in line with **Respect Me, Scotland's Anti-Bullying Service**, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, GIRFEC principles and the particular needs of our school.

### **Aims of the Policy**

Each member of our school community has the right to be safe in and out of school and to be protected when he or she is feeling vulnerable.

We aim to:

- ensure all pupils, staff and visitors can work in a supportive, caring, and safe environment where they can grow and flourish, without fear of being bullied
- demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated
- take measures to prevent bullying in school and during educational excursions
- promote a climate of trust, where individuals know they will be listened to and supported when they are feeling intimidated
- ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of their duty of care and the need to be alert to signs of bullying

## What is bullying?

*Bullying is an act of aggression, causing embarrassment, pain or discomfort to someone. It can take a number of forms, including physical, verbal, emotional and cyberbullying. It is an abuse of power. It can be planned and organised, but on occasion it may be unintentional.*

Some examples of bullying:

- Physical tripping, pushing, hitting, kicking, spitting, unwanted physical contact, invasion of personal space, intimidation
- Verbal name calling, spreading rumours, belittling another's abilities or achievements, racial taunts
- Emotional excluding, ignoring, humiliation, gestures, threatening looks, interfering with another's property, ridiculing appearance or mannerisms, writing offensive notes, graffiti
- Cyber misusing technology to hurt or humiliate through text messaging, photographs, video clips, 'phone calls, emails, chat rooms, instant messaging, online gaming communities

We are aware that the use of the word **bullying** can make some individuals very uncomfortable. Whether you feel a concern fits this definition or not, the situation will be dealt with in the same way: If an individual reports that the actions of another is causing him or her distress, we will address the behaviours and the needs of the individuals involved, with the intention of resolving the conflict.

## Responsibilities of all Stakeholders

### The Senior Management Team

- Work with staff, children and parents to encourage a climate of respect, trust, care, openness and support.
- Provide opportunities for staff to discuss and review anti-bullying strategies regularly.
- Provide training opportunities for staff and pupils.
- Support staff, when incidents arise.
- Ensure both those feeling intimidated and those displaying aggressive behaviour are supported accordingly.
- Monitor and keep records of incidents from all classes, identifying possible patterns of behaviour.
- Apply appropriate sanctions were deemed necessary.
- Keep parents informed.

## **The Class teacher**

- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Discuss bullying and its effects on a regular basis.
- Provide opportunities to examine the Rights of the Child and the responsibilities that must go alongside these.
- Model respect in daily interactions with others.
- Be sensitive to the ever-changing relationships within a class and make every attempt to defuse potential conflicts before they escalate.
- Foster a climate where children report bullying.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent, and report back promptly and fully on the action taken.
- Keep lines of communication open, ensuring all parties are kept informed of developments.
- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident should be investigated and dealt with immediately by the teacher approached.
- Monitor and record conflicts on Pastoral Notes and advise this to the Senior Management Team.
- Follow-up any reported incident, working with the Senior Management Team (Appendix 2)
- If a racial element to the bullying is suspected, a member of the Senior Management Team must be informed immediately. This will be investigated and recorded.

## **Support Staff**

### **Playground Supervisors/Classroom Assistants**

- Observe and monitor children's behaviour and intervene to defuse Incidents.
- Report incidents that give rise to concern to a member of the Senior Management Team as soon as possible.

### **Clerical Staff**

- Provide a channel of communication through which incidents can be reported.
- Report incidents that give rise to concern to the Senior Management Team as soon as possible.

## **Parents**

You can support your child or children by:

- listening to them, assuring them that you want to know what is going on and explaining that you can now help
- encouraging them to let the school know immediately if something happens to make them feel threatened or unhappy
- assuring them that it is not their fault if they have been bullied
- allowing them to express any feelings of anger or sadness
- reporting your concerns to the class teacher in writing, by telephone, or during an arranged meeting.
- cooperating with the school staff as they deal with the problem
- keeping the school informed of any recurrences or developments of the problem

If you discover your child is bullying others, he or she will need help and support to:

- identify the feelings that cause them to act this way
- develop alternative ways of responding to these feelings
- repair relationships through a restorative approach

More information and practical guidance can be found at <http://www.respectme.org.uk/> where there are parent help pages.

## **Pupils**

We expect our pupils to:

- refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying
- not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to the bullying behaviour
- trust the adults in school to deal with the problem and not to resort to physical retaliation, as this can make the issue harder to resolve

## **Dealing with bullying**

### **Prevention Strategies**

In St Mary's Primary School we are working hard to maintain a respectful, caring, open ethos, where bullying behaviours will not thrive.

### **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child**

All children and young people have rights, which are listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. This includes the right to a childhood, an education and to be treated fairly, to be listened to and to be as healthy as possible. While the Convention does not speak of bullying directly, bullying behaviour will take some of these rights away. As a result, all pupils in St Mary's Primary will be instructed in their rights and resulting responsibilities. This will be done through assemblies, wall displays, house meetings and drama.

### **Communication**

The staff in St Mary's Primary School operate an open-door policy for pupils and parents alike and welcome the opportunity to work alongside parents whenever the need may arise. We have two planned Parents' Evenings in the session, however we do not restrict meetings to these organised events. An appointment can be made to discuss concerns with a class teacher or a member of our management team at any point in the school year. In this way we can work together to best meet the needs of the individuals involved and strive to solve any problems before they escalate.

### **Role-modelling**

The relationship between adults and between adults and children in our school should always mirror these values of respect, care and trust. Children will model their behaviour on what they witness happening around them. The adults in St Mary's Primary School will lead by example. We will let children know that bullying is never acceptable, explain why and, most importantly, listen to what our learners have to say on the subject.

### **A Curriculum for Excellence**

Through developing the four capacities of ACfE, our pupils will practise the skills needed to become: a Successful Learner; a Confident Individual; a Responsible Citizen and an Effective Contributor.

## **Promoting Resilience**

Staff continually work together with our learners to help them find sources of resilience by promoting:

- a positive and safe climate within our school setting
- a sense of belonging and connectedness
- involvement in decision making generally, including anti-bullying policy and practice
- opportunities for challenge and success
- recognition of achievement

## **Responding to a Report of Bullying Behaviour**

Each incident will be reviewed individually, however there are some anti-bullying practices which will be common to all situations as staff **listen** and strive to find a **positive resolution**.

**Communication** – All reports will be taken seriously and fully investigated. Pupils from both sides of the disagreement will be given the opportunity to speak to staff privately and parents will be kept fully informed throughout the process. Pupils will be **listened to** and their views will be taken into account when planning how to deal with the allegations.

**Support** – Both the child being bullied, and those demonstrating the bullying behaviour will be supported through the process. The child making the allegations must be made to feel safe and secure at school. They must know they were right to tell and changes will be put in place with immediate effect. Pupils who are bullying will receive help to identify the feelings that cause them to act in this way and develop alternative ways of responding to feelings. An attempt will always be made to repair the relationship.

**Restorative Practices** – This is a solution-focused approach, which is used to address undesirable behaviour and build the relationships of those involved. This approach has been in place in St Mary's Primary School for many years and is embedded into the day-to-day practices of our staff.

While traditional methods concentrate on who is to blame, and what is the punishment? Restorative Practices ask: What has happened? Who has been affected and how? How can we put it right? What have we learned, so we can make different choices next time?

**Monitoring and Review** – Records of conflicts will be kept by the Senior Management Team. In this way those involved will receive regular follow-up, where a member of staff will ‘check-in’ with the pupil regularly to keep the channels of communication open and ensure there is no recurrence of the problem. Through this recording procedure, possible patterns can also be identified and dealt with swiftly.

**Consequences** – When bullying is persistent and violent, firmer action may be required. This will be considered on an individual basis, but sanctions may include:

- withdrawal of privileges, e.g. football team, after school clubs,
- Golden Time
- internal exclusion, removal from playground at break or removal from a group in class
- not permitted to attend an organised trip or special event
- a fixed term exclusion from school
- in some cases there may be a case for police involvement

### **Conclusion**

Children are young and are learning. This includes learning how to behave, learning how to treat others and learning effectively how to respond to pressures. We recognise that children will fall out with their friends and tease each other on occasion. However, left unchecked, this can lead to bullying behaviours. Each incident will be dealt with sensitively, taking into account the age and development stage of the child, continually reinforcing the message of mutual respect.