

St Monica's Catholic Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy



Strive to succeed in the presence of God'

Together – as a Catholic community
Everyone - children, staff, parents, carers and parish
Achieves – in their unique way and tries to be
More – like Jesus

Date of Issue	November 2023
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Statement of Intent

St Monica's recognises and is committed to its responsibility to ensure that children are educated within a caring, happy, welcoming and protective community and in an atmosphere of openness and trust. Children are encouraged and taught to be articulate about their emotional well-being and the well-being of others and are expected to take ownership of their own behaviour and to support their friends to 'do the right thing'. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at St Monica's school, including being a complicit bystander, this means that anyone who knows bullying is happening is expected to tell an adult. If an incident of bullying should occur, all children should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

Aims and Objectives

- To create an atmosphere of openness and trust within the school community where everyone will know that bullying will not be tolerated
- To provide a curriculum and an environment which promote children's self-esteem and respect for others
- To implement appropriate strategies for dealing promptly with any complaints or incidents of bullying as they arise
- To ensure that all governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, children and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is which includes peer on peer abuse on and off line
- To ensure that all governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported and arises

What is Bullying?

Bullying may be distinguished from other unacceptable forms of behaviour in that it involves the dominance of one child by another, or a group of others, is premeditated and usually forms a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident. It is the willful, conscious desire to hurt or threaten or to frighten someone else often over a period of time. To do this the bully has to have some kind of influence or control over the victim/s (and possible by-standers), a power not always recognisable to the staff member. How bullies exercise their illegitimate power depends on who they are, who the victim is and the context. Bullies are not recognisable stereotypes. Increasingly, bullying can happen through the use of communications technology such as text messages, e-mails or internet 'chat rooms', gaming and other social media. This form of bullying is seen to be just as unacceptable as 'face to face' confrontations.

Bullying may vary in its severity, frequency and in the numbers of people involved. The main forms of bullying are:

- Emotional - excluding, tormenting (e.g. threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, names
- Sexist – comments, gestures, actions or attention that is intended to hurt, offend or intimidate
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - all areas of internet, such as email, social media and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by textmessaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities

Bullying is not:

- Falling out with your friend
- Not getting your own way
- Other children not doing as you say, not playing the game that you want or not playing exclusively with you

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying can be extremely damaging. It can lead to a lasting lack of self-esteem, depression, anxiety and even physical harm. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect and no one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Children who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Our school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may not want to tell anyone if they are being bullied, but their behaviour might well show that something is not right. Adults should look out for these signs when a child:

- Is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- Becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Feels ill in the morning
- Is frightened of walking to or from school – begs to be driven
- Starts stammering
- Cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- Changes their usual routine
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Becomes secretive, especially around internet links
-and in worst cases
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away

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

Preventing Bullying

We will use various methods for helping children to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of class/school rules
- visiting charities or external companies leading assemblies or workshops
- Assemblies with a focus on the school values and mission statement
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- using the curriculum, particularly RHE, to raise awareness and to have discussions about bullying, why it matters and why 'standing by' is nearly as bad as doing the bullying
- taking part in the national Anti-Bullying Week
- Teaching online safety, as well as frequent reminders during computing lessons and when engaging with online activities or online meetings.
- Anti-bullying workshops, as well as online bullying workshops included regularly as part of the curriculum
- Parent workshops for online bullying, with regular reminders and updates through school communications.

Our Procedures

1. All incidents of bullying should be reported to staff, in the first instance the Class Teacher, then the Phase Leader, followed by the Assistant Headteacher and as a last resort the Headteacher.
2. All reported incidents will be fully investigated to ascertain whether they are a case of bullying or other behaviour issues. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
3. In all cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff on ScholarPack and reported to the school governors
4. A member of the Senior Leadership Team will meet with all the children involved to allow the perceived 'victim' of the bullying to explain what has been happening and how that has made them feel and the perceived 'bully' to respond to the allegation or apologize as appropriate.
In all cases parents of both the victim and the bully will be informed.

5. The school will be proactive in supporting the victim and also work with the bully (bullies) to support them in changing their behaviour. This will be closely monitored.
6. If necessary and deemed appropriate by the Headteacher, police will be consulted.

The school will respond to all the children involved in a bullying incident by:

- Actively listening
- Offering support and strategies to deal with unwanted behaviours
- Helping the children to take responsibility for their action and to recognise the hurt that they have caused
- Involving parents/carers
- Involving outside agencies to support the child as appropriate

Outcomes

1. The bully (bullies) will be dealt with as the Senior Leadership Team deem appropriate according to the facts they have investigated, the full context to which only they might be fully aware, and in line with the school's behaviour policy and with full parental involvement.
2. In serious cases, exclusion will be considered in line with the school's behaviour policy.
3. The school's expectation is that the children will be reconciled with the support of the parents.
4. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Bullying off the School Premises

While the school will make every effort to deal with bullying on the school premises, and to prevent bullying outside the school gates, we recognise that we cannot be held directly responsible for bullying that takes place off site, by children in our school, or by children of other schools or on children's journey to school. However, we will take seriously any bullying incident and take every reasonable step to support the pupil.

At St Monica's school, we encourage children to tell us and their parents about incidents that happen inside and outside school so that we can:

- Alert parents to the fact that children are having unsupervised and inappropriate internet contact
- Raise concerns and take steps as appropriate, e.g. contact police to alert them to trouble spots, gangs, inappropriate images and sexual harassment etc
- Alert colleagues in another school whose children may be involved off premises
- Map safe routes to school in the event of a child being bullied on their journey to school
- Offer children strategies to handle bullying off the school premises

Where bullying takes place online as part of our curriculum (e.g. online meetings, home learning etc), this will be dealt with as if it were bullying face-to-face on the school premises.

Cyber-bullying

Children have clear structures to deal with online abuse such as cyberbullying which are cross referenced with other school policies. Through online safety lessons, children understand the impact of cyberbullying and trolling and know how to seek help if they are affected by any form of online bullying and also know how to report this abuse when using the internet and related technologies, i.e. parent or carer, teacher or trusted adult within school, or an organisation such as Childline or the CLICK CEOP button.

Peer on Peer Abuse

Peer on Peer Abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously at St Monica's school. The school does not accept the terms 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. Peer on Peer Abuse can have a lifelong impact on children's mental health.

Peer on Peer Abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying** (including cyberbullying);
- physical abuse** such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
- gender based violence**;

- sexual violence;**
- sexual harassment** such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- sexual exploitation** (form of child sexual abuse) where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status;
- upskirting**, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their underwear or genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence under (Voyeurism Offences Act) 2019;
- sexting** (also known as youth produced sexual imagery) this is when someone sends or receives a sexually explicit text, image or video. Pressurising someone into sending nude selfies, pictures or sharing someone's picture without their permission even if it's a friend is wrong and even illegal.
- being touched in a sexual way** that makes you uncomfortable, being pressurised to send naked pictures or being made to sexually stimulate yourself or others is illegal.
- Initiation ceremonies, hazing or other rituals;**
- emotional** abuse;
- financial** abuse.

The school will follow the procedures set out in this policy as well as the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy to safeguard children against Peer on Peer Abuse and promote open conversations through our RHE programme. Raising awareness with all children about the effects of Peer on Peer Abuse is essential and ensuring children have a voice in the school to raise concerns.

Monitoring

As part of our monitoring strategy we will:

- Meet with children and give them regular opportunities to tell us if the policy is working from their point of view and if the school is responding to incidents
- Review the effectiveness of this policy every three years (or sooner if deemed necessary) with staff, children, parents and governors.