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**St Mary's Church of England Academy, Walkley**

# **Anti-Bullying Policy**



**"Rise up, take courage and do it."  
Ezra 10:4**

**Date of next review: Autumn 2025**



# Anti-Bullying Policy

St. Mary's CE Academy

'Excellence through faith & learning'



At St Mary's, we aim to provide a caring environment where every child can thrive and is supported to achieve their unique & amazing potential as a child of God. As such, this means that we place the child at the centre of our school practice & want them to:

- experience the fullness of life (John10:10)
- leave us with confidence & a positive self-image
- be able to grow, develop & learn in an environment which is bully-free.

At our school, we believe that our anti-bullying policy must be positive, confidence building & based in love and that any form of discipline must respect children's dignity & their rights. As we encourage an environment where bullying is not tolerated, we find that our children learn to manage their own responses and dealings with all those around them making our school both happy and safe.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies which relate to wellbeing & safeguarding of our pupils, i.e. Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding & Online Safety.

At St Mary's, we place the child & their rights, as written in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, at the centre of our school practice. This means that: "All children have the right to an education" (Article 28), the right to relax & play" (Article 31) & that this must be "without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, gender, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say & whatever their family background." (Article 2).

## 1. Philosophy

At St Mary's, we work from the premise that the school is a 'Bully Free Zone' & will not be tolerated. We teach children to follow the example of Jesus; to 'love one another' (Jn 13:34-35) as well as 'treat others like we ourselves would like to be treated' (Matt 7:12). We also believe that:

- All bullying is unacceptable, regardless of who bullies or how it is delivered or what reasons are given to justify bullying actions.
- Bullying has a detrimental effect on children and young people who may be subjected to it and we work actively to minimise it.
- Victims of bullying are treated in a supportive manner and their support is never regarded as a burden to staff and peer groups.
- Bullying has a harmful effect on educational performance and therefore are committed to combating all bullying behaviour in partnership with the relevant agencies.
- Bullies need to change their behaviour (it is the behaviour not the person that is unacceptable) and they too will need support.

## 2. Statement of Intent

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St Mary's is absolutely committed to 'End Bullying' & be a 'Bully Free Zone'.  
We want:

- To raise the profile of Bullying as an issue and to provide strategies and guidance on how to prevent it as well as how to respond to bullying incidents.
- To acknowledge that both the victim and perpetrators of bullying need support and that appropriate help for both will be needed after the bullying has been reported.
- To recognise that we all have a responsibility for challenging bullying – children and young people; staff; governors; parents/carers – and to explain how we can meet our responsibilities.
- To ensure that we have an effective Anti-Bullying Policy that includes the recording of all bullying incidents and that these are regularly reported to the Governing Body.

### 3 Definitions

**Bullying** is defined by the Government as:

**“deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.”**

Bullying can take many forms but three main types are:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, taking belongings;
- **Verbal** – name-calling, insulting, racist, sexist, homophobic remarks, cyber-bullying;
- **Indirect** – spreading nasty stories about someone, excluding someone from social groups, negative body language, passing unpleasant notes, etc.

The damage inflicted by bullying can be frequently underestimated and may be verbal or appear in a variety of other forms, such as: texting, e-mail or through mobile phones & social media. Bullying can cause considerable distress affecting health and development. At an extreme, significant harm (including self-harm) may take place.

In line with the *Valuing All God's Children* document (CEEQ, Autumn 2017), all forms of bullying behaviour will not be tolerated at our school. This includes any bullying in relation to: gender, gender identity, sexuality, ethnicity, faith, ability and disability.

St Mary's believes that the most effective strategy to combat bullying lies within the power of the majority of pupils to speak out against it. We seek to challenge bullying behaviour and to build and maintain an anti-bullying ethos in the school. Children are taught to take an active stand against bullying behaviour in order to create a school environment where everyone feels secure, where they feel valued and where they can be happy working in a non-threatening atmosphere.

### 4. Action to Combat Bullying

The issue of bullying and the need to stand firm against it, receives a high profile within the whole school community. The St Mary's Local School's Board supports the school with policy. As a Rights Respecting school, we want our children to be fully aware of their own as well as each other's rights (Article 1, 41 & 42 UNCRC). Among the activities which St Mary's carries out in an effort to combat bullying are the following:

- Teaching children what bullying *is*, what *it isn't* & *what to do* if they think that they are being bullied.
- Having an anti-bullying theme as part of the Establishment Phase at the beginning of the year as part of assembly with regular reminders throughout the year.
- Reaffirming this theme as part of Anti-Bullying Week in November each year as well as through our Online Safety Curriculum.
- Producing a 'Bully Free Zone' Leaflet which is sent out to parents on an annual basis.
- Displaying anti-bullying messages including details for children about what to do if they feel that they are being bullied.
- Ensuring that all fall outs are well dealt with to reaffirm the anti-bullying message.
- Anti-bullying values and co-operative behaviour are actively promoted through our whole school ethos, addressed through the Curriculum as well as through Circle Time, PSHE, Online Safety & Computing (cyber-bullying).
- Being involved in education initiatives that can help challenge Bullying.
- Provide access to appropriate advice and support for both victim and perpetrators, e.g. mentoring & counselling if appropriate.
- Actively engaging children in challenging bullying, e.g. Peer Support & School Council.
- The Head of School follows up more serious behavioural incidents and concerns from parents carefully & sensitively and records uploaded onto CPOMs.
- Parents are notified and involved in follow-up to the more serious incidents.
- Lunchtime supervisors record incidents & inform the Head of School if concerned about an individual or a situation.
- All school staff receive induction to help deal with the issue of bullying.
- Children may be given strategies to follow with behavioural targets, which are reviewed and updated.
- The school operates and records a system for children of concern so that vulnerable children are monitored and reviewed regularly & information passed on at transition.
- Governors receive a termly section of the Head teacher's Report, which monitors the incidents of bullying, racism and homophobia within school.

### **The role of Staff:**

At all times, staff are fully committed to fulfilling the aims of this policy & to ensuring that our school remains a Bully-Free Zone. As part of this process, any issues of a bullying nature will be dealt with by an adult, i.e. lunchtime supervisor, teaching assistant, class teacher or member of SLT.

More serious incidents will always be reported to the Headteacher. Any bullying incident which is classed as cyber-bullying; which is racist, sexual (including reference to sexual orientation, transgender or is homophobic) or which refers to disability will always be reported to the Headteacher. Inappropriate use of the word gay or lesbian to upset will not be tolerated and will be reported & dealt with by the Head of School.

Serious incidents will be recorded with details of time, place, people involved, the incident itself, inappropriate language action taken & follow-up strategies. Parents may

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be contacted & will always be contacted if a racist or homophobic incident is reported. The class teacher will be informed & lunchtime supervisors may be informed if the situation requires monitoring at lunchtime.

### **Five key points for staff to consider when dealing with bullying:**

As part of our commitment to fulfilling this policy, we:

- Will never ignore suspected or alleged bullying.
- Won't make premature assumptions. We will listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth.
- Will adopt a problem-solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves.
- Will monitor & follow-up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed.
- Will always report serious incidents and incidents of racism or use of homophobic language including inappropriate use of the word gay or lesbian to the Executive Headteacher or Head of School.

### **The Role of Children**

As part of our commitment to ensuring that our school remains a Bully-Free Zone, we respect our children's views & feelings in all matters affecting them. As a result, we regularly take our children's views on bullying through the Junior Leadership Team, circle time activities, the annual pupil questionnaire & through discussion more generally.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy has been effectively introduced and enforced in a supportive school climate where children and staff have an understanding of bullying and expectations. In this regard, the children and staff are expected to be responsible for their personal conduct and behaviour and support others by reporting concerns (not keeping secrets) and promoting anti-bullying messages and positive citizenship.

At St Mary's, we want our children to:

- Report all incidents of bullying using the procedures in place.
- Act in a respectful and supportive manner to their peers, reporting any suspected incidents which the victim may be afraid to report him/herself.
- Adhere to and promote the aims and objectives of the Anti-bullying policy.
- Refrain at all times from any behaviour which would constitute bullying, or could be construed as bullying behaviour.
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### **The Role of Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers play a vital role in the education and care of their children. They can assist in combating bullying in a number of ways:

- by not accepting such behaviour
- by reinforcing positive messages about the importance of positive dealings towards others
- by either reporting themselves or getting their children to report when they think someone else is being bullied.

At St Mary's, we would be grateful if parents would:

- Stress to their children the importance of positive sociable behaviour and encourage them not to act in any way that would make the situation worse or could be seen as bullying against another child.
- Reporting any misgivings they have concerning either victims or perpetrators of bullying, sharing concerns as soon as possible and not promising a child that they will not tell others.
- Actively endorsing and supporting the Anti-Bullying Policy, by acting responsibly and calmly.
- In the event of sanctions, making clear their disapproval of this behaviour.
- By not automatically dismissing the suggestion that their own child could be involved in bullying another child and work positively with school to change the behaviour.

## **Evaluation Procedures**

In order to assess the effectiveness of an anti-bullying policy, evaluation procedures covering schools, Governors and the LA are in place. These include an identified contact (the Headteacher) to receive reports on bullying and to analyse these incidents. It is vital to stress the importance of recording Bullying, as well as reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy. Staff, parents and pupils should be involved in the process where possible.

The following standards are used as a means of measuring performance:

- Variation in number of reported incidents over a specific period with record of any increase since first instance.
- Individual incident returns, including nil returns within specified periods for different age groups.
- Variation in the number of pupils' days lost which are suspected to, or alleged to, arise as a consequence of bullying. This could be monitored via the Education Welfare Service.
- Any marked improvement in academic performance which may be confidently regarded to have arisen due to the eradication of bullying behaviour.
- A pupil questionnaire is taken on an annual basis to evaluate the children's understanding if they have been bullied & results are monitored.

## **APPENDIX 1**

St Mary's monitors incidents of bullying & so meets the requirements of section 61 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998.

### **Bullying Record**

If a Bullying incident does take place, then a Bullying Report is written. This is a confidential document. A child's Bullying Record is only available to his/her own parents and not to the complainant. The aim of the system is to:

- place the incident on record;
- be available to use as evidence where an alleged bully has several incidents against him/her and the parents do not accept that their child is involved in these activities;

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- to seriously address bullying issues and reassure parents and children that the school is dealing with these matters in a responsible and responsive fashion;
  - provide a concise report of known bullying incidents and the manner in which they have been handled if claims are made after a young person leaves the school or the Local Authority.

It is acknowledged that there will be a difficulty in deciding which particular incident is bullying and which is merely two or more children 'falling out'. As a quick rule of thumb, we record all those incidents which are reported as cases of bullying. It is therefore necessary to decide if each claim is in fact a case of bullying, or not.

One staff member, the Headteacher, has responsibility for storage and monitoring of information.