

# St. Michael's Catholic Primary School



## Anti-bullying Policy

## **Rationale**

St Michael's School places the happiness, welfare and safety of the children who attend the school as its highest priority. St Michael's School will endeavour to provide an environment that is safe and free from bullying.

Catholic belief is that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and as such, should all be treated justly.

*"The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God."*  
Catechism of the Catholic Church

At St Michael's Catholic Primary School we strive to ensure that this belief is put into practice so that all are welcome. We work to ensure that each person, in all their uniqueness, is able to thrive in our Catholic school, irrespective of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, physical appearance, disability or the actual or perceived sexual orientation of themselves or of their parents/carers.

At St. Michael's we endeavour to create a safe and stimulating environment where everyone knows that they are valued as God's children. Every person has the right to be treated with respect and each person has the responsibility to treat others in the same way. Our mission statement is lived out so that children are enabled to have the confidence and strategies to speak up and tell of any bullying experiences, knowing that positive and fair action will be taken.

## **Aims**

- To provide a safe, caring Christian environment for the whole community and especially the children in our care.
- To reassure and instill in children and adults that bullying is unacceptable and that reports of bullying will be taken seriously, recorded and acted upon.
- To produce a consistent whole school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- To work with all members of the school community (staff, children, parents/carers and governors) to foster productive partnerships which help maintain a bullying-free environment.
- To celebrate diversity and the uniqueness of individuals.

## **Definition**

The DCSF definition of bullying, as defined in their September 2007 Guidance: 'Safe to Learn: embedding anti-bullying in schools', is:

*"Behaviour by an individual or group usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."*

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as

*'The intentional repetitive or persistent hurting of one person by another, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power'*

DFE 'Bullying at school' November 2014 states that there is no legal definition of bullying. However, it states that bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, eg because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

It takes many forms and can include:

- physical assault
- teasing
- making threats
- name calling
- cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online (eg email, social networks and instant messenger)

The DFE 2014 guidance states that schools should have their own definition of bullying. Bullying is defined by our school community as:

*A pattern of intentional behaviour that results in the real or perceived harm of another individual whether it be in the form of physical assault, verbal abuse or cyberbullying. Bullying of any type, including racist, homophobic or transphobic bullying, is not tolerated in our school.*

#### **Types of Bullying:**

Emotional: This form of bullying occurs when a person is deliberately (or excludes another person by) being overtly nasty or unkind. An example of emotional bullying is encouraging people not to play with somebody or making fun of somebody.

Physical: This can include physical harm such as punching or pushing, being made to give money or belongings, or forcing a child to act against their will.

Verbal: Verbal bullying can include being teased in a nasty way, being called 'gay' in a derogatory way, being insulted about race, religion or culture, being called names or being the subject of offensive comments.

Psychological: This is a very complex form of bullying which involves deliberate acts which cause fear or anxiety in another person.

Cyberbullying: This form of bullying includes verbal or indirect bullying via text message, email, instant messenger services or social network sites or images spread via the internet or mobile phones.

#### **Preventing Bullying Behaviour**

Our approach to bullying is informed by the Catholic faith and is reflected in our school Mission Statement: "*Finding Christ in Each Other*"

- The school leadership will work with all in our community to prevent all forms of bullying, including prejudice based bullying, and to fully address incidents of bullying as they arise.

- All bullying in its variety of forms and types will be taken equally seriously and addressed appropriately.
- We will address bullying within the framework of Catholic beliefs and Church teaching and in a way which is age-appropriate
- Staff receive regular training about how to prevent, identify and deal with bullying
- Regular pupil interviews/questionnaires allow children to share their views and concerns around bullying
- Dedicated pupil groups actively promote kindness and deter all forms of bullying (i.e ABC group, e-safety, Mini-Vinnies)
- Robust behaviour policy linked to Gospel values that form the basis of our school rules and all that we do at St. Michael's

### **Procedures for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour**

When dealing with suspected incidents of bullying staff will be guided by the following principles:

1. Never ignore suspected bullying.
2. Do not make premature assumptions. Listen carefully to both sides of the story and remember more than one child with the same version does not mean they are telling the truth.
3. Use a logical approach that moves pupils forward and focuses on making things right in accordance with our Behaviour Policy.
4. Record information in detail outlining any incidents and conversations.
5. Monitor the situation closely and follow up the issue to check bullying has not reoccurred.
6. Include all accusations of bullying in the head teacher's termly report to governors

### **Homophobic bullying and using homophobic language**

Homophobic language can be used as an insult or to refer to something or someone as inferior such as the derogatory use of the word 'gay'. The derogatory use of homophobic language in our school will always be challenged even if it appears to be being used without any homophobic intent.

### **Children with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities**

Our schools are committed to actively promoting the equality of opportunity for all children with SEN or disabilities. Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, in most cases (except those related to specific conditions) school will expect the same standards of behaviour as those which apply to the rest of the school community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

In the event of incidents which have been identified as 'bullying' the following principles and procedures will be followed at St Michael's School:

- Incidents of bullying at the school will be investigated thoroughly and sensitively following the school policy. Any reported incidents must be reported to the Headteacher immediately using CPOMS.

- Children will be encouraged to report any incident of bullying that they experience or witness. Staff will reassure children that what they say will be listened to and taken seriously and detailed notes must be made clearly stating the allegation the child has made.
- The procedures will be explained to the child so that they are fully aware of the action to be taken. An 'Alleged Bullying Incident Log' form must be completed outlining the incident and action to be taken. This will be reviewed termly to monitor the results of the actions taken. The child will be allocated a staff member to report their concerns to in addition to their class teacher. Staff will be made aware of the alleged bullying in the 'pupil spot' item in the staff meeting.
- A 'Worry Box' is located on the school website at all times and will allow children or
- parents to write down their feelings or problems in a non-threatening way. The worry is emailed directly to the Headteacher.
- Staff members have a duty to inform the Headteacher of any bullying incidents they witness or suspect involving children or adults at the school.
- The victim of bullying will be comforted and supported by members of staff. Children will be closely supervised and their emotional well-being will be checked regularly.
- The Anti Bullying Committee are available at break times and are identified by their bibs. They monitor situations, they work with children to build friendships as well as working with Miss Carey to prevent bullying in school.
- In the majority of cases bullying behaviour will be dealt with according to the strategies set out in the Behaviour Management policy. This will involve working and talking with the bully to help them understand the impact of their behaviour and helping them make changes to prevent any occurrence of the behaviours causing concern.
- Alleged bullying incidents will be reviewed termly by the Senior Leadership Team. The parents of the child who has felt bullied will receive a letter explaining the support given and the investigation that has taken place.

**Sanctions for perpetrating bullying behaviour bully may include:**

1. Verbal reprimand by the Headteacher.
  2. Discussions with parents/carers where appropriate.
  3. Withdrawal of children from activities at the school.
  4. Loss or reduced breaktimes for a period.
  5. Fixed period of exclusion from school.
  6. Permanent exclusion from the school may be used depending on the severity of the incident.
- If the investigation has shown that a child has been the perpetrator of bullying the Headteacher will inform their parent, carer or guardian and if necessary have a formal meeting with the parents to discuss the issues and identify solutions to the problem.
  - If a staff member has been the perpetrator of bullying this will be dealt with by the Headteacher in accordance with the Staff Competency and Disciplinary Policy.
  - The school may refer to the Home/School contract signed by the parent/carers and child to make clear the expected level of behaviour at the school.
  - Where bullying behaviour persists and is not stopped by using the strategies outlined in the Behaviour Management Policy, more serious actions may have to be taken if the behaviour is causing significant harm to another child or adult.

- If a parent or carer is unhappy with any aspect of the way the school handles the issue of bullying they may refer to the School's Complaints policy.

### **Staff training**

All adults working in the schools know the anti-bullying policy and the procedures used for reporting of incidents. Training on anti-bullying is part of the induction of new staff.

All staff receive training about being sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied. Those being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems or changes.

Staff are expected to take preventative measures. This includes being aware of where and when bullying might take place. This awareness is informed by discussions with children and from questionnaires completed by children. The staff training includes equality training to raise awareness among staff of potential prejudicial behaviour and how not to reinforce stereotypes.

### **Curriculum**

As a Catholic school Religious Education is the core subject of our curriculum. There are opportunities within RE to make links with Rights Respecting Schools and Mini Vinnies to reinforce the principles of human rights, Catholic social teaching and the uniqueness of the individual, made in God's image and likeness.

Our curriculum as a whole is planned and delivered to enable children to develop empathy, to understand the effect bullying has on people and to take responsibility for trying to prevent bullying.

Through a variety of planned activities across the curriculum such as circle time, role-play, class performances, celebration assemblies, our children gain in self-confidence and develop strategies to speak up for themselves and express their own thoughts and opinions.

Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity and an assortment of strategies to protect themselves from bullying. This is explicitly planned within the PSHE and Citizenship programmes delivered in school. Staff are also expected and encouraged to take advantage of unplanned opportunities to celebrate diversity and to reinforce the principles of anti-bullying.

### **Liturgical Prayer**

In liturgical prayer, themes and values play a part in challenging prejudice and promoting justice for all. The timetable of collective worship includes specific opportunities throughout the year which support work in anti-bullying. The children are encouraged to live the Gospel values by following Christ's example.

### **Reporting and recording of incidents of bullying**

Our school records all allegations of bullying on CPOMS. Where reports are substantiated parents/carers of all children involved are informed. Staff and children have annual training and the Anti-Bullying Policy is uploaded to the school website.

### **Reporting to the Local Authority**

All incidents of racist bullying are reported to the local governing committee.

### **The Role of the Local Governing Committee**

The Local Governing Committee monitors the incidents of bullying that occur and reviews the effectiveness of the policy regularly. This is done through the head teacher's termly report and

through meetings held with the children by the designated governor. The governors require the headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of schools' anti-bullying strategies.

### **Monitoring the Policy**

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the policy termly. To discover the extent to which bullying exists in school and to monitor the extent to which our anti-bullying policy is effective, the log and strategies will be reviewed alongside the responses made in pupil voice meetings.

It is the responsibility of the school governing board to review the effectiveness of this policy. This is done through the report of the headteacher. Governors will analyse information with regard to the types and forms of bullying.

### **Equality statement**

The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have access to the curriculum, and the right to a learning environment, which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.

Any questions or concerns regarding this policy should be made to Christina Parker

**Date reviewed: September 2023**

**Next Review: September 2024**

#### **UNICEF: Rights of the Child**

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 6

Every child has the right to develop to their full potential.

Article 14

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as

long as they are not stopping others from practising their rights.

Article 19

Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment.

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage

the child's respect for human rights, their own and others' cultures and the environment.

Article 37

Children should not be subject to cruel or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 39

Children who experience neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

Article 40

A child accused of breaking rules must be treated with dignity and respect.