

# St. Mark's Catholic Primary School



## Anti-bullying Policy

*Proudly and joyfully, we love, live and learn as God's children*

**LEND A HAND, TAKE A STAND, STOP BULLYING!**

***Be ready. Be respectful. Be safe.***

Date policy was reviewed on: March 2024

Date for next policy review: March 2025

Person/s responsible for policy: D.Linley

Issued to: Staff, governors, parents and children

## **Statement of Intent**

At St. Mark's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children so that they can learn and grow in a relaxed and supported atmosphere underpinned by the Gospel values. Children are encouraged to tell any adult if they feel they are experiencing bullying. Regular assemblies take place which focus on bullying issues and the means of dealing with them. We are committed to educating our children about bullying behaviour, so they understand what it is, how to identify it and its effects, and how to report it. We believe that bullies are not wholly responsible for their behaviour and need support, as do the victims of this behaviour. We endorse that bullying is not and never will be accepted at St. Mark's and therefore strive with aid of children, staff and parents to deal successfully and quickly with any issues that arise.

## **Aims**

The aim of this policy is to provide a definition of bullying and to establish some basic guidelines for:

- The prevention of bullying
- The reporting of bullying
- The recording of incidents of bullying
- Supporting the victim and the person conducting the bullying
- Sanctions
- Communication

## **Definition**

Bullying is repeated action that is intended to cause someone else harm or upset.

It is different from one-off actions or flare ups which may happen spontaneously and even be seen by one person as a joke or something that got out of hand, although these incidents are also taken seriously because of their effect on the victim and because failure to act may lead to them being repeated.

## **Repeated actions which we would define as bullying include:**

- Name calling
- Teasing
- Punching, kicking or any other action causing physical harm i.e. ignoring the no-touch rule
- Leaving children out
- Ignoring
- Spreading rumours or lies
- Stealing, hiding or damaging possessions
- Threatening behaviour or language including by phone, e-mail or text
- Continually bothering someone
- Making rude comments or signs

- Forcing someone to do something

## **Prevention**

The school is committed to stopping bullying altogether. In order to do this the school will:

- Ensure whole-school and class rules reaffirm expected behaviour
- Take seriously and investigate all complaints from pupils, staff and parents where a child has been physically or emotionally harmed, even if these are one-off incidents
- Whole school participates in Anti-Bullying Week every year to promote the school's anti-bullying policy and anti-bullying strategies.
- Deliver anti-bullying lessons in Citizenship, life to the full and RE lessons, circle time and other relevant subject areas.
- Deliver training to staff on the Anti-Bullying Policy and other associated issues, ensuring they are aware of signs and symptoms of bullying.
- Have an Anti-Bullying display board including our slogan 'Lend a hand, take a stand, stop bullying.'
- Ensure that all parents have a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy sent to them.
- Translate the Anti-Bullying Policy into relevant languages if requested
- Ensure the pupil voice team responsible for anti-bullying (Guardian Angels) is proactive in taking action to embed the anti-bullying policy and that pupils know how to use it.
- Promote a no-touch policy
- Promote a high level of vigilance from staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure sanctions are applied when necessary

## **Reporting**

The school is committed to removing the culture of secrecy from bullying. We recognise that many young people will be put off reporting because they fear that it will make matters worse.

In order to encourage pupils to report bullying the school will:

- Ensure the Guardian Angels are well trained and know how to deal with actual or alleged bullying supported by staff
- Provide training for staff and buddies how to deal with a disclosure about bullying
- Take each allegation of bullying seriously and investigate it, guaranteeing anonymity if appropriate
- Carry out regular pupil surveys including through circle time/class councils allowing pupils to disclose if they or others are being bullied

- Provide a worry box in each classroom and talk to the children about how to use them
- Ensure pupils understand bullying is not acceptable and how bullies and victims will be treated
- Provide an open door policy for parents who have concerns
- Consult with pupils about the effectiveness of anti-bullying strategies and their ideas for improvement

In order to ensure the accuracy of reporting written and/or verbal testimony will be taken from the victim, the perpetrator and any witnesses. These will be treated sensitively and kept confidential.

## **Recording**

In order to monitor the frequency with which incidents of bullying take place the school will record each incident of bullying centrally. The following information will be recorded:

- The student's name.
- Their class.
- Date, time and name of person making the report
- Brief details about the alleged incident.
- Who dealt with it.
- What happened and any findings
- What action was taken.

The School recognizes how traumatic being the victim of bullying can be. We are committed to providing each victim with the support they need to continue with their education in an environment free from the fear of bullying. In order to do this the school will:

## **Victim Support**

- Ensure the victim is happy with action taken
- Arrange an apology, written or verbal, from the perpetrator of the bullying.
- Discuss with the student what support they feel that they need.
- Discuss with the parent/s what support they feel their child needs.
- Make referrals to external agencies if necessary.
- Offer a meeting with the perpetrator of the bullying.

## **Support for the Perpetrator**

The school recognizes that bullying can damage the life and education of the person conducting the bullying as well as the victim.

Students who display bullying behaviour will be offered a range of support. This will include one or more of the following:

- Discussion to find out why they are bullying
- Give them chance to make a fresh start in line with the Gospel values of our school
- Supervised break times.
- A report card.
- A Behaviour Action Plan.
- Discussion with parents
- A Pastoral Support Programme.
- A referral to an external agency.
- If the bullying has involved actual or attempted extortion, a referral to the school's police officer.

### **Sanctions**

It is important for the victim, the perpetrator, and the school community as a whole that there are clearly defined consequences for any act of bullying. Each case will be dealt with individually, but the types of sanctions available to the school are:

- Withdrawal of break times and lunchtimes.
- Withdrawal of other privileges
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion.

### **Communication**

Whenever an allegation about bullying is made the parents, principal, class teacher and both victim and perpetrator will be informed. In the case of extortion, the school's police officer will be informed.