



## **St Matthew's CE Primary School** **Anti-bullying Policy**

### **Our aims**

At St Matthew's CE Primary School we expect high standards of behaviour. We encourage our school community to be supportive of one another, demonstrating kindness and respect.

This policy is linked to other school policies (Behaviour, Safeguarding and Playground policies) in order to promote a safe, caring and supportive learning environment, where children can work and play together so that they can fulfil their potential.

However, we recognise that bullying exists, and the issues associated with bullying need to be addressed. All incidences of bullying will be dealt with promptly based on a robust understanding of what bullying is and how it is different to the normal 'falling out' which occurs between children.

### **What is bullying?**

Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. It is persistent and takes place over a period of time. It is not a single act of hurting someone else through anger and frustration about a disagreement.

Bullying can take many forms:

- Physical intimidation and abuse – kicking, hitting, taking belongings or money;
- Verbal intimidation and abuse – name calling, insults, racist and sexist remarks;
- Exclusion from a group – spreading nasty rumours about someone, 'ganging up', intimidation;
- Cyber-bullying – using technology such as text messages, photo messages, emails or social networking sites to abuse and intimidate other children outside of school.

All types of bullying have 3 main things in common: -

- It is deliberately harmful behaviour
- It is repeated often over a period of time
- It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

### **Signs to look for in children being bullied**

- Fear of coming to school (high level of absence)
- Lateness, loss of appetite
- Becoming withdrawn or displaying emotional outbursts
- Work becomes erratic, standards fall
- Isolated in the playground

### **School strategies to address the issue of bullying**

Children should be actively encouraged to talk about bullying either individually or as group. Opportunities for discussion around the issues of demonstrating respect are planned for in:

- Circle time - as a tool to explore issues associated with behaviours, relationships and 'growing up'. This also includes the development of emotional language, co-operation, problem-solving and being calmly assertive.
- Religious Education lessons
- Collective worship – whole school and class assemblies where children are encouraged to talk about their emotions and feel confident to discuss issues with a range of different adults
- Other suitable times, e.g. discussion with peers and adults about characters in texts that explore relevant themes e.g. respect/bullying/vulnerability/loneliness

Cyber-bullying is also addressed through ICT lessons, where children learn how to stay safe using new technologies and what to do if they fall victim to a cyber bully. If an instance of cyber bullying is reported to school, even if it is taking place in the home, then school will investigate the concern thoroughly.

We recognise that bullying is most likely to occur during unstructured periods of the school day, during lunch times and particularly on the playground. All staff must be vigilant and are made aware of where bullying could take place.

### **What to do when an incident of bullying is reported**

No complaint or incident concerning bullying can be ignored. It will be listened to and acted upon in a confidential manner.

Any child or parent who makes a complaint regarding bullying, must be listened to sympathetically. Parents **must** be referred to the Head Teacher, or in her absence to another member of the Senior Leadership Team. A record of this should be kept.

If a bullying incident occurs in the playground or around the school that you are made aware of, it should be dealt with straight away. The class teacher of the child needs to be informed as well as the Headteacher.

Parents will be informed of any bullying incidents that occur whereby a child or children are being physically hurt or mentally threatened.

### **Dealing with incidents of bullying**

In the case of **emotional incidents** during playtime or lunchtime, the adult on duty should: take the names of both/all parties and inform them that their class teacher will be informed. The class teacher will refer this to the Headteacher as above.

In the case of **violent incidents**, both parties should be escorted to the Headteacher or, if she is unavailable, to a member of the Senior Leadership Team for immediate response.

As a result of the investigation, the class teacher may also be involved in addressing the issues with the children involved, either as a group or individually, thereby eradicating any future potential bullying. This is to ensure that:

The child who has been bullied is helped by

- feeling reassured that bullying has stopped and can discuss the issue further
- having his/her self-esteem and confidence restored
- being empowered through learning to be assertive

The child who has been bullying is helped by

- discovering why s/he became involved in bullying behaviour
- understanding the wrong behaviours and what s/he needs to do to change
- informing the parents/guardians to support change the attitude of the pupil

The child who has witnessed bullying is helped by

- understanding that peer pressure plays an important role in minimizing bullying behaviour
- understanding that being a bystander and not reporting a bully is seen as participating in the bullying and changing this behaviour

### **Procedures and Strategies for investigating incidents**

At St Matthew's, we ensure that all adults are enabled to deal with incidents of bullying. When an adult talks to the victims, witnesses and bullies, our policy is to:

- Not to blame either party (“I understand that there has been a problem...)
- Speak to the child at eye level
- Speak to the child in a calm manner
- Allow talk time. This is very important. The victim needs to be given time to talk about the ‘problem’ without being rushed. Write everything down.
- Tell them that you have taken the complaint seriously and want to investigate it fully.
- Discuss possible solutions to the problem
- Agree to arrange a follow up session and appropriate action. Arrange to meet and discuss further.

The Headteacher and governing body will review this policy periodically and assess its implementation and effectiveness.

***Policy Owner: Paulette Osborne***

***Date of next Review:***

***December 2020***