

St. Monica's R.C. Primary School

Anti-Bullying policy

Here at St. Monica's we recognise that we are all cherished members of God's family. We love and care for one another and trust God to guide us in all we do and say. By learning together we aim to achieve and working together we will succeed.

Introduction

Bullying can be a difficult term to define, as not all bullying is obvious nor apparent. It is also something misunderstood, as typified by a casual argument sometimes being referred to by a child as bullying. However, it is clear that bullying does exist and is a sad part of our society and it takes many forms. **Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.** It may include, but not be limited to, actions such as verbal taunts, cyber-bullying, name-calling and put downs, including ethnically-based or gender-based verbal put downs, and the extortion of money or possessions. This may also include taunts and attacks in response to a person's religious beliefs, their background or cultural group or their sexual orientation.

Aims and objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individuals. At St. Monica's, we strive to do all we can to prevent it by developing a school ethos in which bullying behaviour is regarded as totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Bullying, in any form, contradicts our school mission statement: "We love and care for one another." We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety. This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all those connected with our school aware of our opposition to bullying, and we make clear each person's responsibilities with regard to the eradication of bullying in our school.

The Role of Governors

The Governing Body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it clear that the Governing Body does not allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken seriously and dealt with appropriately. The Governing Body monitors the incidents of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy. Any incidents of bullying are included in the Headteacher's report to Governors and included in the School Effectiveness Committee meeting. The governors require the Headteacher to keep records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.

The Role of the Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying. The Headteacher reports to the Governing Body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.

The Headteacher ensures that all members of the school community, both adults and children, know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school. The Headteacher sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel that they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

The Role of the Teachers and all Members of Staff

Teachers take all forms of bullying seriously and intervene where possible to prevent incidents from taking place. They report all incidents that happen in their class or around school to the Headteacher. If teachers are made aware of bullying, they will do all they can to support the victim in whatever way is deemed appropriate e.g., in circle time. All known and suspected cases of bullying are reported to the Headteacher and recorded. Issues are dealt with immediately. This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and sanctions for the child who has carried out the bullying, in line with the school's behaviour policy. The school takes a concerned interest in all repeated cases of bullying that happen outside school premises and/or out of hours. Teachers support all children in their class and establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying. Teachers look for opportunities to discuss and educate the children about bullying in the curriculum, for example in religion, PSHE or literacy lessons.

The Role of Parents

Parents, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately. Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

Identifying the problem

Children or adults who are being bullied will not always be prepared to tell those in authority. However, when a disclosure is made, it should always be treated seriously.

For those who are unable to inform staff about their problem, observations regarding specific behaviour patterns can be routinely established within school. Signs of bullying might include:

- Unwillingness to come to school
- Withdrawn, isolated behaviour
- Complaining about missing possessions
- Being easily distracted
- Damaged or incomplete work
- Signs of distress or behaviour that is out of character.

Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual bullying', which can occur in and outside school. Cyber-bullying is a

different form of bullying which can happen beyond the school day into home and private space, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content.

Criminal Offences

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour - or communications - could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, we may seek assistance from the police.

Dealing with Incidents

When dealing with incidents which are repeated over a period of time, the Headteacher should be informed. Involvement of parents at an early stage is important and strategies to eradicate the problem are put in place. Strategies to support the victim and the bully could include:

- Loss of privileges
- Restorative Practice
- Daily meetings with those bullied and bullying
- Review meetings with the class teacher
- Review meetings with the lunchtime organiser
- Review meetings with parents
- Use of home/school diary
- Setting targets for modified behaviour
- Support from outside agencies
- Discussing bullying in role play and SEAL curriculum
- Ensuring strategies are in place for restoring and supporting a victim's self-esteem and countering feelings of guilt, inferiority etc.
- Avoiding "Bullying the Bully", rather helping the bully to explore his/her behaviour and the consequences of it.
- Enforcement of the school's behaviour policy.
- Make use of social peers - buddy system for the victim or potential victim, and also peer groups to discourage the bully.

The Complaints System

Adults must be prepared to listen to any bullying complaint with patience whilst taking it seriously and protecting the dignity of the person complaining. The staff member should listen to the victim and the bully separately and with fairness. Both should have a fair

chance to give their own perspectives and, if necessary, a written account may be asked for. If bullying is apparent or suspected, the Headteacher should be informed. Depending on the nature and circumstance, as well as the frequency, parents of either party may be contacted or invited to attend the school. The Headteacher would normally do this, but should at least be informed if it is more appropriate for the teacher to do so because of the circumstance. All details constituting a bullying incident must be recorded on CPOMS.

Advice to the Victim

- Reassure the victim - tell them there is nothing wrong with them.
- Advise not to hit back
- Encourage the child and help him/ her to recruit friends
- Advise the child not to try to buy the friendship of the bully (e.g., sweets)
- Let the victim know that there are adults they can always turn to for help and give some examples of who, when and where.

Some Definite Things to Do!

- Do promote the Gospel message of love, tolerance, support, forgiveness and care.
- Encourage humour and smiling across the school.
- Ensure there are school wide activities to promote self esteem and feelings of well being.
- Help bullies to understand their actions and the consequences of them.
- Be aware of risks and opportunities in the school environment e.g., the toilets, at playtime etc.
- Reward good behaviour
- Monitor and review.

The Headteacher, who reports to the governors, monitors this policy on a regular basis about its effectiveness. This anti-bullying policy is the governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness annually.

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Signed: