ANTI BULLYING POLICY

> **Our Vision**
> To be a learning community that promotes the unique gifts, wellbeing and potential of every person. Our work is founded on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, building on His message of equality, peace and justice, guided by His words *'As I have loved you, so you must love one another' (John 13:34).*).

"Every person in the school community is a child of God: so at the heart of Christian distinctiveness in schools is an upholding of the worth of each person." (Valuing all God's Children, Church of England 2017 p11)

Church of England schools have at their heart a belief that all children are made in the image of God and loved by God unconditionally. As Christian Educators, we acknowledge that our role is to help each unique individual to fulfil their potential in all aspects of their personhood: physically, academically, socially, morally and spiritually.
"The hallmark of authentic, life-giving relationships is recognition of the sacredness of the other so that all are welcomed wholeheartedly and with reverence. Each person in all their unique difference should be able to thrive, irrespective of their physical appearance, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, academic ability, sexual orientation or gender identity." (Valuing All God's Children, Church of England 2017 p11)

We believe that all people are made in the image of God and are unconditionally loved by God. Everyone is equal and we treat each other with dignity and respect. Our school is a place where everyone should be able to flourish in a loving and hospitable community.

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1. Introduction

This policy outlines what St Mary's School will do to prevent and tackle bullying. We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our children so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture; including bullying between adults, children or adults and children, and this will not be tolerated.

Our school community will:

- Monitor and review our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis, ensuring that all governors and staff know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it, should bullying be reported.
- Support all staff to promote positive relationships to prevent bullying and identify and tackle any bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensure that all pupils and parents know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- Reassure parents and pupils that they will be supported if bullying is reported and that as a school we take bullying very seriously.
- Report back to parents/carers and in turn will work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that the pupils are aware that all bullying concerns are dealt with sensitivity and effectively so that they feel safe to learn.
- Support all pupils through encouraging them to develop positive social skills and attitudes by learning how to relate to and respect each other.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is hurtful, unkind or threatening behaviour which is deliberate and repeated. Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people towards another individual or group, where the bully or bullies hold more power than those being bullied. If bullying is allowed it harms the perpetrator, the target and the whole school community and its secure and happy environment.

The nature of bullying can be:
- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing or inappropriate/unwanted physical contact)
- Verbal (e.g. name calling, ridicule, comments)
- Cyber (e.g. messaging, social media, email)
- Emotional/indirect/segregation (e.g. excluding someone, spreading rumours)
- Visual/written (e.g. graffiti, gestures, wearing racist insignia)
- Damage to personal property
- Threat with a weapon
- Theft or extortion
- Persistent Bullying

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:
- Race (racist bullying)
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic)
- Special educational needs (SEN) or disability
- Culture or class
- Gender identity (transphobic)

- Gender (sexist bullying)
- Appearance or health conditions
- Religion or belief
- Related to home or other personal circumstances

3.   Strategies for identifying bullying

Bullying can be difficult to identify because it is often subtle, covert and rarely witnessed by adults. However, some of the warning signs can include:

Individual signs

- Torn clothing and damaged books
- Sudden mood swings
- Loss of belongings
- Requests to be accompanied to and from school
- Bedwetting
- Nail biting
- Nervous tics
- Sleep walking
- Flinching
- Underachievement
- School refusal
- Temper flare ups
- Physical marks
- Avoidance of certain days
- Psychosomatic illness

Whole school signs

- Graffiti
- Frequent name calling
- Poor attendance
- Pupils appearing to be afraid
- Social exclusion
- Pupils being alone at break times
- Pupils not willing to approach adults

4.   Preventing, identifying and responding to bullying

We will:

- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience and self-esteem.
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum; through displays; through peer support; the e-safety curriculum and through the school council.
- Train all staff including lunchtime staff, to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children.

If, on any occasion, bullying is suspected of taking place the following procedures should be adhered to:

- Discuss the incident with the victim
- Identify the accused bully/ies
- Obtain witnesses if possible
- Advise the Senior Leadership Team
- Confront the bully/ies to investigate
- If allegations are substantiated implement sanctions appropriate to the incident
- Inform the Head Teacher/Deputy Head Teacher
- Inform the parents of the victim and the bully of the details

Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions in school in accordance with the school's behavior policy.

Cyber Bullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
    - Looking at use of the school systems;
    - Identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
    - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:
    - Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
    - Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and also the school searching and confiscation policy. (Note: Schools should ensure they access the DfE 'Searching, screening and confiscation at school' and Childnet Cyberbullying guidance to ensure that the schools powers are used proportionately and lawfully)
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behavior of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online.

LGBT

Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic harassment involves the same kind of behavior directed against someone because of their culture or identity, their gender, gender identity or sexual orientation.

Homophobic: includes language, jokes or 'banter' that is negative or disrespectful of, or that perpetuates stereotypes about, lesbian or gay people

Biphobic language: includes language, jokes or 'banter' that is negative or disrespectful of, or that perpetuates stereotypes about, bisexual people (people who are attracted to people of the same gender and to people of a different gender to their own)

Transphobic language: includes language, jokes or 'banter' that is negative or disrespectful of, or that perpetuates stereotypes about, trans people (people whose gender is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth)

LGBT bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as all other bullying incidents in school. Teachers should ensure that a broad range of people from our society are used as examples, books and pictures around the classroom. Teachers should tackle the misuse of homophobic language in the moment, ensuring that all pupils are aware of the meaning of words they are using.
The school will ensure that pupils are able to report incidents of bullying anonymously via the school 'worry' box.

Derogatory language

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and recorded and monitored on My Concerns, and follow up actions and sanctions, if appropriate, will be taken for pupils and staff found using any such language. Staff are also encouraged to record the casual use of derogatory language using informal mechanisms such as a classroom log.

5. Involvement of pupils

We will:

- Discuss children's views on the extent and nature of bullying through Circle Time and PSHCE.
- Ensure children knowhow to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure all children are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve children in anti-bullying campaigns in school where appropriate.
- Publicise the details of helplines and websites.
- Offer support to children who have been bullied.
- Work with children who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have.

6. Liaison with parents & carers

We believe in the importance of working in partnership with parents. As such, we ensure that our staff understand the value in meeting and communicating with parents regularly to discuss any concerns.

Parents should make contact with the class teacher initially whenever they have any concerns. The class teacher may decide to involve colleagues in any discussions depending on the nature of the concerns, e.g. Phase leader, Senior Management Team, Deputy Head, Head Teacher or SENCO for SEN.

When responding to parents, it is important to listen to and write down concerns raised. In order to prevent a misunderstanding, staff are encouraged to read back any concerns as they understand them. Parents should be reassured and explained that an investigation will take place. Under no circumstances should a parent be informed of an outcome prior to the member of staff investigating the incident(s).

We will:

- Ensure that parents/carers know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Ensure parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively.*
- Ensure parents/carers now where to access independent advice about bullying.
- Where bullying has occurred we will work with parents to ensure that children continue to attend school.
- Work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
  * Please note the Procedure within the Complaints Policy should only be used if it is felt that all other options have been exhausted.

7. Links with other school policies and practices

This policy links with a number of other school policies, practices and actions plans including:

- PSCHE Policy and RSE Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- The records of racial and LGBT incidents
- Complaints Policy

8. Preventative Strategies

- High levels of supervision.
- Ensuring adequate adult/child ratio when going on a school trip/walk etc.
- Positive reinforcement kind and helpful behaviour e.g. if one child assists another who has fallen over in the playground.
- Reinforce caring for each other through Bible/related stories in Collective Worship and other appropriate curriculum areas.
- Reinforce caring through the 'Value words'.
- Remind children to say 'Stop, don't do that' using a hand signal if another child does something to them that they don't like in the classroom/playground/toilet. If they persist tell Midday Supervisor/Classroom Assistant/Teacher straight away.
- Carpet Discussion Time – when incident brought to the teacher's attention e.g. pushing, fighting, sit down and discuss with whole class how they feel about the

incident. Would they like it to happen to them? How does it make them feel? What should they do?

- Through the teaching of PSCHE discuss different families within our society supported by the Jigsaw Scheme
- Ensure that teaching and teaching resources reflects the diversity in our society – ensure that everyone feels included
- Keep records of incidents – Complete an incident form (in staff room) and report to SLT if a pattern of behaviour is emerging or serious incident occurs parents to discuss ways of resolving the situation. (Use of behaviour cards).
- Playground equipment and adults support – markings/games on the playground, picnic tables and lunchtime equipment (playground storeroom) all help to keep children positively focused on desired behaviour as well as adult support for play.
- Teach children how to recognize when others do not like what is happening to them – sad face, crying.

9. **Monitoring & review – policy into practice**

We will review this Policy every two years as well as if incidents occur that suggest the need for review. The school uses the guidance by the DfE and the Anti-Bullying Alliance to inform its action planning to prevent and tackle bullying. This policy has also been guided by The Church of England, Valuing all God's Children.

10. **Responsibilities**

This Policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken on both prevent and respond to bullying.

This Policy will be working if:

- Children feel safe and secure in school.
- Children know what to do should they feel threatened or frightened by anyone.
- Parents, staff and governors are familiar with the policy and are actively involved in its support.
- Staff and governors are consulted regarding review/policy decisions.

11. **Anti-Bullying procedure**

Bullying can be based on any of the following things: Race (racist bullying), Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic), Special educational needs (SEN) or disability, Culture or class, Gender identity (transphobic), Gender (sexist bullying), Appearance or health conditions, Religion or belief, Related to home or other personal circumstance.

It is important that all staff be alert to early signs of distress in students. If a member of staff witnesses a bullying incident, in any form, or is approached by a child or young person about bullying, they should investigate the incident without delay according to the agreed procedures that are as follows:

- Staff will investigate the incident and see the child young person(s) involved and record what the victim has told you
- Staff should identify the accused bully/ies

- Obtain witnesses if possible and record what they have witnessed
- An incident form should be filled out and this should be passed to the Senior Leadership Team as soon as possible
- Bullying which is of a serious nature, or recurrent or persistent the Head Teacher should be informed as a matter of urgency who if appropriate will refer to a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Senior Leadership Team will investigate the incident speaking with both the victim and the bully/ies
- Parents will always be informed if their child has been found to be either a victim or a perpetrator of a bullying incident
- If allegations are substantiated implement sanctions appropriate to the incident
- Staff should continue to monitor the wellbeing of the victim and the behaviour of the bully. Meet with the victim on the review date to determine whether the bully/ies have stopped their behaviour. Staff should inform the Head teacher if the bullying has continued
- It should always be acknowledged that on rare occasions some children or young people set themselves up as victims, and the reasons for this should be thoroughly investigated and appropriate support given.
- Senior Leadership Team should ascertain whether or not the alleged bully has been involved in similar incidents involving this or others, thus enabling patterns of behaviour to be established