



ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*To lead those in our care to grow in their faith
and to benefit from an enriching education*

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Principles

'My commandment is this: love one another just as I love you.'

John 15:12

St Thomas More is a community where we strive to live by Gospel values. Mutual respect and love for our neighbour underpin our philosophy. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive environment for all our students, allowing all to learn in an atmosphere free of intimidation, denigration, violence and discrimination. Bullying is not acceptable or tolerated within such an environment and the governors will be determined that any bullying allegations are responded to swiftly; thoroughly investigated and if substantiated, dealt with efficiently and robustly. However, we aim not to vilify those exhibiting bullying behaviour, condemning the behaviour rather than the perpetrator. We look to support both the perpetrator and the victim.

Aims of this policy

1. To set out a definition and examples of what might be termed 'bullying behaviour'.
2. To broadly identify how the School might respond to the aggressor and victim.
3. To indicate how information about bullying might be disseminated to students, staff, governors and other stakeholders.
4. To broadly indicate systems whereby staff and students will be trained to recognise and respond to bullying.
5. To outline the broad principles relating to monitoring and dealing with incidents of bullying.

WHAT IS BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

We define bullying as a repeated or persistent attempt by one person or group to exert control in an anti-social and detrimental way over another person or group. Bullying behaviour is part of peer-on-peer abuse which is any form of physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse, and coercive control, exercised between children, and within children's relationships (both intimate and non-intimate), friendships, and wider peer associations. Bullying behaviour is unpleasant and involves dominance and abuse of power. It is often but not necessarily pre-meditated and usually forms a sustained pattern of behaviour rather than being an isolated incident. As there are many forms of bullying, our policy is to examine each incident individually and decide on the appropriate action in each case. Examples of the major different types of bullying are listed in the Student Journal (issued to each student) and are reproduced below:

- Physically hurting someone else.
- Making threats.
- Stopping someone from walking past.
- Making someone give you money.
- Getting people into trouble for something they did not do.
- Frightening another person.
- Deliberately cutting people out of conversations or refusing to talk to them.
- Verbal abuse.

- Making hurtful personal remarks.
- Making comments over social networks.
- Name-calling.
- Making racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic comments.
- Calling people names because of their religion.
- Interfering with other people's property.

WHERE CAN BULLYING HAPPEN?

Bullying behaviour is often hidden and involves subtle or covert threats. It can happen:

- On the way to, or back from school.
- In the playground.
- In the toilets.
- In the classroom or corridors.
- In the canteen.
- Over the Internet/using social media.

SYMPTOMS OF CHILDREN BEING BULLIED

- Fall in attendance due either to illness or truancy.
- Truancy from particular lessons.
- Drop in the standard and amount of work being carried out by a pupil.
- Child appears withdrawn or depressed.
- Noticeable change in the behaviour of a child.
- Unfavourable changes in friendship groups.
- The child not wishing to sit near another child.
- The child being fearful of moving around the school alone.

THE LAW

While there is no legal definition of the term bullying, it is important to bear in mind that many behaviours which, in the school context, are called bullying, may be defined in law as threatening behaviour, criminal damage, theft, assault, sexual harassment or racial harassment. It is the right of pupils and parents to report such incidents to the Police.

SCHOOL GUIDELINES

The school will take seriously allegations of bullying and investigate appropriately keeping appropriate records. We will strive to communicate appropriately with parents/carers of the aggressor and the victim.

HOW WE MAY DEAL WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- Ask them to apologise to the victim.
- Keep them in at break and/or lunchtime.
- Change seating in a classroom.
- Restrict the area they are allowed to be in, during school.
- Give special work, such as work about bullying and how it can hurt.
- Initiate a pastoral support plan (PSP) and involve external agencies in supporting the student.
- Use peer mentors to mentor the aggressor.
- Contact parents to ask for their intervention.

- Exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion.

HOW WE DEAL WITH THE VICTIM

- They are encouraged to come forward to tell us about bullying issues and are supported in the process.
- We will listen and investigate what is reported.
- Students and parents will be encouraged to contact the Police and support agencies if appropriate.
- The victim will be encouraged to reconcile with the perpetrator if appropriate.

HOW WE TRY TO DEAL WITH BULLYING ISSUES AND GENERAL/PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- Ensuring a senior member of staff has overall responsibility for overseeing ‘anti-bullying’.
- By empowering parents to come forward to discuss any concerns.
- Timetabling assemblies with bullying issues – Heads of Year to use assembly time to reinforce the anti-bullying Policy.
- By directing resources to supervising students around the school.
- Bullying is covered in PSHE/Citizenship schemes of work.
- Creating a ‘tell an adult immediately’ culture in the School.
- Anti-bullying signage around the School.
- Staff trained every two years to recognising and deal with bullying.
- Staff to log all reports of bullying incidents and the subsequent investigation.
- Peer mentoring scheme to encourage younger students to talk to those more senior.

This policy was agreed on 7 December 2004

This policy was reviewed on 7 November 2005

This policy was reviewed on 18 January 2007

This policy was reviewed on 28 September 2009

This policy was reviewed on 30 March 2011

This policy was reviewed on 9 June 2016

This policy was reviewed by the Full Governing Body on 26 June 2018

This policy was reviewed by the Admissions and Ethos Committee on 15 June 2021

This policy was reviewed by the Admissions and Ethos Committee on 23rd November 2021

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