



St Matthew's Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date policy written: February 2023

Reviewed: April 2026

Next review date: April 2027

This Policy must be read in conjunction with : the Behaviour Management Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Equality Policy, Relationships, Health and Sex Education Policy, SEND Policy, E-Safety Policy, Pupil Premium Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Child on Child Abuse Policy

Rationale

At St. Matthew's Primary School, we believe that school should be a safe place for everyone. As a 'Happy Centred School' we strive to provide a supportive and secure environment where our pupils develop:

- Self –confidence
- Achievement and Success
- Positive Relationships
- Support mechanisms
- Coping Skills

We believe that coming to school should be something to look forward to and not something to fear; children who feel safe attend school regularly and are more able to learn effectively. As a result, they are more likely to reach their full potential and benefit from the opportunities of education.

We recognise that bullying can have long lasting effects on children's mental health. As such, we take all allegations of bullying seriously and believe that bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school.

Aims

As a school, we aim for all our pupils to feel safe and happy to be themselves. However, we acknowledge that bullying does occasionally happen and we adopt the attitude that 'it could happen here' (Keeping Children Safe in Education). Under the Equalities Act 2010, we have a legal responsibility to eliminate discrimination. Therefore, the objective of this policy is to define what bullying is, outline our stance on it and support staff to take reasonable steps to reduce, address and tackle instances of bullying behaviour. Allegations of bullying will be taken seriously and these will be dealt with swiftly with collaboration from pupils, parents/carers and staff.

What is bullying? A definition

The school has adopted the following definition of bullying:

'The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.' (Anti-Bullying Alliance)

Bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or fights. However, these are also serious incidents and would be dealt with in line with the school's Behaviour Management Policy. These would be monitored to look for patterns of behaviour emerging which could become bullying.

The following would be used with children:

S – several

T - times

O - on

P – purpose

Bullying can be:

- *Physical* – taking someone's property, pushing, kicking, biting, hitting, or any other violent act (including sexual harassment)
 - *Verbal* – name calling, tormenting, threatening, racist or sexist language
 - *Indirect* - spreading rumours, writing notes, coercion or exclusion from social groups
 - *Cyber* – all areas of the internet, email, social networking and the use of mobile phones or gaming devices
 - *Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic* – a focus on the issue of sexuality or gender identity
- (This list is not exhaustive)

Pupils may be at risk of becoming a target based on the grounds of appearance, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability, family circumstances or any other perceived differences. Groups more likely to experience bullying in childhood include those with SEND, looked after children, young carers, those perceived to be LGBT and there is growing evidence that children in receipt of free school meals are more at risk. (Anti-Bullying Alliance, 2023)

We acknowledge that there is no stereotype of a 'typical' bully or a 'typical' target. In fact, all children of different ages and personalities may at some point become involved in bullying behaviour or become a target of bullying.

Signs and Symptoms

Here are some possible signs and symptoms of being a target of bullying:

- Becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking confidence
- Appears reluctant to go to school
- Trouble sleeping
- Complaining of feeling ill
- Changes in school work
- Regular physical signs such as bruising
- Has possessions go missing
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Stops eating

(This list is not exhaustive)

Where can bullying take place?

Bullying can happen anywhere – in the classroom, in the corridor, in the toilets, on the playground or on the internet. It may also occur outside the school premises.

With increased access to the internet through smart devices, bullying can happen behind closed doors often during times where pupils may be spending more time on their own without close supervision. Pupils will be taught that bullying can happen anywhere.

Bullying outside school premises

'Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises...this can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises'. (Prevention and tackling bullying, DfE , 2014)

- In these cases the following steps could be taken:
- Talk to the local PCSO
- Talk to the headteachers of other schools where pupils may be involved
- Discuss coping strategies with children and their parents
- Arranging alternative routes for children to travel to school
- Any other steps in accordance with the school's Behaviour Management Policy

Prevention: Strategies for avoiding bullying behaviour

We believe that it is vital to develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. As such, adults must:

- Refer to the school's Golden Rules regularly with children
- Explicitly teach children how to build and maintain friendships and relationships with their peers and support children to develop coping strategies
- Celebrate differences (such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or family situations), challenge stereotypes and prejudice, promote fundamental British Values and raise awareness of the protected characteristics included in the Equalities Act 2010
- Plan curriculum lessons, assemblies, role-plays, visits, circle time activities and displays which are used to educate children about bullying. These will take place throughout the year, not just in national Anti-Bullying weeks
- Promote the positive use of technology and e-safety in order to educate pupils about how to protect themselves from cyberbullying
- Evaluate technology, social networking sites and gaming sites to take account of developments in potential methods for cyber bullying
- Attend any required training. Staff training opportunities will provide adults with clear messages about bullying (including homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying) and how to deal with it effectively
- Use national Anti-Bullying week to bring issues to the forefront and to refresh pupil, parent and staff knowledge
- Share the child friendly Anti-Bullying Policy with pupils and their parents or carers so that all parties understand the school's approach
- Review the school site to look for potential 'bullying hotspots' and ensure that adults are placed accordingly during breaks and lunchtimes
- Arrange for Year 6 Prefects to patrol corridors

- Regular consultation with children and action on what they say to ensure that practice is effective

This prevention work will be led by Rachel Bardon (Assistant Headteacher), Sandie Gonsalves (Safeguarding Manager) and Natalie Crawford (Mental Health Lead).

Intervention: Recording, Monitoring, Responding and Evaluating

Communication is critical; children are encouraged to report incidents of bullying behaviour against themselves or involving friends or classmates. They are encouraged to be proactive bystanders (upstanders).

Adults take all allegations of bullying seriously but will investigate thoroughly before making any decisions or taking action. All known/reported cases will be investigated by a senior member of staff. This will be the link Assistant Headteacher in the first instance.

Basic Procedure

1. Through questioning of all those involved, try to establish what has happened
2. Consult other adults who may have knowledge about the case
3. Keep notes of all responses including any historical incidents between those concerned on CPOMS
4. Keep parents informed as appropriate
5. Speak to the children and resolve the situation
6. Record agreed actions and a timescale for a 'check back' with the target (to be logged on CPOMS)
7. Assistant Headteachers will inform the Deputy Headteacher and Headteacher as necessary
8. Actions will include support for all those involved, including the bully, and all sanctions/behaviour modification will be in line with the school's Behaviour Management Policy

This is a basic procedure. Any cases will be managed with professional judgement and on a case by case basis. Our ultimate aim is to stop cases of bullying rather than cast blame or punishments. Senior members of staff will monitor cases and analyse trends and patterns. This will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy. Pupil and parent questionnaires will also be used.

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils

We expect our pupils to:

- Recognise what bullying is and what it is not
- To recognise the difference between a 'bystander' and an 'upstander'
- To behave in a manner that supports the school ethos
- Use the internet safely and adhere to all school expectations
- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying both inside and outside of school, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity
- Be 'upstanders' who report incidents of unkind or threatening behaviour
- Provide support to their peers

- Collaborate in the writing of a child friendly Anti-Bullying Policy
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- **Parents/Carers**
 - We ask our parents to support their children and the school by:
 - Familiarising themselves with key information provided by the school about bullying
 - Watching for any signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their own child, which might be signs of bullying
 - Advise their child to report any suspected bullying to a member of staff
 - Report incidents of bullying to a member of staff on behalf of their child if necessary
 - Allowing the school to investigate the incidents in line with this policy without intervening
 - Monitoring their child's online activity to check that the internet or any smart devices are being used safely and responsibly and ask school for help in establishing parental controls if necessary
 - Keep evidence of any cyber bullying, whether this be photographs, text messages or emails
 - Advising their child not to retaliate to forms of bullying
 - Cooperating with the school even if their child is accused of bullying, to try to ascertain the truth.
 - Sharing the message that bullying is very serious and is not acceptable
 - Know that the school will deal with cases sensitively and confidentially
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- **Staff**
 - Our staff will:
 - Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect from our pupils
 - Uphold the school ethos and adhere to all school policies
 - Take the necessary steps to prevent bullying behaviour from occurring (see prevention strategies above)
 - Make arrangements for alternative spaces to be used by pupils who find outside 'free play/less structured playtimes' times difficult
 - Be alert to signs of bullying even if there are no reported incidents
 - Provide a safe space to listen to children who report incidents of unkind or threatening behaviour, take these seriously and report onwards to a senior member of staff (link Assistant Headteacher in the first instance)
 - Look for behaviour becoming repetitive and intentionally hurtful
 - Be alert to persistent absentees and any cases where absence from school might be associated with bullying
 - Report suspected cases of bullying to the link Assistant Headteacher and log it on CPOMS
 - Follow up any reported cases from parents/carers promptly and keep parents informed
 - Deal with any cases of bullying in accordance with the agreed procedures outlined in this policy
 - Provide support to both the targets and perpetrators of bullying
 - Hold all children to account in the same way and not make excuses for behaviour

Headteacher

The headteacher will:

- Ensure the safeguarding of all pupils in the school
- Act as a role model for other staff by exemplifying all the behaviours and actions expected of members of staff in relation to this policy
- Ensure that training is provided for staff in how to deal with incidents of bullying and ensure that this policy is included in the induction process for all new staff
- Ensure that staff safeguarding training is up to date and that staff are trained in child on child abuse
- Ensure that incidents of bullying are recorded and monitored
- Lead and conclude the investigations into incidents of bullying
- Consider provision for all pupils involved
- Implement sanctions as required including suspensions and permanent exclusions
- Nominate a mental health lead for the school
- Review the effectiveness of the policy

Governors

- Support the Headteacher in implementing the policy and reviewing its effectiveness
- Evaluate and update this policy in line with new legislation on an annual basis
- Be part of the formal Complaints Procedure and respond to any complaints from parents/carers

This policy was written with reference to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- 'Prevention and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies', DfE 2014
- 'School support for children and young people who are bullied', DfE 2014
- Equalities Act, 2010
- Ofsted Inspection Handbook
- Stonewall Training Resources
- 'Together we can address bullying!' training by Rita Adair, Senior Educational Psychologist, Norfolk County Council
- Guidance from the Anti-Bullying Alliance

*Written by Rachel Bardon
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