



St Mary's Church in Wales Voluntary Aided School



Anti-bullying Policy

Date approved by Governing Body: 13.3.2023

Date of Next Review: Spring 2026

Signed by Chair of Governors: A Veneklaas Slots

Signed by Headteacher: L Williams

Aims and Objectives

Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim, as a school, to produce a safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur. We aim to make all those connected with the 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.

Consultation

The school has developed its policy after it has consulted with pupils, parents, School Staff and the Local Authority. The views of interested parties have been sought through questionnaires to parents and pupils, interviews with pupils – individually or in small groups, the School Council and Governors meetings.

Our Mission Statement

‘Dream, Aspire and Achieve Together through Love and Faith’

St Mary's has a simple behaviour policy which is well established and fully embedded in school. Our simple guide of Ready Respectful Safe ensures everyone in school understands and knows what is expected of them. Teaching and support staff ensure pupils of all ages understand how it looks and sounds to be Ready Respectful and Safe. This strong core of understanding along with our Christian ethos and emphasis on values helps everyone at school to make the correct choices. This policy is intended to support when things go wrong and pupils make the wrong choices in how they treat other people.

Pupil Voice

We spoke to our Student Council and asked for their views on bullying: When we asked them for their definition of bullying they said bullying is: ‘Constantly being mean physically and verbally and also now electronically through cyberbullying’. We then asked what an adult can do to help stop bullying and they said : ‘An adult in school will speak to the person doing the bullying and ask them to stop or face the consequences of the school rules’ ‘The adult may also speak to the parents of the child being bullied and the parents of the child doing the bullying.’

Definition

At times we may use the word ‘bullying’ to mean any sort of unpleasant actions, but most people consider bullying to be deliberately hurtful and is often repeated over a period of time. “Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual or group, often repeated over a period of time, that intentionally hurts or harms.” (Tackling Bullying in Schools: A Survey of Effective Practice – Estyn 2006)

However, it is important to note that one off incidents can also leave children shocked and upset.

Identifying behaviour as bullying

Bullying can take many forms, including the use of modern technologies as a tool for bullying. The four main types are:

- Physical – by being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give money or belongings; having property, clothes or belongings damaged; forced to do something they don't want to do.
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks.
- Indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups.
- Electronic – known as 'cyberbullying'; for example, via mobile phones (text messages, calls) and computers (emails, website, chatroom).

There are many important categories of bullying, including:

- Racist bullying.
- Sexual bullying.
- Gender based bullying.
- Bullying on the basis of sexual orientation.
- Bullying on the basis of Special Educational Need or disabilities.
- Bullying of those with long-term health conditions.

Signs of concern

We recognise the need to be vigilant as a staff and will take particular note of the following signs for concern.

- Children who are overly shy or withdrawn.
- Children who do not want to go out to play.
- Children who stay close to adults during playtimes and other informal times in the school day.
- Children who are frequently absent from school for no discernible reason.
- Children who appear unhappy, isolated or anxious.
- Children who are suddenly performing poorly in class.
- Children who are bringing extra items of snack to give to other children.
- Children who complain of being 'ill' with no discernible symptoms.

Strategies for the School

Bullying is dealt with as a whole school approach. Bullying and its effects may be exemplified and reinforced through many areas of the curriculum:

- PSE and in particular Jigsaw lessons
- Class discussions and in particular Circle Time.
- Creative writing.
- Drama.
- Humanities (to include History and RVE).

The School uses a combination of strategies that can be drawn on and adapted to fit the circumstances of particular incidents:

- Collective Worship
- Rewards and positive behaviour recognition.

- Group work.
- Circle time.
- Buddying.
- School council.
- Worry box.

Immediate responses to bullying

Our immediate responses to bullying will be:

- To take the incident or report seriously.
- To be ready to listen and believe children when they 'tell'.
- To encourage children to speak up straight away by offering confidentiality and by ensuring that there is a special time for children to speak to a teacher.
- To make children comfortable about approaching a teacher, encouraging close relationships and understanding between teachers and children.
- To talk to children about 'bullying' issues, making them more aware of what is going on, helping them to understand what 'bullying' is and how it feels.
- To help the 'bullies' to understand what the problem is and to let them know what being bullied is like.
- To talk to groups of children who are behaving inappropriately and to get them to think about/ discuss the consequences of their behaviour.
- To help children who are bullied to stick up for themselves in an appropriate way.
- To have a designated child who is easier to talk to – someone who will help them to think through the right cause of action.
- To encourage older children to play their part in protecting younger or more vulnerable children.
- To have more and tougher specific punishments for persistent bullying.
- By ensuring that all children are aware of exactly what to do if they are bullied.
- To keep a close eye out in the playground, looking for children who look isolated or scared.
- By ensuring that all children are included and have friends through group activities that encourage good social interaction.
- By anticipating trouble and breaking up groups that display inappropriate behaviour and tackling the 'ring leader' immediately.
- To give clear consequences and warnings to those who bully.

Records

If staff feel the incidents are happening daily and informed of so, they will keep their own records. Details recorded could include:

- Names of those involved, including the victim, bully and any witnesses.
- Dates of incidents.
- Details of incidents.
- Action taken.
- Monitoring of situation.

Strategies for Parents

For any Anti-bullying policy to be effective it needs the support and cooperation of parents.

If parents wish to make a complaint about bullying we offer the following guidelines:

- Try to stay calm.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened.
- Make a note of what action the school intends to take.
- Ask if there is anything you can do to help your child at school.
- Stay in touch with the school.

Strategies for Pupils

The pupils are encouraged to use the following strategies if they feel they are being bullied.

- Tell the Class Teacher or an appropriate adult.
- Tell a Prefect or School Council member.
- Tell a friend who could then pass on their concerns to an appropriate adult.
- Tell their parents who will then be welcome to contact Staff.
- Write down your concerns and place it in the worry box.

All pupils will be made aware of the disciplinary processes and sanctions used. These may include:

- An awareness that their behaviour is related to an outcome, and has consequences for themselves and others.
- Time-out. Removing the pupil from the group, not so much as a punishment, but rather as a time when the pupil can think about their behaviour and often a solution.
- Denial of privileges, with the opportunity to redeem one's self.
- Parental involvement.
- Individual Behaviour Plan.
- Counselling.

If all steps fail it may be necessary to exclude the pupil for a fixed period or, particularly where serious violence is involved, the Headteacher has the option of permanently excluding the pupil. This would not be a standard course of action as each case would be considered separately.

Procedures

Once bullying concerns have been expressed these will be dealt with by either the Class Teacher, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher – whoever is deemed to be the most appropriate to deal with the situation. Our aim would be:

- To remain calm and in control of the situation.
- To carry out discussions away from the remainder of the class, where possible
- To take the incident or report seriously and never ignore it.
- To avoid making premature assumptions.
- To take action as quickly as possible.
- To reassure the child who has been bullied.
- To offer concrete help, advice and support to the child concerned.
- To help children to work co-operatively, helping them to implement mediation or conflict resolution skills, when appropriate.

- To adopt a problem solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves.
- To ensure that the incidences are recorded appropriately.
- To encourage the bully to see the 'victims' point of view and to implement consequences for the bully, if need be.
- To explain clearly the punishment and why it is being given.
- To inform the Head teacher and other colleagues of the incident, when appropriate.
- To follow – up repeatedly.
- To ask the Head Teacher to contact both sets of parents, if the problem persists.
- To set targets for improvement with the child and the Parents where appropriate. This will form part of an Individual Behaviour Plan.

Conclusion

We believe that a whole school approach to bullying is the best way forward for children. We believe that this Policy sets out clear guidelines, due support processes for the 'victims' of bullies, as well as unambiguous consequences for the bullies.

We recognise that as a School we need to avoid complacency and retain clear views regarding the unacceptability of bullying and the importance of being alert always for the signs that it is taking place.

We acknowledge, therefore, our role in fostering an environment that encourages good behaviour where acceptable standards of behaviour are clearly defined and the parameters of good behaviour are obvious to all. In this way, we will endeavour to secure a safe and comfortable environment for all of our 'School Family'.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the Headteacher, who reports to Governors on request about the effectiveness of the policy. The anti-bullying policy is the Governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness annually, in line with School Improvement.