

St Matthew Academy

BULLYING Policy

St Matthew says *'let your light shine.'*

At St Matthew Academy we let our light shine by:

- Growing our inclusive, caring Catholic community
- Nurturing faith, discovering talents and cultivating ambition
- Transforming each other through integrity, courage and service

enabling everyone at St Matthew Academy to flourish.

Date of approval	Autumn 2021
Date of review	Autumn 2022

Academy anti-bullying statement, procedures and reporting

Learning to live as part of a community is a complex process for adults, so it is not surprising that children who are learning about relationships, friendship and themselves, can become involved in bullying behaviour as bullies, victims or both.

1. Our commitment

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so that they can learn, play and communicate in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We wish to help our pupils develop a positive self-image and positive strategies for self-assertion.

We have a commitment to ensuring that the Academy ethos and curriculum actively discourage bullying behavior. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our Academy. If bullying behaviour does occur all children and adults should be able to tell and know that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We believe that ignoring bullying is wrong.

As part of our rights and responsibilities in St Matthew Academy everyone who witnesses or knows about a bullying incident has a duty to intervene, to get help and to report it.

2. Defining

We define bullying as any or all of the following:

- A repetitive series of actions by an individual or group which causes long lasting fear, anxiety or harm to another person or group of people
- Verbal or physical actions which are designed to intentionally hurt and intimidate or to make the person who is at the receiving end feel unhappy, embarrassed or insecure about themselves

What kind of behaviour constitutes bullying behaviour?

- Hitting, kicking, pushing, threatening
- Nudging, whispering, sniggering, facial expressions, gestures
- Making someone do something they don't want to do
- Preventing someone from doing something they do want to do
- Putting someone down (belittling or embarrassing or humiliating)
- Being domineering or controlling
- Forcing someone to be your friend – making it uncomfortable or risky for them if they are not
- Making fun of someone's race, ethnic origin, faith, culture, religion, name, appearance, accent or family
- Making sexist or sexually abusive comments
- Using homophobic language as insults, putting people down on the basis of sexuality or the sexuality of family members
- Online or cyberbullying e.g. Posting offensive messages on websites or chat rooms, sending offensive text messages or emails or bullying the victims via their mobile phones
- Any unfavourable or behaviour comments, gestures or actions made to someone relating to their disability or special educational needs

What kind of behaviour is not bullying?

- Occasional loss of temper
- Hurting by accident
- Teasing or having a joke which is received in good spirit
- Falling in and out with friend's minor disagreements
- Not being friends with someone, not inviting someone to your party
- A disagreement or fight between two people of equal strength or qualities

3. Recognising

We recognise that when bullying takes place some or all of the following features may be present:

- It is constant, frequent or repetitive
- It is deliberate
- It is often accompanied by a threat not to tell
- It is not always obvious who the bully is or might be
- It can be a group of people, sometimes led by a bully
- It is often focused on individual differences (colour, size, ability, home circumstances)
- It can be emotional or psychological (for example whispering about someone, excluding them from a group, staring and laughing)
- It is often subtle and not easily detected by adults who could respond
- The bully is usually seen to be more powerful or empowered than the victim (either by being stronger or bigger or older or cleverer or by belonging to a majority group)

We define bullying by how a person who is bullied feels, rather than what a bully does.

Pupils are encouraged to 'support and report' – if you know someone has been bullied support them, but also report the incident or knowledge to an adult.

4. Taking Action

We will take seriously all allegations of bullying, addressing as a priority the fears and concerns of the bullied.

We will ensure that all incidents are dealt with fairly and consistently. In all incidents of bullying we will:

- Gather as much information as possible, as soon as possible, from the bullied and any possible witnesses
- Report the incident to the class teacher(s), director of learning or head of primary
- Ensure that an investigation begins within one working day
- Record exactly what has happened and make careful notes on each stage of the investigation
- Use an incident sheet for recording incidents, in a consistent way that allows for monitoring of behaviour
- Make sure that teaching and support staff know about the incident in order for them to be vigilant and responsive
- Contact parents of the bully and the bullied in order to enlist their support
- Explain the consequences of the incident(s) to all parties concerned

5. Responding

Academy staff will react firmly and promptly where bullying is identified. A range of strategies is available to staff, according to the nature of the behaviour and incident.

In all cases of bullying behaviour, we will:

- Show that there is a united response, this is one of strong disapproval
- Reinforce our belief that behaviour is learned and can be changed and help the bully to change their behaviour
- Implement strategies to help this change
- Help pupils who have bullied to understand the effects of their actions and behaviour on others and then to alter their behaviour through restorative justice approaches
- Ensure that a record is kept of the incident
- Use peer group pressure to actively discourage bullying
- Apply appropriate sanctions when necessary

When we know a pupil has been bullied we will:

- Respond quickly and praise the reporter
- Listen to and reassure the pupil being bullied
- Reaffirm, boost or repair their self-esteem
- Demonstrate our support by taking the matter seriously
- Negate what has been said or threatened
- Report the incident to the class teacher(s), director of learning or head of primary
- Create a network of support by informing the bullied pupil's friends, parents/carers and class teacher(s) or pastoral staff
- Teach or suggest ways the bullied might assert themselves or respond to future incidents
- Consider training or activities for the class/school (e.g. Class discussion, drama, literature, assemblies) and buddies
- When reporting to the pupil's parents/carers ask them to monitor and report

6. Monitoring

It is well recognised that bullying often happens in secret and is accompanied by threats not to tell. In order for us to be able to find out about bullying we will:

- Encourage pupils to report bullying incidents whether they are the person being bullied or they are witnesses to bullying
- Ensure that the head of school, head of primary, pastoral staff and/or senior leaders always respond to phone calls, letters or emails from parents concerning bullying behaviour
- Ensure that all staff are vigilant and investigate concerns and contribute to any log or record being maintained so that we have a full picture
- Ensure that all staff are kept informed about reported incidents and appropriate follow up procedures
- Give the governing body a termly report on the nature, scope and frequency of bullying incidents in order to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this policy.

We will endeavour to deal with any incidents of bullying as quickly as possible, it is important pupils, parents and carers report any incidents of bully straight away so that appropriate investigations can begin.