

St Michael's CE Primary School: ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Our Philosophy

We believe that all who work and learn here should show respect for one another and treat each other with positive regard for feelings, individuality and personality, regardless of age, race, gender or other differences. Considerate behaviour is essential to the creation of a happy learning environment.

We recognise that it is the responsibility of the governing body to decide what action will be taken against bullying. The governors have delegated the co-ordination of this action to the headteacher. To be effective, we believe action against bullying must involve the whole school community, which includes pupils, teachers, support staff, parents and governors.

Aims

The aim of this policy is to set out clearly the school's approach to the problem of bullying behaviour. As such it will define what we mean by bullying behaviour and identify the main forms it might take. It will set out what action needs to be taken to deal with the behaviour as well as consider preventative measures. It will explain monitoring procedures and identify success criteria.

A Definition of Bullying Behaviour

We have been guided by the Department for Education definition of bullying to formulate a definition which can be clearly understood:

Bullying can be defined as behaviour which is deliberately offensive, hurtful or threatening to the victim, who finds it difficult to defend him/herself because the perpetrator exercises some sort of power over the victim. It tends to be repeated often over a period of time if not stopped.

Types of Bullying Behaviour

We recognise that, from time to time, the following types of bullying behaviour may occur in our school:

- Physical** : hitting, kicking, pinching, taking or damaging belongings
- Verbal** : name-calling, insulting, making racist or sexist remarks
- Indirect** : Spreading nasty stories, excluding from social group

We consider such behaviour to be unacceptable and will work towards minimising its occurrence.

Signs to look for at school

We strive to ensure, through all our formal and informal discussions with children, that they have sufficient confidence in their teachers and other staff to confide in them if they feel harassed by another child or group of children. However, we need to be aware that the following could be signs of possible bullying.

Children may:

- a) begin to under-achieve in their school work;
- b) become withdrawn and even start to stammer;
- c) become easily distressed and perhaps not wish to eat;
- d) have unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts;
- e) have their possessions go missing;
- f) refuse to say what is wrong;
- g) give improbable excuses for any of the above;
- h) display uncharacteristic behaviour;

The signs can, of course, be symptomatic of other problems so staff should not jump to conclusions. In any event these and similar concerns should be reported to the headteacher.

Who deals with Bullying?

If a case of suspected bullying is reported or observed the following procedure should be implemented:

- If a member of staff feels confident that they have the time to deal with the issue there and then (e.g. in the playground) they should follow the agreed procedures.
- If they feel the problem is too serious to resolve successfully there and then, to the satisfaction of all involved pupils, then they must pass the problem to the headteacher, who will deal with it.
- Likewise, if they feel that they will be hampered by circumstances (e.g. lack of time) in following the procedures, they must pass the problem to the headteacher, who will deal with it.

Action to be taken

We recognise that it is not necessary for every incident of poor behaviour to be recorded. Children may report incidents causing them offence or distress, which may be isolated occurrences. Often these incidents can be dealt with through discussion with the victim and perpetrator together, and can be solved amicably. In this situation, the victim is usually happy to accept apology from the perpetrator and will feel the incident has been successfully resolved. He/she should always be reassured that it was right to tell an adult and should report any future incidents. It should be made clear to the perpetrator that behaviour which upsets others, in any way at all will not be tolerated and a sanction may follow. There will be other incidents, however, which will need to be recorded on the Incident Report sheet (see Appendix A).

In either situation, the following action should be taken:

Establish what really happened

- Fully discuss the incident with the person bringing it to your attention (pupil, parent or other).
- Unravel the incident, disregarding hearsay evidence, and establish the facts.
- Involve other named people in unravelling the facts, allowing each person the opportunity to speak without interruption from the others.

- Establish time, place, exact nature of incident, name of victims/s and perpetrator/s.
- Record the facts on a Bullying Incident Record sheet if appropriate.
- Reassure the victim. Explain that you are definitely investigating.

Deal with the perpetrator/s

- Listen to their version of events.
- Make a decision as to who is telling the truth based on all the facts, including accounts of any witnesses or collaborators.
- Make it clear to the perpetrator/s involved which aspect of their behaviour is unacceptable and why (explaining that it is the behaviour, not the person, that is unacceptable).

Ask the perpetrators/s:

- how they think the bullied person feels.
- how would they feel if they were treated in the same way
- what can they do to put the situation right.

Report the incident to the parents of victim and perpetrator/s if deemed necessary.

Follow up procedure

- Meet with the children together, if they have been dealt with separately, and ensure they are all clear about what happened.
- Remind them that they are all responsible if anyone is being bullied - there are no innocent bystanders.
- Decide on an appropriate line of action which may/may not involve a sanction.
- Explain the line of action/sanction clearly to all involved.
- Ensure that the line of action and /or sanction is carried out.
- Report outcome to parents if involved.

Bullying and the curriculum

Through whole school assemblies, work in both PSHE and RE and through all our discussions with the children, we will adopt a pro-active approach to combat bullying. We will emphasise good behaviour and a caring Christian ethos throughout the school, explore what is meant by bullying and how we can all help to prevent it. We will also emphasise to the children the importance of telling an adult if they feel they are being bullied. It should never be kept a secret and everyone has a responsibility to tell so we can ensure no-one has to suffer.

Parental Involvement

We recognise that, from time to time, any of these bullying behaviours could happen in our school and will do everything we can to minimise the possibility. Below are some helpful points which, we believe, are valid in helping us work with you to control bullying.

1. For child to feel better he/she must:
 - tell a responsible adult
 - feel that something is being done about bullying
 - see that you and the school are taking steps to protect him/her

2. Encourage your child to talk to you about things in general - school, friends, family, feelings - and listen to what he/she says. This way it will be a lot easier to recognise when there is a problem and take early preventative measures.
3. Helping you child starts with telling. Impress on your child the need to tell a teacher whenever bullying occurs. Children are encouraged to report incidents straight away and we view this as responsible behaviour rather than 'telling tales.'
4. Please tell the school if you have concerns as soon as possible. When meeting staff it might be helpful to have three or four points written down before the meeting. We want to work with you to ensure that your child feels secure and enjoys coming to school.

We aim to develop a trusting relationship between staff and parents so that, if a problem with bullying arises, teachers can talk freely to parents about their children whether they are the victim or the perpetrator.

The staff will liaise as closely as possible with parents to resolve problems regarding bullying. Parents of victims will be given an explanation as to how we are dealing with the perpetrator to ensure the bullying does not recur. Parents of the bully will be contacted by the headteacher to enlist their support and this may result in a written communication, which will remain on the pupil's file.

Success Criteria

We have identified the following as criteria against which the success of this policy can be judged.

- a) Pupils, teachers and support staff express a common understanding of what is meant by bullying.
- b) Parents and pupils feel that the school responds positively to bullying incidents.

Monitoring Procedures

The headteacher will be responsible for filing all copies of the Incident Report sheets. Any patterns identified, regarding specific places or pupils involved, will be discussed with teachers and support staff at staff meetings.

Appendix A

St Michael's CE Primary School Incident Report Sheet

| |
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| Date & time of day |
| Location |
| Children involved |
| Pupil's Comment/s |
| Bystander comment/s |
| Staff Comment |
| Action |
| Parents' Comment |

Staff Signature