



ST GEORGE & ST MARTIN CATHOLIC ACADEMY
Part of the Newman Catholic Collegiate
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



At St George & St Martin we aim to *foster positive and caring relationships within the academy, and between all in the wider community, through our Mission Statement:*

‘Growing, Learning, Loving; United in Play, Prayer and Peace’.

At St. George & St. Martin Catholic Academy, we believe that every child has the right to an environment wherein they feel happy, safe and valued, free from any humiliation, oppression and abuse caused by bullying. Whilst recognising that all institutions, whether large or small, have the potential for some bullying behaviour, we feel that a clearly laid down system for discipline can minimise its occurrence. At St George and St Martin we **take a cohesive, collective and collaborative approach to anti-bullying and endeavour to promote good relationships and make it clear that bullying behaviours are anti-social. Our school culture maintains that all children should feel included, valued and welcome, celebrating differences and challenging discrimination.** As a Catholic School, our understanding of Christ is based on love, and we teach that our actions should reflect some aspect of God’s love for us. Actions which do not reflect this, therefore, do not have any place in our school.

Bullying behaviour challenges our Mission Statement values and school ethos and, as such, is totally unacceptable.

At St George and St Martin, we are aware that bullying affects everyone, not just the **person showing bullying behaviours** and the **targets**. It also affects those children who watch (**bystanders**) and **other** pupils may be drawn in by group pressure.

We feel that it is important for pupils and parents / guardians to know that any bullying complaints will be dealt with **seriously**, firmly, fairly and promptly.

There are many definitions of bullying. At St George and St Martin Catholic Academy we use the following definition, teaching children that bullying:

- is deliberate, **intending to hurt someone physically or emotionally** ;
- is ongoing;
- involves a power **imbalance** between the **person showing bullying behaviours** and the **target**.

Bullying can take many forms but four main types are:

- physical - hitting, kicking, taking belongings;
- verbal - name-calling, insulting, **making threats**, racist remarks;
- indirect - spreading nasty stories, excluding someone from social groups;
- cyber-bullying – offensive text messaging and e-mailing and sending degrading images by phone or the internet.

It is important to note that although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some actions that can be seen through bullying can be.

In some instances, bullying can occur as a group behaviour. When this happens, it usually consists of the following:

- The ringleader (the person who is using the power as motivation to display bullying behaviours)
- Reinforcers (other people who encourage the bullying behaviour, for example, by laughing along)
- Assistant/s (people who help the ringleader)

- Bystanders (people who may not be directly involved with the bullying, yet are aware of what is happening)
- Target (the person who bullying behaviours are directed towards)

At St George and St Martins, all instances of bullying will be dealt with in context and all behaviour will be addressed as appropriate.

Some children may be more at risk of becoming targets of bullying behaviours and every effort will be taken to ensure that all children are educated to understand the impact, both short term and long term of bullying behaviours upon the target, as well as potential bystanders.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

Children who are being bullied will frequently be wary of disclosing incidents for fear of reprisals. It is, therefore, very important for staff to be vigilant in identifying and supporting those children who are bullied. Indicators of bullying might include a child:

- having low self-esteem;
- becoming withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence;
- being unusually quiet and withdrawn;
- being frightened of walking to or from school;
- being unwilling to come to school;
- having poor attendance at school;
- being late to arrive at, or depart from, school;
- feeling ill in the morning;
- crying themselves to sleep or having nightmares;
- doing less well in school work;
- coming home with clothes or possessions damaged;
- having dinner or other money 'lost' frequently;
- stealing money;
- having physical injuries (which the child fails to explain adequately);
- becoming aggressive or unreasonable;
- being emotionally volatile;
- bullying siblings or other children;
- stopping eating;
- being frightened to say what is wrong;
- being afraid to use the mobile phone [or internet].

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility.

PREVENTATIVE STEPS

In primary education the majority of bullying takes place in the playground so teaching and non-teaching staff must aim to carry out their supervisory duties diligently, including such areas as the toilets and those not in direct view. Staff, and children, are asked to watch out for lone children and try to integrate them into the play activities of other children. Children who are alone on the playground can go to the 'Friendship Stop' or the 'Buddy Bench' to find someone to play with. **If a child is struggling to form or maintain friendships, it may be appropriate for the class teacher to set up a 'Buddy System' to ensure that the child does not spend every play time alone. There are also Worry Boxes, situated in each classroom, are available for children to record their concerns, which the class teacher should check and address regularly.**

Anti-bullying Ambassadors maintain the role of supporting children who are or have in the past been a target of bullying behaviours or struggle to maintain friendships. Anti-bullying Ambassadors aim to identify issues and communicate these to staff as well as being an approachable peer for all children.

Staff should respond to good behaviour - rewarding exemplary instances would demonstrate fair mindedness and emphasise the importance we attach to it. Moreover, children who misbehave as a way of getting attention from the teacher can be encouraged to be well-behaved as an alternative and more attractive way of receiving this attention.

Green cards should be issued specifically for instances of good behaviour, whilst red cards should be issued for examples of unacceptable behaviour. All examples of unacceptable behaviour should be referred back to the Golden Rules. The use of good questioning techniques can be very effective i.e. "What are you doing?" followed by "What should you be doing?"

The school's non-bullying ethos is taught specifically to the whole school each year to tie in with National Anti-Bullying Week, and through the RHE Programmes of Study. The promotion of the non-bullying ethos of the academy should be addressed at every opportunity and, while Assemblies, RE and RHE lessons naturally lend themselves to this, bullying can also be addressed in other areas of the curriculum.

RESPONDING TO BULLYING INCIDENTS

Every report of bullying must be thoroughly investigated, fairly and impartially, and responded to in an appropriate manner using the following guidelines:

- 1 All incidents of bullying should be recorded in the Incident Log, which is kept in the Principal's office.
- 2 The initial response to a bullying incident occurring on the yard should be from the **member of staff** on duty. The incident should then be referred to the class teacher who will adopt **an individual, context-based** problem solving approach. Children involved in bullying others may feel quite justified in their actions, and may be reluctant to admit to them. Some children may even make false accusations of bullying against a fellow pupil to get them into trouble. It can be difficult for teaching and non-teaching staff to get an accurate picture of events or to be sure who is telling the truth. Class teachers can often build upon a special relationship with individual children to encourage honest and direct discussion so that a solution to the children's personal disagreement may be adopted. **With the initial response, staff will aim to ensure that they do not try** not to rescue the **target** or punish the **person showing bullying behaviour**, but help them both gain insight into the situation and consider ways of avoiding or resolving the difficulties they are experiencing. Circle time may be an ideal opportunity for this approach. A follow-up meeting with the children, arranged by the class teacher, can find out whether the solution has been effective or not.
- 3 Sanctions should be used where bullying is clearly proven. Whatever sanctions are undertaken, they must relate to the schools' general **behaviour** policy and the matter needs referral to a senior member of staff. Mild sanctions can be useful in responding to one-off **incidences** which do not result in actual physical harm. A reprimand may be sufficient to deter a pupil from name-calling or mild teasing. Counselling or problem solving approaches may be used profitably at this stage, especially if a number of children are involved. For bullying which results in damage to person or property, a serious response is considered.
All incidents of a physical nature must result in a red card being issued.
Incidents of a racial nature must be reported to the Principal.

SANCTIONS

- (i) Exclusion from break time yard activities (children must be supervised).
- (ii) Exclusion from lunch time yard activities (Principal and Vice Principal to cover)

- (iii) Procedure for issuing red card should be followed. (See **Behaviour** Policy).
- (iv) Exclusion from school at lunchtime.
- (v) Exclusion from school.

Involvement of parents throughout each stage is discretionary within sanctions (i) to (iii), though from sanction (iii) it is essential. Parents should be given the opportunity to assist the school and, indeed to support any action being taken. It is also vital that accurate records are kept of incidents to protect the school should the family or child decide to take legal action. All relevant school personnel will also be informed.

Exclusion as a response to bullying is the ultimate sanction and would not be expected to be used unless all other possible strategies have been thoroughly explored. While no one can be complacent about the effects of serious bullying in our school, we find incidents infrequent in occurrence.

The school recognises the growing problem of cyber-bullying. This is reflected in the E-Safety policy, which should be read in conjunction with this Anti-Bullying policy.

The school statement of its Anti-Bullying policy reflects the consensus of the whole teaching staff and has the full agreement of the Academy Committee.

Links with other policies

This policy links particularly to the following policies:

Behaviour

Pupil Exclusion

RHE

Safeguarding

Policy Monitoring and Review

Policy to be reviewed every two years.

Policy agreed by staff: _____

Date: _____

Policy agreed by school, council: _____

Date: _____

Policy agreed by Academy Committee: _____

Date: _____