

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

St. Mark's Catholic Primary School



Approved date :	December 2025
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Next review due by:	September 2028
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Signed by Chair of LGB

St Mark's Anti Bullying Policy

Mission Statement:

Guided by our Catholic faith, we work together at St Mark's Catholic School, Ipswich, to show kindness and respect and to keep our school a safe place where bullying is not allowed.

Policy Objectives

- This policy outlines what St Mark's Catholic Primary School will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.
- The policy has been adopted with the involvement of the whole school community.
- St Mark's Catholic Primary School is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form.

Equalities Statement/Principles

St Mark's Catholic Primary School acknowledges the Equality Act (2010) and the Public Sector Equality Duty (2011). We understand our duty to every member of the school community to ensure they feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth. At St Mark's Catholic Primary School, equality is a key principle for treating all with respect and dignity and exercising our duty in relation to the nine protected characteristics. We believe that equality at our school should permeate all aspects of school life and is the responsibility of every member of the school and wider community.

This policy links with several school policies, practices and action plans including:

- *Behaviour policy*
- *Complaints policy*
- *Child Protection and Safeguarding policy*
- *Confidentiality policy*
- *Acceptable Use and Online safety Policies (AUP)*

At St. Mark's School we believe that every child has the right to receive their education free from humiliation, aggression and abuse. The school's anti-bullying policy aims to be rigorous and explicit – in short, any type of bullying will not be tolerated.

We aim to provide a happy, caring environment that nurtures and supports the developmental needs of individual children within the school community.

Keeping quiet encourages bad behaviour

At St Mark's we have:

- Regular opportunities for pupils to talk about what's going on.
- Clearly understood, consistent, open and fair responses to bad behaviour.
- A commitment to constantly reinforce the 'telling' message.

What is Bullying?

Bullying can be defined as '*behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally*'. DfE 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying'

Bullying usually has three common features:

1. It is deliberate, hurtful behaviour
2. It is repeated, often over a period of time
3. It is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves

There are three main types of bullying:

1. Physical; hitting, kicking, taking belongings
2. Verbal; name-calling, insulting, remarks against protected characteristics
3. Indirect; spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups

Bullying can be done verbally, in writing or images, **including through communication technology (cyber bullying) e.g.: graffiti, text messaging, e-mail or postings on websites.**

This policy covers all types of bullying, such as that towards disabled children and young people, homophobic, cyber, LGBT, racist, Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children.

Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying

The following steps will be taken when dealing with incidents:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be investigated by a member of the SLT.
- The school will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Headteacher.
- The DSL will be informed of all bullying concerns, especially where there may be safeguarding issues.
- The headteacher, designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or another appropriate member of leadership staff will interview all parties involved.
- The school will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.
- Parents will be informed by the investigating SLT member who will also inform both parents of the outcome.
- Appropriate consequences will be applied in consultation with all parties concerned up to and including permanent exclusion.
- If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, for example the police if a criminal offence has been committed, or Early Help if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.

The first step will be to gain a clear understanding of exactly what has been happening. If it is agreed that bullying has taken place the aim of the intervention will be to stop the abuse. The most effective way this can happen is to ensure that the bully changes his or her behaviour. They are the cause of the damage and the first step must always be to stop their unsafe actions.

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Integrated Children Services or Early Help or support through the Emotional Wellbeing Hub.

The following steps may be taken:

- Discussions with the child as to appropriate behaviour
- Official warnings to cease offending
- Loss of morning and/or lunchtime play
- Exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- Minor fixed-term suspension (up to 5 days)
- Major fixed-term suspension (6-15 days)
- Permanent exclusion

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the pupil and providing immediate pastoral support.
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the DSL, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to any further concerns.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support. This may include working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Integrated Children Services or support through the Emotional Wellbeing Hub.

Parents/Guardians

Parents will be made fully aware of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the Behaviour Policy. It will be stressed that if the bullying continues then appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be used.

Maintaining an anti-bullying initiative

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through:

- Use of curriculum opportunities (in particular PSHE, RSHE, RE, Circle Time)
- Use of purpose-made curriculum designed to address in-school issues, either for the whole class or small groups

Cyber bullying

At St Mark's School, we take this bullying as seriously as any other type of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situation individually.

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied, and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - looking at use of the school systems
 - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses
 - Contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.

Where an individual can be identified, the school will ensure that appropriate sanctions are implemented to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help or support they may need.

- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online.
- This may include:
 - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply.
 - providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists.
- Helping those involved to consider and manage any private information they may have in the public domain.

At St Mark's School, pupils are taught how to:

- Understand how to use technologies safely and know about the risks and consequences of misusing them.
- Know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyber bullied.
- Report any problems with cyber bullying. If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school, parents, the police, the mobile network (for phone) or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it.

Involvement of Pupils

We will:

- Ensure that pupils understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying.
- Regularly canvas pupils' views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in school and embedded messages in the wider school curriculum.
- Utilise pupil voice in providing pupil led education and support
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.

Monitoring and Review: Putting Policy into Practice

- The school will ensure that they regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied.
- Any issues identified will be incorporated into the school's action planning.
- The headteacher will be informed of bullying concerns, as appropriate.
- The headteacher will report on a regular basis to the governing body on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with St. Mark's Catholic Primary School Acceptable Use and Online Safety Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.