



# Anti-Bullying Policy

**Reviewed: September 2021**

**Reviewed: September 2022**

**Review date: September 2023**

**We will provide a learning environment that empowers, challenges and encourages individual success and responsibility.**



### 1) Objectives of this Policy

This Anti-bullying Policy outlines what St Matthias Academy will do to prevent and tackle bullying. For the purpose of this document the use of the word 'school' refers to St Matthias Academy.

The policy has been drawn up through the involvement of the whole school community and should be read in conjunction with the Equality Policy.

### 2) Our school community

- discusses, monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy on a regular basis;
- supports staff to promote positive relationships and identify and tackle bullying appropriately;
- ensures that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy;
- reports back to parents / carers regarding their concerns on bullying and deals promptly with complaints. Parents / carers in turn work with the school to uphold the anti-bullying policy;
- seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere and utilises support from the Local Authority and other relevant organisations when appropriate.<sup>1</sup>

### 3) Definition of bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet), and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Stopping violence and

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Bullying – A Charter for Action, DCSF



ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously a school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; teachers and schools have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

#### **4) Forms of bullying covered by this Policy**

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types of bullying including:

- bullying related to race, religion or culture;
- bullying related to special educational needs;
- bullying related to appearance or health conditions;
- bullying related to sexual orientation;
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances;
- sexist or sexual bullying.
- Internet related bullying
- Any child-on-child abuse as defined in the Keeping Children Safe in Education document (September 2022)

#### **4a) Cyber-bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Separate advice on teachers' powers to search (including statutory guidance on dealing with electronic devices) is available – see below for a link to this document.



### **5) Identifying and responding to bullying**

We will:

- work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying;
- actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience;
- consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through the School Council;
- Observe and take part in the annual nationwide 'Anti-Bullying week' campaign;
- train all staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying;
- actively create safe spaces for vulnerable children and young people.

### **6) Involvement of pupils / students**

We will:

- regularly canvass children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying;
- ensure students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying;
- ensure all students are aware of the range of actions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying;
- involve students in anti-bullying campaigns in schools;
- publicise the details of help lines and websites;
- offer support to students who have been bullied;
- work with students who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have.

### **7) Liaison with parents and carers**

We will:

- ensure that parents / carers know whom to contact if they are worried about bullying;



- ensure parents know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively;
- ensure parents / carers know where to access independent advice about bullying;
- work with parents and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.

### **8) Links with other school policies**

This Policy links with a number of other school policies including:

- Engagement Policy (formally Behaviour Policy)
- Confidentially Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

### **9) Monitoring and Review**

We will review this Policy at least once every two years as well as if incidents occur that suggest the need for review. This Policy only works if it ensures that the whole school community understands that bullying is not tolerated and understands the steps that will be taken to both prevent and respond to bullying.

In addition, the school will have a student and staff 'Anti -Bullying Champion'. The respective roles will aim to work together to identify and respond to incidents of bullying and respond to them accordingly. These roles will be highlighted on the school website.

### **10) What does the law say and what do I have to do?**

Every school must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying.

#### **The Education and Inspections Act 2006**

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's



behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Maintained schools and Academies are required to comply with the new Equality Duty. Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment. In England and Wales Part 6 of the Act applies to maintained schools and Academies and to other independent schools.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

### **Criminal law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour



– or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

### **11) Bullying outside school premises**

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable”. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying the teacher can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member.