



Anti-Bullying Policy

“And the king will answer them. Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” Matthew 25:40

Links with other school policies

- Behaviour Management policy
- Rewards and Sanctions policy
- Educational Visits policy
- Equal Opportunities policy
- Internet Usage policy
- SEN and Disabilities policy
- PSHCE policy
- Student/Pupil Welfare policy

Legal framework

- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice January 2015
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, October 2014.
- Independent School Standard Regulations 2010
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, DFE, September 2016
Available on the school's website and hard copy made available upon request.

Rational

Guided by the teaching of the gospels, we promote a community of love, service and prayer where:

- each student's and pupil's worth is recognised
- each student and pupil is seen and respected as an individual
- each student's and pupil's contribution is recognised
- no one benefits at the expense of another

We wish to encourage an environment where independence is celebrated and individuals can flourish without fear. Every student and pupil has the right to be safe and happy in school and be protected if she is feeling vulnerable.

The curriculum at St Martha's is used as a vehicle to support this Anti-Bullying Policy, as well as assemblies, morning prayers, weekly Tutor meetings, Anti-bullying Week and House activities whereby students and pupils can bond and develop positive relationships with their peers across Form groups. We also gain feedback from parents/guardians and monitor the interaction of pupils/students through parent/guardian consultation evenings and Tutor Review meetings.

Bullying is among the highest concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being; it is also a primary concern of children and young people themselves. It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help.

Aims and Objectives

Our main aim is to raise levels of consciousness and awareness so that:

- there is an agreed definition of 'bullying' within our school community
- everyone in the school community feels responsible for combating bullying and realises that bullying is always unacceptable
- victims feel protected and supported
- those engaged in bullying change their attitudes as well as their actual behaviour
- as a school community we can ultimately eradicate bullying

Definitions of 'bullying' and 'cyber-bullying'

Within the document, **Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governing Bodies, October 2014**, bullying is defined as the following:

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.'

Within the document, **Advice for Parents and Guardians on Cyber-bullying**, cyber-bullying is defined as the following:

'Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved.'

- Bullying is the wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone else.
- Bullying may be a verbal, physical, psychological or emotional form of abuse. As explained in **'Keeping Children Safe in Education', DFE, September 2016**, emotional abuse *'may involve serious bullying (including cyberbullying), causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger ...'*
- Bullying may be a repetitive action which causes distress not only at the time of each 'attack' but also by the threat of future 'attacks'
- Bullying is characterised by the dominance of an individual or group over another
- Bullying can be short-term or continued over a period of time
- Bullying can be overt or subtle
- Bullying can be perpetrated by an individual or a group

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- Name calling
- Excluding and individual or group
- Pushing/shoving, hitting/kicking
- Making fun of people
- Being rude
- Spreading rumours
- Saying unpleasant things about people's family and friends
- Stealing and breaking property
- Blackmail
- Threatening behaviour
- Demanding money

- Following people
- Unwanted physical contact
- Inappropriate gestures
- Derogatory looks
- Negative and inappropriate cyber communication (e.g. through social websites/apps, mobile phones, texting, misusing digital images)

Bullies pick on vulnerable individuals, but it is difficult to judge in advance who might be seen as vulnerable. Some victims may seem no different from others. The 'difference' may be a notional one used by the bully to justify the bullying. Any reason for a student/pupil being picked on is unacceptable. Such protected characteristics as race, religion, culture, sexual views and disability are some of the more common reasons for bullying occurring that we must all guard against.

Peer on Peer Abuse including Bullying and Cyber Bullying

- All staff must be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.
- Bullying, in all forms it may take, is unacceptable at St Martha's and all examples of bullying will be dealt with using our robust procedures at the earliest point of intervention.
- Pupils and students will be educated about cyber bullying through school programmes including anti bullying week and assemblies linked to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP).
- Where abuse is suspected the DSL must be informed and this may lead to a referral being made and the police informed with reference to Barnet LEA CAF & Social Care Thresholds booklet 2014.

Victims may be students and pupils who:

- are new to the class or school
- are different in appearance, speech or background from others
- suffer from low self-esteem (this may be a cause or an effect of bullying)
- demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when bullied e.g. tantrums, loss of control
- are more nervous or anxious

All of these are only possibilities, not predictions of victimisation. The victim may be the student/pupil who is in the wrong place at the wrong time, or who reacts inappropriately.

We must be alert to the behaviour of all students and pupils. It is important to be watchful and observe the social relationships between the students and pupils in the classroom during lessons as well as outside the classroom, especially during breaks and lunchtime.

Students and pupils who are bullied may show changes in behaviour, including:

- becoming shy, nervous and withdrawn
- feigning illness and clinging to adults
- being frequently absent
- having damaged clothes or property
- showing changes in their work patterns
- lacking concentration and do poor school work
- playing truant
- giving improbable excuses for any of the above

Bullying is a serious issue that can cause physical and/or psychological damage even leading to suicidal tendencies in some cases.

Speaking out – Victims often don't want to tell disclose that they are being bullied because:

- of the fear of reprisals
- of the shame and humiliation suffered
- they don't want to publicise their unpopularity
- they are too confused or upset
- seeking help might confirm the taunts of being a baby, stupid, etc.
- of low self-esteem and therefore the belief 'It's my lot in life'
- of no confidence in adults' ability to help
- of the unwritten code about telling tales among their peer group

Consequently, it is vital that at St Martha's, the ethos prevails whereby anyone who is being bullied or who has witnessed bullying taking place, tells a member of staff. Not telling protects the bully and gives the message that it can continue.

It is therefore important that students or pupils who are being bullied, or others who know about it, feel that they will be listened to and believed, and that action taken will be swift but sensitive to their concern.

At St Martha's, all staff are trained annually in Safeguarding and Child Protection raising awareness of the signs of bullying and identifying likely situations where bullying may happen. This reduces the risk of bullying taking place and gives our staff the knowledge of how to deal with bullying when it happens.

Preventative Measures

In order to avoid any cases of bullying and foster mutual respect amongst students and pupils within our school community we must put in place preventative measures.

Our school's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. Instead, our staff must proactively gather intelligence about issues between students and pupils, which might provoke conflict. All staff must practise the strategies set out within this policy to prevent bullying occurring in the first place. This might involve talking to students and pupils about issues of difference, perhaps in lessons, through dedicated events or projects, or through assemblies. Staff themselves will be able to determine what will work best for their students or pupils, depending on the particular issues they need to address.

As a school it is our primary aim to nurture an ethos of good behaviour where students and pupils treat one another and our school staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other students/pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how ones actions affect others permeate through our whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.

Procedures to follow

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the school Behaviour Policy. At each stage, in keeping with our Catholic ethos, the focus of the procedures is the welfare of all the students/pupils involved. Both the victim and the bully will be in need of support.

STAGE 1 – GETTING THE FACTS STRAIGHT

Apart from the written statements that may already exist, all involved will be interviewed individually. A 'No Blame' approach identified by Kidscape will be employed.

STAGE 2 – MAKING AMENDS

The bully needs to be encouraged to see things from the victim's point of view and to carry out corrective action to improve relationships; also the victim must be encouraged not to be a victim. Making a contract not to engage in this behaviour or setting particular targets may be appropriate.

If the victim is in agreement, a meeting with the teacher, victim and bully should take place where the bully apologises to the victim and all agree to work in harmony.

STAGE 3 - CONTACTING PARENTS/GAURDIANS

Contact parents/guardians of both the victim and bully as quickly as possible and inform them what has happened and the steps taken so far. Parents/guardians of victims are likely to be upset and anxious to protect their child. Working together to identify ways of tackling the bully is the goal. Parents of bullies may likewise be upset, anxious and defensive. Here it is important to try and establish a clear picture of events and to stress the unacceptability of the behaviour. A meeting in school may be appropriate at this stage and certainly if the incident was particularly serious or was a repeat. **IT SHOULD BE MADE VERY CLEAR TO PARENTS, GUARDIANS, STUDENTS AND PUPILS THAT THERE IS NO PLACE AT ST MARTHA'S FOR THOSE WHO REPEATEDLY BULLY.**

STAGE 4 – KEEPING RECORDS

Full records must be kept. In addition, a brief record needs to be made in the central 'Monitoring Incidents of Bullying' folder kept by the Deputy Head (Pastoral).

STAGE 5 – FOLLOW UP

Action taken may differ according to circumstances. For example:

- The victim may need support through sessions with a member of staff or counsellor, or, if her academic progress has been affected, she may need the intervention of the Head of Faculty or the Director of studies.
- The bully may need to be punished but may also need to see a counsellor to help her modify her behaviour. She may need to be encouraged to take part in positive activities.
- Both bully and victim will need to be monitored over a period of time. This will be done by the Personal Tutor, Housemistress or Deputy Head.
- Positive progress made by the bully and victim will be praised and celebrated.
- Severe bullying will not be tolerated and will likely result in suspension or exclusion from school. Persistent severe bullying will likely result in exclusion.

Key Responsibilities

We expect our Senior Pastoral Leaders/Designated Safeguarding Lead to:

- Organise anti-bullying staff training to empower all staff at St Martha's to deal with and eradicate bullying.
- Guide colleagues on how to deal with incidents of bullying if and when these arise and monitor these incidents closely.

- Raise awareness of anti-bullying amongst students/pupils through various activities and Anti-Bullying Week.
- Update the Anti-Bullying Policy and other policies linked with anti-bullying.
- Contact the relevant outside agencies if necessary, in the event of a concerning incident of harassment, assault or threatening behaviour whereby criminal laws may apply.

We expect all staff to:

- Foster our students/pupils self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our students/pupils.
- Discuss bullying with all classes, so that every students/pupil learns about the damage it causes to both the individual who is bullied and to the bully and the importance of telling a teacher about bullying when it happens.
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.
- Listen to students/pupils who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act to support and protect them.
- Report suspected cases of bullying to the Personal Tutor, or, relevant member of the Pastoral team.
- Follow up any complaint by a parent/guardian about bullying, and report back promptly and fully on the action, which has been taken.
- Deal with observed instances of bullying promptly and effectively, in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Praise students/pupils for positive behaviour and inform parents/guardians of this behaviour.

We expect our students/pupils to:

- Refrain from becoming involved in any kind of bullying, even at the risk of incurring temporary unpopularity.
- Intervene to protect the student/pupil who is being bullied, unless it is unsafe to do so.
- Report to a member of staff any witnessed or suspected instances of bullying, to dispel any climate of secrecy and help to prevent further instances.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should:

- Not suffer in silence, but have the courage to speak out, to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets.

We ask our parents/guardians to support their children and the school by:

- Familiarising themselves with relevant school policies and procedures.
- Watching out for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their child, which might be a result of bullying.
- Advising their child to report any bullying to their Personal Tutor or a teacher and explain the implications of allowing the bullying to continue unchecked, for themselves and for other students/pupils.
- Advising their child not to retaliate to any forms of bullying.
- Being sympathetic and supportive towards their child, and reassuring them that appropriate action will be taken.
- Informing the school of any suspected bullying, even if their children are not involved.
- Co-operating with the school, if their child is accused of bullying and try to ascertain the truth.
- Pointing out the implications of bullying, both for the children who are bullied and for the bullies themselves.

Role of Governors

- A report is made to the Governors at Full Governors Meetings.

Role of SLT

- Discussed at Senior Leadership weekly meetings and any issues, action taken and followed are documented.

Important Contacts

- Sr Teresa, our Head of Pastoral care may be contacted by email on:
roseingravet@saint-marthas.org.uk
- Charlotte Carpenter, our Designated Safeguarding Lead may be contacted on:
carpenter@saint-marthas.org.uk
- Our school chaplain may be contacted by e-mail on:
balyh@saint-marthas.org.uk
- Childline: **0800 1111**
- The Anti-bullying Alliance:
<http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/advice/support-from-the-sector/>.
- Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk
- Police: In the event of immediate danger call **999**, or, in an event which does not require immediate intervention call **101**
- Barnet Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): **020 8359 4066**, or
- MASH out of hours Emergency Duty team: **020 8359 2000**