



## ST MARY'S SCHOOL GERRARD'S CROSS

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The School refers to all staff and students in St Mary's School which includes: the Early Years/Foundations Stage (EYFS), the Prep School (Years 1-6), Senior House (Years 7-11) and the Sixth Form.

#### AIMS OF THIS POLICY

- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and on off-site activities.
- To support everyone in actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied.
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is enhanced by dealing positively with bullying.
- To promote an environment where to tell someone about bullying is **not** an offence and pupils feel safe and confident to do so.
- To promote self esteem and positive attitudes in pupils so that they feel better equipped to challenge bullying behaviour.

St Mary's School values the good relationships that are encouraged by the School and embodied in our Students' Code of Conduct which has been drawn up by the students themselves and the STAGS guidance in the Preparatory School. Every allegation of bullying, including cyber bullying and bullying outside school, will be taken seriously. We acknowledge the negative psychological effects that bullying can have on individuals and the learning environment, and that bullying can cause, in extreme cases, suicide. We will strive to create an environment free from fear. Bullying is unacceptable in this school and will not be tolerated. We recognise that to condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

*"Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes actions such as making threats, spreading rumours, attacking someone physically or verbally, and excluding someone from a group on purpose."*  
([stopbullying.gov.org](http://stopbullying.gov.org))

A more child-friendly definition of bullying, might be:

*Bullying is when you keep picking on someone because you think you're cooler, smarter, stronger or better than them.*

Bullying is handled with understanding and fairness at St. Mary's. Our aim is to change the attitude of bullies and guide them to more acceptable behaviour. With everyone working together this is possible:

- Bullying is not tolerated at St. Mary's School. It occurs when someone is deliberately hurt or is being upset by others, regularly or over a period of time, e.g. aggressive physical behaviour, deliberately excluding someone from a group, threatening or disrespectful behaviour, spreading malicious gossip or rumour, continual teasing.
- All cases of bullying must be reported to a member of Staff as soon as possible, perhaps through a parent or Senior girl. Incidents will always be investigated.
- Because bullying is unacceptable, any incidents are regarded as a serious matter. Each case is dealt with on an individual basis.
- In cases of bullying, the School may work in partnership with parents and, in very serious cases and especially with regard to cyberbullying, with external agencies such as police/children's social care.
- Everyone in the School community is equally important and has the right to feel comfortable, happy and valued. Bullying can be prevented if all members of St. Mary's work together and respect each other. This complies with the spirit of the European Convention on Human Rights and with the active promotion of values at the School.

The School also recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school which spills over into the school. The school will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying.

We recognise that to allow or condone bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

## **DEFINITION**

Pupils, staff and parents may be perpetrators or victims of bullying. The School defines bullying as deliberately hurtful behaviour, whether physical or psychological, repeated over a period of time where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. One-off incidents will be treated as a breach of the Students' Code of Conduct but will be logged, and should not be confused with one-off incidents such as friendship issues.

It can be:

- Physical (e.g. pushing, hitting, kicking, theft of or hiding belongings, invasion of personal space).
- Verbal (name calling, teasing, insulting remarks for example on race, sexual orientation, religion, cultural differences or gender, unkind notes).
- Social or psychological (spreading nasty stories or untrue rumours, exclusion from a group, staring in an intimidating manner).
- Visual such as texting, phone calls, emails, SMS or similar service for social networking, blue tooth, videoing, photography, mobile phones.
- Inter-relationship bullying between classes/groups.

Abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'. Equally, abuse issues can sometimes be gender specific e.g. girls being sexually touched/assaulted and boys being subject to initiation/hazing type violence (KCSIE, 2018). It is important to consider the forms abuse may take and the subsequent actions required. See appendix three of our Child Protection policy for further details.

## **SPECIFIC TYPES OF BULLYING**

### **Racist Bullying**

This type of bullying is when an individual is targeted for representing a group based on colour, background, culture or religion. This type of bullying can take the following forms:

Name calling, racist jokes, graffiti, offensive mimicry, physical threats/attacks, provocative use of badges, racist literature, inciting others to be racist and refusing to co-operate in lessons or extracurricular activities with others.

We recognise that racist bullying may lead to consideration under child protection procedures.

## **Homophobic Bullying**

Pupils do not necessarily have to **be** lesbian, gay or bisexual to experience bullying around sexual orientation. This type of bullying can take the form of any of the aforementioned behaviour.

## **Special Educational Needs and Disability Bullying**

This type of bullying can take the form of any of the aforementioned behaviour.

## **CYBERBULLYING – DEFINITION**

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site: <http://www.cyberbullying.org/> defined this unpleasant phenomenon in the following terms:

*“Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others.”*

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, emails and mobile phones, used for SMS messages and as cameras.

## **SIGNS OF BULLYING**

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing, or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Psychological damage and diminished levels of self confidence
- Frequent visits to the Sick Room with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares
- Talking of self harm, suicide or running away

**To encourage a culture in line with our aims, the School will ensure that:**

- An anti-bullying programme will form part of the PSHCEE curriculum (Nursery -Y13), Circle Time and pastoral sessions (Prep School) and assemblies which raise awareness, promote self esteem and refer to the anti bullying policy in age

appropriate terms. Other vehicles such as drama lessons and projects will also be used.

- Discussions surrounding such issues will take place in form times in the Senior House.
- The Students' Code of Conduct will be available in every form room.
- The School will challenge racist or homophobic language, acknowledge diversity and difference and offer confidential support for pupils bullied on the grounds of their sexuality.
- Pupils will be encouraged to keep a record of any bullying via text, email or messaging services and will be informed about how the police recommend presenting online communication via their PSHCEE lessons and ICT lessons (ie it must be a live feed which cannot have been altered).
- The School will avoid drawing undue attention to differences of LDD pupils.
- The effectiveness of this policy will be discussed in School Council meetings.
- Pastoral displays will highlight the importance of treating others with fairness and respect.
- Pastoral system: girls are encouraged to confide in Form Tutors or Senior Staff in Senior House and Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants or Senior Staff in the Early Years and Prep School.
- Regular school assemblies address the issue including Anti Bullying week.
- Academic and extra-curricular successes are celebrated in all types of assemblies and feedback in lessons.
- The school discourages any exclusive or unfriendly behaviour by staff.
- A provision of a range of extra-curricular activities.
- The Designated Senior Lead will liaise with the Headmistress over all anti-bullying strategies.
- The DSL will report annually to the nominated governor for child protection.
- There will be regular staff training and support for all staff to raise awareness.

- We will have a Buddy system and Sixth Form prefect system in Senior House, playground leaders, friendship bench and Kindness Cup in Prep. Worry box in both sections.
- Staff are asked to use seating plans in lessons where appropriate.
- Staff will be on duty from 8.00 am, at break and lunch time. After school girls are supervised either in Late Prep, Busy Bees or registered in extra-curricular clubs.
- All girls are aware of their safe places to go eg. School library

## **CYBERBULLYING – PREVENTATIVE MEASURES**

In addition to the preventative measures described above, St Mary's School:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and our IT Department monitors pupils' use. We will impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address. Access to sites such as "hotmail" is not allowed.
- Adheres to the BECTA guidelines regarding E-teaching and the internet.
- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in IT and PSHCE lessons, which covers blocking and removing contacts from "buddy" lists.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- Mobile phones are handed in at registration each morning, stored securely in the School Office and returned at afternoon registration.
- No filming or photographing of any girl or member of staff is allowed except at the express direction of a member of staff and then with a clear educational purpose.

Further details are given in our policy on Pupils' use of ICT, Mobile Phones and other Electronic Devices and in our Internet Safety Policy. All mobile phones will be kept switched off in the EYFS setting.

## **Prep School**

In the morning, children from Reception to Y6 attending Early Birds/Breakfast Club are supervised by a member of staff. Otherwise, parents remain with their children until collected by the class teacher. Children are fully supervised during break time and at lunch. There is also after school supervision at afternoon pick-up. Girls are only allowed in the building during play times if attending a supervised activity, or in the event of severe weather, where, again, appropriate supervision is in place.

**All Staff will:**

- Know the policy and procedures.
- Be observant and ask pupils what is happening to them.
- Deal with incidents according to the procedures.
- Never let any incidences of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity.

**PROCEDURES TO DEAL WITH BULLYING**

All reported incidents will be treated seriously and fully investigated; all parties will be heard and given appropriate support.

**Senior House**

If a member of staff witnesses overt bullying, as defined above, the incident should immediately be reported to a member of the Senior Leadership Team. A member of staff who is informed of any bullying should report the incident to a member of the Senior Leadership Team who will then investigate by interviewing all the parties concerned and document the incident. If the incident is of a serious nature or repeated, the Headmistress will be informed immediately. Any incidents involving members of staff should be reported directly to the Headmistress. Written records of all proceedings should be kept in school files to enable patterns to be identified. All bullying is recorded on a central register. Incidents are kept on the pupil's central file.

**Prep School**

If any member of staff or School helper witnesses overt bullying as defined above, the incident should immediately be reported to the class teacher, who should then inform a senior member of staff. The senior member of staff will speak with the girls involved and take written notes of the incident. If the incident is of a serious nature, the Head of the Prep School will be informed immediately. Any incidents involving members of staff should be reported directly to the Headmistress. A written log of all such incidents is kept by the Deputy Head and the Head of Prep and incidents are kept on the pupil's file.

**What pupils should do**

If a pupil witnesses or experiences bullying, the incident should immediately be reported to any member of staff. Girls are encouraged to confide in Form Tutors and Senior Staff in Senior House and Class Teachers, Teaching Assistants or Senior Staff in the Prep School. Pupils must keep a record of any bullying via text, email or messaging services. All reported incidents will be treated seriously and fully investigated; all parties will be heard and given appropriate support.

**What Parents Should Do**

If you suspect your daughter is being bullied you should:

- Listen and try to provide an open, non-judgemental environment for your daughter to talk about her problem.

- Tell her you understand and give her support. Remind her she has the right to feel safe.
- Suggest your daughter speak to a member of staff.
- If the problem seems particularly serious, or ongoing, contact the Form Tutor or Head of Section immediately.
- Try to avoid an angry or emotional response.
- Parents should realise that actions such as contacting the parent of the alleged bully and discussing the matter with other parents can inflame the situation.
- Contact the school straight away if the issue continues to be unresolved.
- Trust the school to carry through actions that will solve the problem.

**When bullying is found to have occurred appropriate action will be taken to:**

- Ensure the immediate safety and well being of those involved.
- Provide ongoing support and counselling for the individual being bullied.
- Inform the individual who has been responsible for the bullying that this behaviour is unacceptable.
- Counsel the individual to understand the implications of bullying.
- Establish whether further support and/or counselling are required to rectify behaviour.
- Advise the individual of the consequences of further bullying.
- Discipline the offender.
- Inform the parents.
- Follow up with the individuals to provide any necessary support.

Please see the “Procedures for Bullying” appendix at the end of this document.



## **SANCTIONS**

Parents will be invited in to discuss the matter with their child present and appropriate action will be taken. Disciplinary sanctions may include Saturday detention, formal warning and contract of good behaviour, 'community service' or suspension, removal of privileges or specific supervision and there may also be a requirement that the bully has specialist counselling. In serious or repeated incidents a disciplinary hearing will be held which could result in suspension or expulsion.

In all cases, both the victim and the perpetrator will be monitored until such a time as both parties are confident the situation is resolved to the School's satisfaction.

In all instances both victim and perpetrator will receive support through the pastoral system; the former to ensure the restoration of self confidence and in the case of the latter to investigate underlying causes of and ensure a fuller understanding of her behaviour.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

The anti bullying policy is the governors' responsibility, and they review its effectiveness annually through an incident report presented to the Designated Governor for Safeguarding.

*This policy has been created with reference to the new DfE guidance 2011 Preventing and Tackling Bullying – Advice for School Leaders, Staff and Governors, Safe to learn: Embedding anti-bullying work in schools as well as 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence' (DFES 2002) KCSIE (September 2018). It has involved pupils in its creation.*

## **ANTI-BULLYING PROCEDURES**

1. Report made. This may come from staff, parents or pupils.
2. In case of isolated incident, record made and any evolving patterns identified
3. Where bullying is suspected, pupils, including witnesses, to provide separate written accounts of incidents
4. Investigation and discussion with pastoral team
5. Pupils interviewed.
6. Parents informed if appropriate
7. Strategy devised – according to situation, including use of agreements.
8. Perpetrator interviewed with parents
  - i. Sanctions agreed and counselling offered.
  - ii. Support strategies in school identified and implemented
  - iii. Victim and perpetrator – monitored until all parties are happy (up to 6 months).
8. In case of groups – mediator may be used.
9. Exceptionally, discussion with Police Schools Liaison Officer or refer to the DSL for communication with the LSCB.

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This policy will be reviewed annually