

St. Michael's High School

Anti-bullying (incl. Cyberbullying) Policy



We exist to enable our students to flourish
spiritually, academically, and personally

2023/24

Introduction

Building on the foundation of Luke 2:52, “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature,” we would like our students to grow spiritually, personally and academically. As a Christian school, our Christian ethos and values are central to all we do. Our values of love, peace, forgiveness, courage and equality support our students and underpin our approaches.

At St Michael’s CE High School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a *TELLING/LISTENING* school. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is the **PERSISTENT** use of negative behaviour with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic - because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber - All areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse; Mobile threats by text messaging & calls; Misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Schools have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying. At St Michael’s CE High School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our students so they may feel free to learn in a supportive, disciplined and secure environment. At St Michael’s CE High School bullying of any kind is unacceptable regardless of the parties involved whether they be students, staff, parents or governors.

Objectives of this Policy

- All governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is.
- All governors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All students and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.
- As a school we take bullying seriously. Students and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Bullying will not be tolerated.

Please note: Procedure for reporting the bullying of a pupil by an adult member of either the school or the wider community is detailed in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. There is also a Whistleblowing policy to inform the Headteacher, Chair of Governors or the LADO – Local Authority Designated Officer.

Roles & Responsibilities

School Responsibilities:

Everyone should be made aware that bullying will not be tolerated and all members of the school community should clearly understand:

- The school's definition of bullying.
- The school's procedures to deal with bullying.

Staff Responsibilities

- Staff should be vigilant during registration times, during lessons and whilst on duty, so that bullying does not pass undetected.
- Staff should report any allegations of bullying via Cpoms and take the student's concerns seriously.
- Staff should ensure promptness to lessons and duties in order to prevent situations developing.
- Staff should never bully, torment or be sarcastic to students, and should not tolerate this from others in lessons.
- Staff should constantly reinforce the school's firm stand against bullying through daily contact

Student Responsibilities

- Students should be expected to treat others with kindness, consideration and respect.
- Students should report any incidents of bullying either themselves or others to a member of staff.
- Students should ask for help from a member of staff in diffusing a difficult situation. They should not retaliate.
- Students who are peer mentors/prefects should always report incidents to a member of staff even when they feel that a situation has been resolved.

Parent / Carer Responsibilities

- If parents have any concerns about bullying they should inform school through the Head of Year.
- If they continue to have concerns then it is advised they contact the Designated Senior Lead for Safeguarding
- Parents must keep any malicious text messages, comments on social networking sites or emails received by their children as evidence.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus
- begs to be driven to school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating / excessive eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received
- increasingly secretive regarding internet and mobile phone use

Or any other behaviour that is out of character with your child.

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

How can we identify potentially vulnerable students?

Bullying can happen to all students and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. All staff at St Michael's CE High must be alert to any form of bullying but be especially aware that some students may be particularly vulnerable to bullying.

Definition

Bullying is the persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically or emotionally harming another person or group and includes peer on peer abuse.

Bullying is generally characterized by:

- Repetition – incidents are not ‘one offs’; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- Intent – the perpetrator(s) mean to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- Targeting – bullying is generally targeted at a group or individual.
- Power imbalance – where real or perceived bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be perceived as bullying. Targeting another student or group of students because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur

Bullying can be acted out in the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Cyber
- Deliberate Isolation

Racist Bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and bi-phobic bullying: bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic Bullying: Bullying based on another person’s actual or perceived transgender status.

Sexual bullying: Unwanted physical contact or abusive comments.

Cyber bullying: all forms of internet, such as, email and social media misuse. Mobile threats by text, social media, messaging and/or calls. Misuse of associated technology with computer and phones.

SEND bullying: bullying behaviour based on another person’s special educational needs or disability.

Students with SEND

Evidence shows that children and young people with SEND are significantly more likely to be bullied or victimized than those who don’t have any SEND.

(Chatzitheochari P & June 2014)

St Michael’s CE High School, as all schools, have a legal responsibility, under the Equality Act 2010, to protect disabled students and those with SEN against direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or victimisation.

At St Michael's CE High School we recognize that some students with SEND might have difficulties in reporting their experiences of bullying. This may be because they are unable to recognize that they are being bullied, they may not be able to verbalise the incidents or they may experience increased feelings of anxiety around any incidents.

Nonverbal early signs:

- Withdrawn behavior
- Deterioration in work
- Poor attendance
- Complaints of ill health
- General unhappiness or anxiety
- 'Clingy' around adults

Staff being alert to bullying:

- Ensure that SEND and Safeguarding training is delivered regularly
- Signs and symptoms are shared and displayed in key staff areas and staff are aware of them
- Ensure that all staff, parent and students are signposted to areas and sources of support.

Procedures

1. All allegations of bullying incidents should be reported to staff and recorded on synergy and CPoms.
2. Incidents will be investigated thoroughly. In cases of suspected cyber bullying this may include viewing students' use of the internet, including use of social networking sites; evidence provided by other students, e.g. screen shots, mobile phone/mp3 content.
3. In all cases parents will be informed and may be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem further.
4. If necessary and appropriate, Police or other agencies will be consulted and their support enlisted.
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and strategies must be put in place and recorded to enable the bullying behaviour to be stopped quickly.
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

Outcomes

1. The bully (bullies) will be expected to remedy the situation and to give assurance that it will not reoccur. Sanctions will reflect the seriousness of the incidents.
2. Where parental contact has already been made or, the incident/concern has been initiated by parents then we will feedback outcomes.
3. In serious cases, inclusion or even exclusion will be considered
4. If possible, the students will be reconciled through mediation with a member of staff.
5. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored on the bullying log to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
6. Cases of homophobic/ racist bullying will be reported to County in-line with policy.

Prevention

We will help our community to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Creating an open environment for sharing issues related to bullying (being a Telling/Listening School). Use of the term “If we don’t know we can’t help”.
- Raising the understanding of bullying related issues in Assemblies, PSHE (and other lessons as appropriate).
- Creating and exploring easy methods for students to report incidents of bullying.
- Dealing with bullying issues quickly, efficiently and sensitively.
- Imposing quickly appropriate sanctions for perpetrators as necessary.
- Use of drama / role play to create opportunities for students to experience the issues with bullying.
- Use of our counsellor to work with victim and perpetrator separately where appropriate.
- Display of anti-bullying materials around our environment.

HELP ORGANISATIONS:

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) 020 7354 8321

Children's Legal Centre KIDSCAPE 0845 345 4345

Childline 0800 1111

Parents Helpline (Mon-Fri, 10-4) 0845 1205 204

Parentline Plus 0808 800 2222

www.bullying.co.uk

Kooth Online support www.kooth.com

Cyberbullying

Additional information and policy on Cyberbullying.

Cyberbullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation; harassment or “cyber-stalking” (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages); vilification / defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images and videos and the manipulation of.

The procedures for dealing with, the outcomes and preventing Cyberbullying are similar to those we use for Anti-bullying. Tackling cyber bullying can sometimes be more challenging as it can take place outside of school (although not always) and the evidence can be difficult to gather. To this end we rely on parents monitoring their children’s use of technologies, e.g., the internet and mobile phones with particular regard to social networking sites.

In School:

Access to social networking sites is not available in school due to the Lancashire Firewall. The use of mobile phones is also banned within school.

At St Michael's CE High School when students log on to a PC they are asked to agree to Acceptable Use Policy as well as the Acceptable Use Agreement that all students and parents must sign before they are allowed access to the ICT network at St Michael's CE High School.

At St Michael's CE High School we use SENSO which is a filtering and monitoring system. Emails are shared with Mrs Trebble with regards concern around students. SENSO monitors words which are typed in or images viewed on a student's PC. SENSO alerts are always recorded on CPOMS and students and parents are informed.

If needed external support is requested depending on the nature of the information. For example Police Community Action, CAMHS, CFW, School counsellor.

Students may as a result have their right to ICT access restricted, withdrawn or monitored indefinitely. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher

Parents/Students:

Should a parent or child become aware of bullying or inappropriate use of the internet or mobile devices then they must try and record any instance, through the use of the screen shot / print screen. i.e. taking a digital image of the screen they can view and saving it or printing it. This could be used by the School in line with our anti-bullying policy, or the police/other agencies should it be deemed necessary.

Mobile Phones:

The school recognises that mobile phones and digital devices are now an integral part of young peoples' culture and way of life and can have considerable value, particularly in relation to individual safety. It is recognised that such technology will play an increasing part in future learning practices, but, akin to existing ICT use, this should follow agreed rules and guidelines to prevent disruption and instill good learning habits. The school therefore accepts that students can bring in mobile devices but that they are to be switched off and not used on site

The school aims to educate students in the responsible use of technology.

Note: The term 'phone' in this policy denotes mobile phones, I pods, tablets and any similar portable electronic devices.

Mobile phones do present a number of problems:

- They are valuable items that can be stolen / lost
- Their use can render student's subject to potential bullying or inappropriate contacts
- They can disrupt the learning environment
- Camera functions can lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images

Responsible Use:

Students are required to use phones responsibly at all times.

1. Students must ensure that files stored on their phones do not contain violent, degrading or offensive images. The transmission of some images/information can be a criminal offence and will be dealt with as such by the school.
2. Cyber-bullying is completely unacceptable, and will be followed up by the school as serious misbehavior in line with our anti-bullying policy.
3. The school is a workplace, and phones can interfere with the atmosphere and good order of the workplace, even when in silent mode. St Michael's CE High School expects that phones will be switched off and kept in bags/blazer during and between lessons. Hand the phones into the valuable box in PE before going into the changing room.

Rules:

1. Responsibility for the phone rests with the student and the school accept no financial responsibility for damage, loss or theft.
2. Students must not use phones during or between lessons. This means that phones must not be used for example, for making calls, checking the time, texting or used as a calculator. Mobile phones/headphones etc. must not be visible during or between lessons, phones must be switched off and stored in the pupil's bag/blazer. Where appropriate, an individual member of staff may give permission for the use of a device for a specific educational purpose.
3. Head phones must not be worn during or between lessons, for reasons of safety and courtesy.
4. Students must not use phones or MP3 players to broadcast music, or transfer inappropriate material.
5. No device should be used in the school to photograph or video students or staff without the authority of the Headteacher.
6. If there is an emergency which requires communication with home, student's must speak to a member of staff who will deal with the matter. Parents/carers should only contact students via the from office and main phone line. In an emergency parents/carers should phone the reception and a message will be taken to the student. This ensures that a student is given support and privacy in dealing with a potentially difficult situation. Students who feel unwell must always contact home via the school office and not use their mobile phone. This allows support and supervision and also avoids students leaving the school without a record being made by the school.
7. Mobile phones cannot, under any circumstances, be taken into examination rooms. Breach of this rule will lead to invalidation of that examination and potentially other examinations.
8. Students need to acknowledge that it is a privilege to be permitted to bring mobile phones to school and abuse this policy may lead to a curtailment of this privilege.
9. If for any reason a member of staff approaches a student who is on their phone the student will be expected to pause or stop their call as a sign of respect and also in case the member of staff has to share important information.

Consequences:

- If a member of staff is aware that a student is using a mobile phone during teaching hours then the phone will be confiscated, sent to the school office until the end of the school day when the student may retrieve it from the office. A text will be sent home to inform parents. If this is persistent the parent will have to collect the phone

in person, be invited to meeting to discuss the persistent behaviour or asked that the student keeps their phone at home until future notice.

- Persistent misuse of a mobile phone will be dealt with under the Behaviour Management policy and may lead to more severe sanctions being used.
- Should any member of staff suspect that a student's mobile phone contains any information, files or media that is harmful or inappropriate then the headteacher or DSL may search the student's mobile phone. Parents will have to be advised. If permission is not given then the phone will be seized.
- Where students act illegally with technology they will be reported as appropriate. Appropriate support will also be put in place.