



'Every Child Matters'

St Mary's High School Downpatrick

Principal: Ms McLaughlin



Celebrating 60 Years of
Education

Anti-Bullying Policy

In St Mary's we work to develop a culture of respect and tolerance for difference. We encourage pupils and staff to behave in a mutually respectful manner towards each other. We work with parents, guardians and grandparents to foster positive working relationships that seek to ensure all are valued and the opinions of others are listened to and acted upon.

Whilst we accept that bullying can happen in any organisation, we are a **Telling School** and as such we encourage others to speak up if they are being bullied or if they see another being bullied.

This Policy has been developed consistent with 2003 statutory requirements (Education and Libraries NI Order) which require consultation with all stakeholders to be in place in relation to bullying prevention.

As a Rights Respecting School we follow the UNCRC Articles as follows:

Article 3-Every child is treated equally

Article 19-School Discipline: Measures to prevent Bullying.

Article 28-Right to Education and respect of dignity

Bullying can happen in many different ways e.g. psychological pressure, physical aggression, on line harassment through inappropriate use of mobile technologies, social media etc. In St Mary's we have a taught PD Programme which focuses on building respect for the rights of the individual and building resilience so that every child will be able to respond effectively if they are being targeted. We recognise that in every bullying scenario we need to help both the victim and the perpetrator. We also recognise that not all unkind, unacceptable behaviour is bullying behaviour. Bullying behaviour is persistent and recurrent in which a more powerful pupil or group target a more vulnerable pupil.

DEFINITIONS OF BULLYING

There are several definitions of what constitutes bullying behaviour.

"The repeated use of power by one or more people intentionally to harm, hurt or adversely affect the rights and needs of another or others"

Northern Ireland Anti Bullying Forum (2005)

"Deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for the victim to defend him/herself"

DE-Pastoral Care in Schools: Promoting Positive Behaviour (2001)

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

In St Mary's we embrace the importance of Pastoral care provision in the form of safeguarding, pupil behaviour, health and well-being, safety and security. With this in mind pupil welfare is addressed through various policies including Behaviour for Learning Policy, Inclusion and Diversity Policy, Acceptable use Policy, Attendance Policy and Child Protection Policy and ICT Policy.

AIMS OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- students will have the right to learn in a safe and supportive learning environment free from intimidation and fear.
- The welfare / well-being needs of all children are paramount and pupils' needs whether bully or those being targeted
- To promote an ethos of respect for the individual
- Encourage pupils to **TELL**
- To listen and support and encourage the pupils to take responsibility for their actions and to change their behaviour
- To train staff regarding bullying prevention and to respond to concerns through parent evenings etc.

PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTATION

In St Mary's there is a lot of emphasis on the pupil voice and the consultation process.

- Each class has a PD period where a class contract is usually drawn up at the start of the year.
- Pupils are made aware of anti-bullying awareness through Curriculum and Pastoral programmes and through participation in Anti bullying week activities.
- All classes are represented on the Student Council where issues surrounding relationships and bullying are raised and views sought by others. The views are then fed back to the group and decisions made.
- Each class has two 6th form Mentors who attend PD class each week and work with the pupils in delivering part of the Pastoral programme. These Mentors communicate with the pupils and look out for them on a daily basis.

- Staff are regularly involved in the consultation process of all Policies and other aspects of the SDP. Minutes are produced and action points followed up if necessary.
- There are regular Parent information evenings. There are additional sessions to raise awareness of cyber safety and student ability to cope with exam pressure etc.
- All pupils receive an Induction book in Year 8 and Year 13 giving them a good grounding in expectations and responsibilities.
- Each year group has a dedicated Pastoral Programme.
- A culture of continuity exists to ensure all classes have the same form teacher and Head of Year throughout their time in St Mary's.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

- The Behaviour for Learning Policy and new strategies and sanctions for support have been drawn up in consultation with all staff.
- Each classroom has a set of class rules displayed. These have been suggested by the School Council
- The school curriculum addresses issues such as discrimination and prejudice through areas such as the Health and Social Care course and the Learning for Life and work programme
- All staff have been trained in effective classroom management techniques
- In Key stage 3 there is a Tutorial Period for relationship building between teacher and her form class. This may include circle time and working with outside agencies on building relationships

BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

The following are unacceptable behaviours but only constitute bullying behaviours when they are recurrent/persistent, targeted with intent and where a power imbalance is evident.

Types of incidents

1. **Physical Bullying** - This includes jostling, punching, physical intimidation, kicking or any other contact which may include use of weapons
2. **Verbal Bullying** - This includes name calling, insults, jokes, threats and spreading rumours
3. **In Direct Bullying** - This includes isolation, refusal to work with or talk to or play with or help others. This may include cyber bullying and the misuse of mobile phones and internet programmes to humiliate, threaten and isolate others.

Pupils may be targeted on the basis of race, religion, culture, gender or perceived sexual orientation.

The 2003 Statutory Requirements (Education and Libraries Order) requires schools to 'encourage good behaviour and respect for others' and in particular prevent all forms of bullying.

Staff will:

- Foster in our student's self-esteem, a sense of their rights and their responsibilities to others
- Demonstrate by example the high standards of personal and social behaviour we expect of our pupils
- Discuss bullying behaviour with all classes so that every student learns about the damage it causes in both the student who is targeted and the student who engages in bullying behaviour.
- Emphasise the importance of telling a trusted adult about bullying behaviour when it happens or is observed
- Be alert to signs of distress and other possible indications of bullying.

- Listen to students who have been bullied, take what they say seriously and respond appropriately
- Follow up any complaint by a parent about bullying and report back promptly and fully on the action which has been taken
- Respond to bullying behaviour promptly and effectively, in an assertive and confident manner with an expectation of change in accordance with agreed procedures.
- Monitor any student who may have been identified as being bullied or has been the one who has bullied others.

Pupils should:

- Avoid any behaviour, which could be considered bullying.
- **TELL** if they or others are being bullied - (Form Teacher or any other teacher they feel comfortable confiding in) This is also important if they perceive they are being bullied.
- Always tell their parents if anything is wrong.
- Not react aggressively.
- Have respect for themselves and for others.

Anyone who becomes the target of bullies should have the courage to speak out and to put an end to their own suffering and that of other potential targets

Parents/Guardians should:

- Discourage any tendency towards bullying behaviour.
- Suggest to their child non-aggressive strategies for dealing with bullying behaviour if they perceive this may be happening.
- Work in partnership with school if bullying behaviour happens.
- Inform the school if they suspect bullying is taking place.
- Resolve difficulties occurring outside of school to prevent them continuing inside school.
- Respond to the consultation process.
- Actively participate in partnership with the school to resolve concerns involving their child
- Explain to their children the difference between bullying and relationship issues
- Watch for signs of distress or unusual behaviour in their children which might be evidence of bullying
- Encourage their daughter to report any bullying to their form teacher or HOY.
- Advise their daughter not to respond violently to any forms of bullying behaviour
- Be sympathetic towards their daughter and reassure them that appropriate action will be taken
- Keep written records of any reported instances of bullying
- Cooperate with the school if their child is involved in a bullying concern, to resolve the difficulty in a way which stops the behaviour recurring and meets the needs of all children

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING INCIDENTS OF BULLYING

- Bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's referral system if stems from a school incident
- Investigation of any bullying incident will be thoroughly investigated by the relevant staff
- Records of the incidents will be produced and stored appropriately in both hard copies and as a SIMS insertion
- Records of information concerning the incident(s) reported by the pupil(s) involved, and/or staff or pupils who may have witnessed the incident(s).

- Communication will be in a transparent way with all involved including parents.
- Ensure that the incident is actually Bullying as by definition.

Where appropriate;

- Use of Pastoral Development Programme to promote good relationships and to discourage bullying.
- Discuss coping strategies with pupil being bullied.
- Monitor the effectiveness of procedures (use of monitoring sheet–*Appendix 4*)
- If bullying persists, parents of the bully may be contacted.
- Liaise with other agencies if appropriate such as Youth Service.
- Sanctions, if appropriate will be followed

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

A range of interventions can be adopted to prevent and reduce bullying to raise awareness of bullying and to support those who may be bullied or who are bullying others

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Staff will engage in all consultation in relation to the implementation and review of any policy.

Relevant staff members will attend any external training courses and disseminate the information to the rest of the Pastoral teams.

MONITORING AND REVIEW OF POLICY

The policy will be reviewed by the Pastoral team every year in consultation with other staff, students and parents.