



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

At St. Michael's, we aim to create a well disciplined, safe environment which promotes the Catholic ethos of the school. We do this through the teaching of gospel values where respect for the pupil is of paramount importance. In accordance with our Mission Statement, every student deserves to be respected, and equally, every student has a responsibility to treat others with respect.

Bullying is not easy to define and often, not easy to detect. It can be of a physical nature, such as hitting, tripping up, kicking and punching, or it can be of a verbal nature, such as name calling, teasing or taunting. Bullying can occur indirectly too. This includes spreading rumours about a student, talking about them and leaving them out of a friendship group, in effect isolating them socially.

Sometimes it is individuals who are doing the bullying, but sometimes it can be a group of students.

Each year during anti-bullying week, the students have an opportunity to review with staff what they perceive to constitute bullying, and this policy.

Students have described bullying as:

- Name calling
- Being teased or taunted
- Being threatened
- Being pushed, pulled or kicked
- Having their possessions spoilt or taken
- Having rumours spread about them
- Being ignored, left out or ridiculed
- Being forced to hand money over
- Being attacked physically or verbally
- Personal comments about family, colour or religion

It must be acknowledged that the individual(s) responsible for this type of behaviour need(s) to be dealt with, and there must also be support available for the victim. The fear that a bullied student feels should never be underestimated.

Bullying hurts. It can make the student feel:

- Hurt and upset
- They have no confidence
- Extremely worried
- Unable to concentrate on school work
- Unable to eat or sleep
- Unable to attend school

Preventing bullying at St. Michael's

At St. Michael's we take a pro-active approach to bullying. We raise the awareness of bullying through assemblies and the school curriculum, particularly PSHE and RE. Pupils are encouraged to develop coping strategies should they feel vulnerable and to be reassured that they can and should talk to an adult. Through recognising and modelling positive behaviour, we are committed to ensuring that the school community works together to create a safe, caring and stimulating learning environment. We constantly reinforce the importance of treating each other with respect rather than simply reacting as incidents occur. Our very strong pastoral system provides students with a network of support in difficult times. They have a number of adults to whom they can talk in private, and they can be confident that help is at hand if needed. Tutors, pastoral heads and mentors communicate effectively with each other and liaise with the Deputy Headteacher (Student Welfare) where appropriate. Students are made aware that, in the interests of their own safety, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Dealing with bullying if it occurs

Guidance for staff

At St. Michael's we believe that bullying is unacceptable. All such incidents are dealt with appropriately by staff, and in accordance with the school behavioural system.

All staff need to be alert to instances of bullying, both inside and outside the classroom.

If you become involved in any instance of bullying:

- Ensure the victim is safe and being cared for
- Reassure the victim
- Offer the victim advice and support
- Take all incidents/reports seriously
- Listen to both accounts of the incident
- Take written statements if necessary and look for other witnesses
- Make it plain to the offender that this type of behaviour is unacceptable
- Punish the bully in line with the school behavioural system
- Inform Head of Student Learning/Deputy Headteacher as appropriate
- The Head of Student Learning/DHT will inform parents of both students involved, reassuring them that the incident will be investigated thoroughly and indicating that they will be kept fully informed of the outcome

- The Head of Student Learning will keep a written account of the incident
- Help from outside agencies will be offered, as appropriate, to both students.

Guidance for parents

It is important that parents are aware of the procedures in place within school if an instance of bullying occurs.

It is equally important that parents understand too, that due to advances in technology, bullying can take place out of school via mobile telephones and the Internet.

- Texting messages on mobile phones
- Using mobile phones to take photos and then posting them on the Internet
- MSN chatroom

If parents have reason to suspect their child is being bullied in any of the above ways, and it involves pupils from St. Michael's, please inform the child's tutor in the first instance, who will then pass the information to the appropriate member of staff who will deal with the situation as outlined above.

The Head of Student Learning/DHT will inform parents of both students involved, reassuring them that the incident will be investigated thoroughly and indicating that they will be kept fully informed of the outcome.

It is the responsibility of everyone to report acts of bullying as soon as they arise.

To be seen to act is as important as taking action.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed annually during the spring term by the Governors' Pupil Disciplinary Committee, on behalf of the full Governing Body.

Updated 06.10