CfBT Schools Trust

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Anti-bullying Policy

Scope and publication

This anti-bullying policy applies to all pupils and staff at St Mark's Academy, irrespective of their age and whether or not a pupil is in the care of the school when or if bullying occurs, including bullying incidents occurring off the school premises, such as on school transport, outside the local shops or in the town centre.

This policy is available on the school website and is provided to all parents and pupils and to all staff in the staff handbook. This policy can be made available in large print or other accessible formats if required.

Policy statement

Bullying behaviour is always unacceptable and will not be tolerated at this school because:

- It is harmful to the person who is bullied as well as to those who engage in bullying behaviour and those who support them and can in some cases lead to lasting psychological damage, including suicide.
- It interferes with a pupil's right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure time.
- It is contrary to the school's aims and values.

Aims

It is recognised that all schools are likely to encounter problems with bullying at some time. This school regards bullying as particularly serious and firm action will always be taken against it. The aims of this policy are to:

- Maintain and promote a positive and inclusive culture among all pupils and staff.
- Deter bullying behaviour by detecting it when it occurs and responding appropriately on a case by case basis which may lead to disciplinary sanctions and if necessary, expulsion.
- Produce a consistent response by the school to any bullying incidents that may take place.
- Comply with the school's duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Responsibilities

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that no one becomes a victim of bullying and to report any suspected incidences of bullying behaviour. We expect all members of the school community to comply with this policy and work towards an inclusive, kind school culture with positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and towards ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups within and outside the school. Discriminatory words and behaviour should always be treated as unacceptable.

Definition of bullying

Bullying is aggressive or insulting behaviour by an individual, or a group of individuals, that intentionally sets out to hurt or harm another individual, or group of individuals. The hurtful behaviour may be repeated over a period of time and, if allowed to continue in the social context of

a school, can become an established and accepted form of behaviour, thus making it extremely difficult for victims to defend themselves.

It can take various forms.

- Physical – for example fighting, damaging or hiding someone's clothes or belongings.
- Psychological – for example, excluding someone from a group, activity or place; aggressive name-calling; cyberbullying (for example via social media, gaming, phone calls, text messages, photographs or emails) or unpleasant remarks or actions.

Bullying may also be:

- racist, or relating to someone's religion or culture
- sexual (i.e. talking to or touching someone in a sexually inappropriate way)
- sexist – related to a person's gender or gender reassignment
- related to someone's sexual orientation (e.g. homophobic or transgendered bullying)
- related to someone's disability, special educational needs, learning difficulties, intellectual ability, health or appearance
- related to pregnancy or maternity
- related to someone's home circumstances.

Low-level disruption

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and isn't acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating.

Non-intended hurt

Any behaviour which a reasonable bystander would say was calculated or intended to hurt or upset the victim is wrong and may well constitute bullying. However not all bullying is deliberate or intended to hurt. These forms of bullying are equally unacceptable, and it is not a justification for a bully to say that he does not believe the victim is upset or hurt by his/her actions. It may however be that the bullying behaviour is not malicious and can be corrected with advice without the need to for disciplinary sanctions.

Safeguarding and peer-on-peer abuse

Children and young people may be harmful to one another in a number of ways which would be classified as peer-on-peer abuse. In most instances, the conduct of students towards each other will be covered by the school's behaviour policy. However, some allegations might be of such a serious nature that they become safeguarding concerns.

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is *'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'.* Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns to their local authority children's social care. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying. Please refer to the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy for further information.

Preventing bullying

The school is committed to promoting positive values of mutual respect and concern and to taking action to prevent bullying in a wide range of contexts.

Staff vigilance

Members of staff are vigilant at all times but particularly before and after lessons, during unstructured times, in the queue for the canteen and in the canteen itself, while waiting for and on transport to and from school. Staff are expected to promote an anti-bullying culture and prevent bullying in various ways including:

- anticipating problems and providing support
- celebrating achievement and positive attitudes
- disciplining fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking into account any disability or special educational need of the pupil and the needs of vulnerable pupils
- making opportunities to listen to pupils
- acting as advocates of pupils
- discussing behaviour and concerns in meetings.

Staff training

The school ensures that all members of staff receive appropriate training on preventing and tackling bullying behaviour, especially awareness of the risk and indications of bullying and child abuse, and how to deal with cases. The school also arranges training in counselling skills, including bereavement where appropriate.

Anti-bullying education

The School ensures that a variety of measures are taken throughout the year to educate pupils about bullying and this policy. Pupils are taught that bullying will not be tolerated at the school and how to promote positive attitudes as well as how to share problems and raise concerns. As a values based school our ethos helps to support the strategies below.
Measures include:

- annual anti-bullying awareness week
- anti-bullying posters placed around the school
- Personal, Social and Health education (PSHE)
- anti-bullying messages in assemblies and in coaching groups.

Reporting bullying complaints

Pupils

A pupil who is being bullied, or who is worried about another pupil being bullied should inform a suitable person straight away and can do so in several ways. He/she can:

- tell his/her Coach, Progress Leader, Student Support staff, other members of staff, his/her parents or responsible older pupil
- place a note in the 'Bullying box' situated in the student hub desk (near lost property)
- request to speak with the student support manager or student wellbeing coordinator for advice
- contact Childline on 0800 1111.

Some pupils are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

Children with SEN or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents, so our staff will be alert to the potential bullying these pupils face and will help our mechanisms for reporting to be accessible to all.

Parents

Parents are asked to let the school (normally the Coach or Progress Leader) know directly if they have any cause for concern, either on behalf of their own children or because of rumours about others.

Staff

Any member of staff who becomes aware of any bullying behaviour should inform the relevant Progress Leader without delay, in accordance with the procedures set out below.

This policy focuses on the bullying of pupils by pupils although it is recognised that a staff member could be a victim and on occasion may be perceived to be guilty of bullying. Staff members who are concerned about bullying or harassment at work should refer to the school's Dignity at Work Policy.

Procedures

In the event of an instance of bullying being observed or reported, the member of school staff must:

- Respond quickly and sensitively and ascertain the facts from the victim whilst offering support, reassurance and advice.
- Report the allegation to the Progress Leader and Student Support Manager of the victim and the bully without delay.

All incidences of bullying must be treated as serious and the above steps followed, however minor.

Assessment and investigation

The victim's Progress Leader or Student Support Manager will normally see the victim, the pupil(s) accused of bullying behaviour and any witnesses without delay. The investigation will consider:

- the nature of the incident
- whether the incident is a 'one off'
- whether the incident involves any other individuals or a group of pupils
- whether physical injury has been caused
- who needs to be informed (including the parents, designated member of staff for child protection, the Deputy Headteacher or the Headteacher, social services, the police, the Trust)
- whether there have been any misunderstandings
- whether the complaint is justified in whole or in part
- whether any further action needs to be taken, and if so what action is appropriate.

Information on searching pupils and pupils' property, including mobile phones, is included within the school's Behaviour Policy.

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Resolving the incident after an investigation

Once investigated, and if a complaint is upheld the school will make every effort to resolve the problem and prevent any further occurrences. The range of responses will include one or more of the following:

- Advice and support for the victim and, where appropriate, establishing a course of action to help the victim including support from the school counsellor or external sources.
- Advice and support for the perpetrator in trying to change his/her behaviour. This may include clear instructions and a warning or final warning.
- Consideration of the background behind the bullying behaviour and whether external services should be used to help the school to tackle any underlying issues.
- A supervised meeting between the bully and the victim to discuss their differences and ways in which they can avoid any future conflict.
- A disciplinary sanction against the bully, in accordance with the school's behaviour policy such as an after-school detention. In a very serious case or a case of persistent bullying, a pupil may be permanently excluded.

Action to break up a group of bullies

- Moving either the victim or the bully to a different class after consultation with the pupil, his/her parents and the relevant staff.
- Involving external agencies including social services or the police.
- Notifying the parents of one or both of the pupils about the case and the action which has been taken.
- Taking anti-bullying measures within the school community, for example an assembly on bullying.
- Noting the action taken and the outcome in the incident book.
- Noting the action taken and the outcome in the personalised strategy.

Responsibilities

The Progress Leader or Student Support Manager must:

- Record complaints of bullying in the incident book/log.
- Contact the other Progress Leader (as appropriate) and agree on a personalised strategy which is recorded in writing, acted on and subsequently updated in writing.
- Inform the **Behaviour for Learning Lead** and **Vice Principal of Pastoral/Behaviour** of the incident and strategy.

The Vice Principal must:

- Monitor the incident book/log at the end of each term in order to identify patterns, both in relation to individual pupils and across the school as a whole. Results of this monitoring will be provided to the Headteacher at the end of each term.
- Liaise with the Headteacher as to any particular issue as appropriate.

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Continued monitoring

The position should be monitored for as long as necessary thereafter and the personalised strategy kept up to date. If bullying continues after a response has been made, the Progress Leader will need to inform the Vice Principal and further responses will be necessary. The personalised strategy and the incident book/log must be kept updated if further bullying occurs and further responses are made.

Liaising with parents

The school will keep parents informed if and when it may be dealing with a significant bullying situation relating to their child.

Complaints

All complaints regarding the implementation of this policy must be submitted and will be dealt with according to the Complaints Procedure.

Monitoring and review

The Vice Principal monitors the incident book and reports on the results at the end of each term to the Headteacher. The Vice Principal will look for patterns of behaviour and any concerns. All concerns will be reported to the Headteacher and action will be taken.

The responsibility of the Local Governing Body and Education Director

The Local Governing Body and the Education Director will, annually, receive a report from the Headteacher on the implementation of the Policy and records of bullying behaviour and will review the effectiveness of the Policy following the report. Feedback should be provided to the Trust who review this policy every two years.

Linked policies

Other policies which should be referred to include:

- Behaviour
- Exclusions
- Equality
- E-Safety
- Child Protection and safeguarding - which includes a specific section on peer-to-peer abuse.

Related Government statutory and non-statutory guidance

Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017)

Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff (November 2014)

The Education and Inspections Act (2006) Section 89

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

The Equality Act 2010