



## APPROACHES TO BULLYING

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 It is essential that students can learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from all the opportunities provided by the Academy.
- 1.2 Bullying is defined as a deliberate attempt to hurt, tease, torment, threaten or frighten someone, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.
- 1.3 Bullying can be physical, mental or / and verbal in nature. It may be direct or indirect. The Academy recognises that bullying takes a number of forms, commonly:
- Name-calling, including the use of racist or homophobic language.
  - Teasing – especially an older pupil to a younger one.
  - Winding people up.
  - Excluding someone from a social group
  - Spreading rumours.
  - “Borrowing” money or equipment.
  - Damaging the property of others.
  - Cyber – bullying Sending bullying text messages or e-mails or posting hurtful comments about people on web sites or in chat rooms.

Other types of bullying are fortunately rare but may include:

- Minor assault – poking, prodding, tripping etc.
- Threatening behaviour.
- Gang pressure.
- Serious physical assault – punching, kicking, tearing hair, and scratching.

Factors that make bullying more likely are:

- lacking close friends in school

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- being shy
  - over-protective family environment
  - being from a different racial or ethnic group than the majority
  - SEN needs or a disability
  - behaving inappropriately, intruding or being a 'nuisance'
  - possessing expensive accessories such as mobile phones or computer games
  - being different in some obvious respect – such as stammering.
- 1.4 Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from school. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in schools.
- 1.5 Anyone may be at risk of being bullied, even an adult, but younger children are particularly at risk. The academy recognises that bullying often takes place out of school, but the fear generated has a significant effect on the right of each young person to feel safe at school. Equally, we recognise that pupils seldom admit to being bullied, as they are often afraid of reprisals or of being accused of "grassing".
- 1.6 Academy teaching and ancillary staff must be alert to signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with school policy.

## **2. Responses to bullying**

- 2.1 As a community, we recognise that bullying can become endemic unless a pro-active stance is taken. We therefore undertake to:
- Supply all registered pupils with guidelines on bullying, which can help them identify whether they are being bullied and recommending coping strategies and a framework for support and advice.
  - Address the topic at an early stage within the framework of our Life Skills/PSHE course and by the development of generic coping strategies to better equip young people to deal with the issues around bullying.

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- Ensure that adults in academy, teachers, ancillary workers, EWO's, teaching assistants, support staff etc. are aware of the issues and fully understand the mechanisms for dealing with cases reported to them.
- Always take any accusations of bullying seriously.
- Always inform parents of all parties about any incidents, this may be in the form of a 'phone call, letter home, or inviting parents in for discussion/negotiation and remediation of the situation.
- Always deal with such matters at a senior level and maintain scrupulous records of incidents and action taken.
- Remain flexible in responding to situations, as each will be individual and thus unique.
- Remember that punishment does not necessarily cure a bully.
- Operate on the guiding principle that each young person at St Mark's has the right to feel safe and secure.
- To regularly consult students and staff to gain an accurate picture of the degree of bullying within school.
- Identify 'vulnerable' students in Year 7 and provide support in raising their self esteem and confidence.

### 2.2 Teachers may take the following steps when dealing with incidents:

- i if bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached;
- ii a clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the Principal;
- iii the Principal will interview all concerned and will record the incident;
- iv form tutors will be kept informed and if it persists the form tutor will advise the appropriate subject teachers;
- v parents will be kept informed; and
- vi punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned.

### 2.3 Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

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- i offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a form tutor or member of staff of their choice;
- ii reassuring the student;
- iii offering continuous support; and
- iv restoring self-esteem and confidence.

### 2.4 Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- i discussing what happened;
- ii discovering why the student became involved;
- iii establishing the wrong doing and need to change; and
- iv informing parents to help change the attitude of the student.

### 2.5 The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- i official warnings to cease offending;
- ii detention;
- iii exclusion from certain areas of school premises;
- iv minor fixed term exclusion;
- v major fixed term exclusion; and
- vi permanent exclusion.