



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Agreed: September 2024

Review Date: December
2026

Family, Aspiration, Love.

Introduction

Catholic belief is that all people are created in the image and likeness of God and as such, should all be treated justly.

“The dignity of the human person is rooted in his or her creation in the image and likeness of God.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church

At St Thomas More Catholic Primary School we strive to ensure that this belief is put into practice so that all are welcome. We work to ensure that each person, in all their uniqueness, is able to thrive in our Catholic school, irrespective of gender, race, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic background, physical appearance, disability or the actual or perceived sexual orientation of themselves or of their parents/carers.

“Because all people are equal in God’s sight, every person possesses the same dignity and has a claim to the same human rights. Hence every kind of social, racist, sexist, cultural or religious discrimination against a person is an unacceptable injustice.”

YOUCAT 330

At St Thomas, More we endeavour to create a safe and stimulating environment where everyone knows that they are valued as God’s children. Every person has the right to be treated with respect and each person has the responsibility to treat others in the same way. Our mission statement is lived out so that children are enabled to have the confidence and strategies to speak up and tell of any bullying experiences, knowing that positive and fair action will be taken.

Family, Aspiration, Love.

School Mission Statement

Aims and objectives

- To provide a secure, safe and positive Christian environment free from threat, harassment or any type of bullying behaviour, where children and adults can grow and develop.
- To create a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.
- To produce a consistent whole school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.
- To work with all members of the school community (staff, children, parents/carers and governors) to foster productive partnerships which help maintain a bullying-free environment.
- To celebrate diversity and the uniqueness of individuals.

What is bullying?

Bullying can take many forms and can be experienced in many different ways.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (2024) defines bullying as:

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online. DFE ‘Bullying at school’ November 2014 states that there is no legal definition of bullying. However, it states that bullying is usually defined as behaviour that is:

There are four key elements to this definition:

- hurtful
- repetition
- power imbalance
- intentional

Bullying behaviour can be:

- *Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.*
- *Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.*
- *Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.*
- *Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.*
- *Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion*
- *Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.*

Types of Bullying

Bullying can be categorised into seven main types:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities
- Bullying related to gifts and talents
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying related to gender

Bullying related to race, religion or culture

Racist, faith-based or cultural bullying is bullying based on a person's background, colour, religion or heritage. This form of bullying has a negative impact on a child's sense of identity, self-worth and self-esteem. It also can be negative about the child's family, and about their ethnic or faith community as a whole.

Bullying related to home circumstances

The home circumstances of children can make them vulnerable to bullying. This may include obvious signs of affluence or lack of it, being a looked after child, being a young carer or having a family member with a disability or special need.

Bullying related to appearance or health conditions

Children with health or visible medical conditions, or perceived physical characteristics, such as size and weight may be vulnerable to bullying.

Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities

Children with SEN and disabilities are vulnerable to bullying. Their differences can be used by bullies to isolate them from friendship groups.

Bullying related to gifts and talents

Children and young people who are gifted and talented can be vulnerable to bullying. Their achievements and abilities can set them apart from their peers. This may lead to resentment and jealousy among their peers which may make them targets for bullying behaviour.

Bullying related to sexual orientation

Homophobic bullying involves the targeting of individuals on the basis of their perceived or actual sexual orientation. Homophobic bullying includes all forms of bullying but in particular it can include homophobic language. This is terms of verbal abuse used towards lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual people or those who are perceived LGBT. It can be used as an insult or to refer to something or someone as inferior eg derogatory use of the word 'gay'.

Bullying related to gender

Sexist, sexual and transphobic bullying affects both genders. Sexist bullying is based on sexist attitudes that, when expressed, demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Both sexes may be victims and each may be a victim of their own sex. Children who feel that they belong to another gender or do not conform with the stereotypically defined roles often ascribed to particular genders, can also become a target of bullying.

Forms of Bullying

Different forms of bullying can be seen within the seven identified types of bullying. Forms of bullying include:

Physical

This can include physical harm such as punching or pushing, being made to give money or belongings, or forcing a child to act against their will.

Verbal

Verbal bullying can include being teased in a nasty way, being called 'gay' in a derogatory way, being insulted about race, religion or culture, being called names or being the subject of offensive comments.

Indirect

This can include being deliberately excluded from groups or ignored, or being the subject of tales or rumours.

Electronic /'cyberbullying'

This form of bullying includes verbal or indirect bullying via text message, email, instant messenger services or social network sites or images spread via the internet or mobile phones.

Our Approach to Bullying

Our approach to bullying is informed by the Catholic faith and is reflected in our school Mission Statement.

*"Every human being is created in God's image and likeness and therefore is valuable and worthy of respect."
Christ at the Centre*

"In our school we believe that each person is unique and created to flourish in God's image."

School Mission Statement

Key Principles

- The school leadership will work with all in our community to prevent all forms of bullying, including prejudice based bullying, and to fully address incidents of bullying as they arise.
- All bullying in its variety of forms and types will be taken equally seriously and addressed appropriately.
- We will address bullying within the framework of Catholic beliefs and Church teaching and in a way which is age-appropriate.

Responding to bullying

When responding to incidents of bullying we aim:

- to make the child who has been bullied feel safe
- to encourage better behaviour from the child who has displayed bullying behaviours

We will:

- Listen carefully to all children involved.
- Immediately offer support and help
- Record the incident and report it to the head teacher
- Take sanctions in line with the school *Good Behaviour Policy*, involving parents and carers appropriately
- Include all accusations of bullying in the head teacher's termly report to governors
- Monitor the situation closely

- Review the situation and the impact of sanctions

Homophobic bullying and using homophobic language

Homophobic language can be used as an insult or to refer to something or someone as inferior such as the derogatory use of the word 'gay'. The derogatory use of homophobic language in our school will always be challenged even if it appears to be being used without any homophobic intent.

Children with special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities

Our schools are committed to actively promoting the equality of opportunity for all children with SEN or disabilities. Where children with SEN and disabilities are themselves found to be bullying, in most cases (except those related to specific conditions) school will expect the same standards of behaviour as those which apply to the rest of the school community, having made the reasonable adjustments necessary.

Staff training

All adults working in the schools know the anti-bullying policy and the procedures used for reporting of incidents. Training on anti-bullying is part of the induction of new staff.

All staff receive training about being sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied. Those being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems or changes.

Staff are expected to take preventative measures. This includes being aware of where and when bullying might take place. This awareness is informed by discussions with children and from questionnaires completed by children. The staff training includes equality training to raise awareness among staff of potential prejudicial behaviour and how not to reinforce stereotypes.

Curriculum

As a Catholic school Religious Education is the core subject of our curriculum. There are opportunities within RE to make links with Rights Respecting Schools and Mini Vinnies to reinforce the principles of human rights, Catholic social teaching and the uniqueness of the individual, made in God's image and likeness. Our curriculum as a whole is planned and delivered to enable children to develop empathy, to understand the effect bullying has on people and to take responsibility for trying to prevent bullying. Through a variety of planned activities across the curriculum such as circle time, role-play, class performances, celebration assemblies, our children gain in self-confidence and develop strategies to speak up for themselves and express their own thoughts and opinions. Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity and an assortment of strategies to protect themselves from bullying. This is explicitly planned within the PSHE and Citizenship programmes delivered in school and through the annual celebration of "Proud to be me" days. Staff are also expected and encouraged to take advantage of unplanned opportunities to celebrate diversity and to reinforce the principles of anti-bullying.

Pastoral structure

Children are elected to the school councils each year. The elected school councils regularly meet and discussions include playground buddies, school rules and behaviour.

The pastoral care system and Rainbows programme provides a structure of support for all children and helps to create an atmosphere where our children know that they will be listened to and where their problems and worries are taken seriously and responded to with sensitivity.

Liturgical Prayer

In liturgical prayer, themes and values play a part in challenging prejudice and promoting justice for all. The timetable of collective worship includes specific opportunities throughout the year (eg Statements to Live By, Proud to be Me Day, Good Samaritan Day) which support work in anti-bullying. The children are encouraged to live the gospel values by following Christ's example.

Reporting and recording of incidents of bullying

Our school records all allegations of bullying on CPOMS. Where reports are substantiated parents/carers of all children involved are informed. Staff and children have annual training and the Anti-Bullying Policy is uploaded to the school website. Reminders are published in the school newsletter.

Reporting to the Local Authority

All incidents of racist bullying are reported to the local governing committee.

The Role of the Local Governing Committee

The Local Governing Committee monitors the incidents of bullying that occur and reviews the effectiveness of the policy regularly. This is done through the head teacher's termly report and through meetings held with the children by the Specialist Interest Governor for Pupil Voice. The governors require the headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the governors on request about the effectiveness of schools' anti-bullying strategies.

Monitoring the Policy

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the policy termly. To discover the extent to which bullying exists in school and to monitor the extent to which our anti-bullying policy is effective, the log and strategies will be reviewed alongside the responses made in pupil voice meetings.

It is the responsibility of the school governing board to review the effectiveness of this policy. This is done through the report of the headteacher. Governors will analyse information with regard to the types and forms of bullying.

Equality statement

- The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all pupils, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. All pupils have

access to the curriculum, and the right to a learning environment, which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping.

- This policy has been impact assessed by governors in order to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on race, gender or disability equality.

UNICEF: Rights of the Child

Article 3

The best interests of the child must be top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.

Article 6

Every child has the right to develop to their full potential.

Article 14

Every child has the right to think and believe what they choose and also to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping others from practising their rights.

Article 19

Every child has the right to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment.

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, their own and others' cultures and the environment.

Article 37

Children should not be subject to cruel or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 39

Children who experience neglect, abuse, exploitation, torture must receive special support to help them recover their health, dignity, self-respect and social life.

Article 40

A child accused of breaking rules must be treated with dignity and respect.



St Thomas More Catholic Primary School



NEW GOVERNOR CHECKLIST

Governor Name	
---------------	--

Action	Completed by	Date	Signed
Welcomed to the Governing Body	Chair		
Allocated an identified governor mentor	Chair		
Visit the school to meet staff and children	Head Teacher		
Informal briefing on the school	Head Teacher		
Received dates for meetings	Clerk		
Received school induction pack			
Attended local authority training			
Attended diocesan briefing			

Signed	
Date	