



Anti-bullying Policy

The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust



Anti – Bullying Policy

At St Margaret’s C of E Academy we celebrate the uniqueness of every child of God in a Christian Community and encourage them to flourish and shine in all they do, preparing them for life’s journey. Our school has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the heart of the school and provides an inclusive, caring and supportive environment shaped by our core Christian values of Love, Friendship, Perseverance, Respect, and Wisdom.

Bullying damages children’s and young people’s physical and mental health, including their self- confidence and ability to build and sustain relationships. It can also destroy self-esteem sometimes with devastating consequences and with the effects lasting into adult life. Bullying undermines the ability to concentrate and learn and can impact on children’s and young people’s chances of achieving their full potential at school and later in life. Bullying causes harm to those who bully, those who are bullied and those who observe bullying. This school believes that all children and young people have the right to learn and work in an environment where they feel safe and that is free from harassment and bullying. The purpose of this policy is to communicate how the school aims to create a climate and school environment in which everyone agrees that bullying is unacceptable and is committed to tackling it in order to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Hub Board would seek to maintain the School's character as a close-knit, caring, Christian community that reinforces positive behaviour. They expect teaching and non-teaching staff to lead by example, to listen to children and, equally, to give many opportunities for children to listen to each other and to respect each other's views.

A Definition of Bullying

The Essex County Council’s definition of bullying is that: Bullying is any behaviour which is perceived by the targeted individual or any other person, as intending to hurt, intimidate, frighten, harm or exclude. It is usually persistent and an abuse of power, leaving the targeted individual feeling defenseless. Bullying is a subjective experience that can take many forms. Various national and international definitions of bullying exist and most of these definitions have three things in common which reflect CYP’s experience of bullying and evidence gained from extensive research in this area.

The three common aspects in most definitions of bullying are that:

- It is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- It is usually repeated over time.
- There is an imbalance of power, which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves.

These factors are reflected in the DCSF and Essex definitions of bullying:

- Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. DCSF 2007
- Bullying is the persistent, deliberate attempt to hurt or humiliate someone. Essex 2007

At our school we define bullying as: Emotionally or physically harmful behaviour which is:

- Repetitive, willful or persistent
- Intentionally harmful, carried out by an individual or a group
- Based on an imbalance of power leaving the person who is bullied feeling defenseless.

Bullying Forms and Types

The school recognises that although children and young people may be particularly vulnerable to bullying as a result of personal characteristics such as height, weight, colour of hair or more structural inequalities such as race, disability or sexuality, anyone can be bullied for almost any reason or difference. Research has identified various different types of bullying which reflect different causations.

Forms of Bullying

Bullying behaviour across all types of bullying can represent itself in a number of different forms. Children and young people can be bullied in ways that are:

Physical – by being punched, pushed or hurt; made to give up money or belongings; having property, clothes or belonging damaged; being forced to do something they don't want to do.

Verbal – by being teased in a nasty way; insulted about their race, religion or culture; called names in other ways or having offensive comments directed at them

Indirect – by having nasty stories told about them; being left out, ignored or excluded from groups. Some bullying is physical:

Electronic / 'cyber bullying' - for example, via text message; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via email; and via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phones.

Specific Types of Bullying

Specific Types of Bullying include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities
- Bullying related to being gifted or talented
- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying of young carers or looked – after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist or sexual bullying

The school recognise that bullying is a complex type of behaviour occurring between individuals and groups. Different roles within bullying situations can be identified and include:

- The ring-leader, the person who through their position of power can direct bullying activity
- Assistants/associates, who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ring-leader)
- Reinforcers, who give positive feedback to the bully, perhaps by smiling or laughing.
- Outsiders/bystanders, who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour
- Defenders, who try and intervene to stop the bullying or comfort pupils who experience bullying.

Some Children and Young People (CYP) can adopt different roles at different times, or at the same time (a bullied child might be bullying another child at the same time, or a seeming 'reinforcer' might become a 'defender' when the ringleader is not around).

Recognising Signs and Symptoms

The school recognises the fact that some CYP are more vulnerable to bullying than others and is sensitive to the changes of behaviour that may indicate that a child or young person is being bullied. CYP who are being bullied may demonstrate physical, emotional and behavioural problems. The following physical signs and behaviour could indicate other problems but bullying will be considered as a possibility:

- Being frightened of walking to or from school
- Losing self confidence and self-esteem
- Being frightened to say what's wrong
- Developing unexplained cuts, bruises and other injuries

- Unwilling to go to school, development of school phobia and unusual patterns of non-attendance
- Failing to achieve potential in school work
- Becoming withdrawn, nervous and losing concentration
- Becoming isolated and disengaged from other CYP
- Developing changes in physical behaviour such as stammering and nervous ticks
- Regularly having books or clothes destroyed
- Having possessions go 'missing' or 'lost' including packed lunch and money
- Starting to steal money (to pay the perpetrator)
- Becoming easily distressed, disruptive or aggressive
- Developing problems with eating and food
- Running away
- Developing sleep problems and having nightmares
- Developing suicidal thoughts or attempting suicide

Where CYP are exhibiting extreme signs of distress and changes in behaviour, the school will liaise with parents/carers and where appropriate, relevant health professionals and agencies such as the school nurse / G.P. and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service

Recognising Reasons for why Children and Young People (CYP) may Bully

The school recognises the fact that CYP may bully for a variety of reasons. Recognising why CYP bully supports the school in identifying CYP who are at risk of engaging with this type of behaviour. This enables the school to intervene at an early stage to prevent the likelihood of bullying occurring and to respond promptly to incidents of bullying as they occur. Understanding the emotional health and well-being of CYP who bully is key to selecting the right responsive strategies and to engaging the right external support. Possible reasons for why some CYP may engage in bullying include:

- Struggling to cope with a difficult personal situation e.g. bereavement, changes in family circumstances
- Liking the feeling of power and using bullying behaviour to get their own way
- Having a temperament that may be aggressive, quick tempered or jealous
- Having been abused or bullied in some way
- Feeling frustrated, insecure, inadequate, humiliated
- Finding it difficult to socialise and make friends
- Being overly self-orientated (possibly displaying good self-esteem) and finding it difficult to empathise with the needs of others

- Being unable to resist negative peer pressure
- Being under pressure to succeed at all costs

Section 3 – Implementing the Anti-Bullying Policy in our School

This anti bullying policy is set within the wider context of the school's overall aims, values and vision. As a school, we are committed to engaging with a whole school approach to examining and developing all aspects of school life to enhance the physical and emotional health and wellbeing of the whole school community.

Rational

That every child has the right to feel safe in school and enjoy their education without the threat of bullying behaviour. Our approach is to build the children's self-esteem and confidence and for our approach to be consistent across the school. We intend that the policy is clearly understood and shared by all, children, staff and parents.

At St Margaret's C of E Academy:

- We promote a healthy, safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff.
- We provide a broad and deep curriculum for all our pupils, having considered gender, ability and culture.
- We promote pupils self-esteem and emotional well-being and help them to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school, work and in the community.
- We prepare our pupils to confidently meet the challenges of adult life.
- We provide sufficient information and support to enable our pupils to make safe choices.
- Through an enriched curriculum, we provide young people, with opportunities to develop the necessary skills to manage their lives effectively.
- We help our young people to learn to respect themselves and others and move safely from childhood, through adolescence, into adulthood.
- We create a wider awareness of religious, cultural and moral values within a Christian framework and respect for different ethnic groups, religious beliefs and ways of life.
- We promote an inclusive ethos and a culture of mutual respect where diversity and difference are recognised, appreciated and celebrated.

The school believes that providing a safe and happy place to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, promoting equality and diversity, ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community and raising achievement and attendance.

In line with national guidance the school has allocated specific responsibility for

anti-bullying work to the schools (HoS, Learning Mentor, SENCO) who will support the coordination of a whole school approach to managing this important issue. This leadership role on anti-bullying includes the following core elements:

- evaluating data to inform policy development
- co-ordinating anti-bullying curriculum opportunities
- overseeing the effectiveness of the anti-bullying prevention and response strategies
- supporting staff to ensure alignment with the school anti-bullying policy and practice.

Policy Aims

The aim of this anti bullying policy is to communicate the school's approach to involving the whole school community in developing and promoting a whole school anti bullying ethos and culture. The policy provides clear guidance on how the school intends:

- To raise the profile of bullying and the effect it has on children and young people's emotional health and well-being, life chances and achievement
- To make clear to everyone within our whole school community that no form of bullying is acceptable and to prevent, de-escalate and /or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To encourage and equip the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including those who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident
- To respond quickly and effectively to incidents of bullying within the overall positive behaviour management policy
- To safeguard and offer support and comfort to CYP who have been bullied.
- To apply reasonable and proportionate disciplinary sanctions to CYP causing the bullying
- To support CYP who are bullying in recognising the seriousness of their behaviour and to offer support and counseling to help them to readjust their behaviour
- To provide longer term support to promote the self-esteem of those who have been bullied to reduce the likelihood of long term damage and also to address the emotional and behavioural needs of CYP who bully others to reduce the likelihood of repeated incidents of bullying
- To identify vulnerable CYP and those critical moments and transitions when they may become vulnerable, and provide additional support/safeguarding when needed.
- To ensure all staff are trained and supported and model positive relationships
- To regularly monitor incidents of bullying and harassment and report to

- responsible bodies e.g. Hub Board Members
- To provide curriculum opportunities including an entitlement framework for Personal Social and Health Education and Citizenship that includes learning about bullying, discrimination, personal safety and domestic violence

Reporting Incidents of Bullying

The school encourages and equips the whole school community to report all incidents of bullying, including CYP who have experienced being bullied and bystanders who have witnessed an incident. The school endeavors to provide clear, accessible and confidential incident reporting systems, which include access to:

- staff including teachers and support staff who are trained in listening skills and anti-bullying issues
- a designated Anti Bullying Coordinator / Person for Child Protection
- communication/suggestion boxes
- Learning Mentors
- Independent listeners/buddies, identified by the children themselves, including older pupils and adults other than teaching staff to whom CYP who are experiencing being bullied may turn
- online web based reporting systems for staff e.g. CPOMs
- message reporting via mobile phones, parent mail and email systems.
- confidential phone numbers

Responding to Incidents of Bullying

The school has an agreed procedure for responding consistently to incidents or allegations of bullying. Direct action to respond to incidents of bullying occurs within a context, which reminds all CYP that bullying behaviour is unacceptable to the school and will not be tolerated. At our school all CYP are encouraged to report incidents of bullying whether they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying.

The school will investigate the incident including the context and the roles of the people involved. In cases involving cyber bullying, the school will follow the guidance below.

DCSF Guidance: Cyber bullying, A Whole-School Community Issue in conjunction with the process described below. When responding to incidents involving any type of bullying the school will consider the situation in relation to the school's Child Protection policy and procedures. Statutory guidance on safeguarding CYP identifies Emotional Abuse as featuring serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger; or the exploitation or corruption of children.

In cases of severe or persistent bullying, staff will liaise with the Designated Person

for Child Protection particularly where there are concerns that a child or young person may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm in terms of emotional abuse.

The procedure and stages in responding effectively to bullying at our school are:

- Monitoring and recording behaviour and relationship issues. The school follows a clear support system, which enables challenging behaviour and relationship problems to be identified, recorded and addressed. This process is part of the school's overall behaviour management policy. It supports the detection of bullying and allows for intervention at an early stage. This system involves using the services of the School's Learning Mentor or HoS to talk through situations..
- Making sure the person being bullied is safe and feels safe. When a CYP reports being bullied (including when they describe disability, racist, gender or homophobic bullying), the school will acknowledge their concerns and the incident will be taken seriously. Incidents of bullying reported by witnesses are treated in the same manner.
- Establishing and recording what happened by listening to different perspectives, including those of the person bullied, the person doing the bullying and those that have witnessed the bullying ('bystanders').

Throughout this process a written record and log will be kept of the initial incident and any subsequent incidents. These records detail what happened and who was involved including the views and observations of any bystanders. Follow up action / strategies and the monitoring and impact of these strategies are also recorded.

- Date, time incident reported
- Member of staff to whom the incident was reported
- Date, time, location of alleged incident
- Nature of the alleged incident from the perspective of the person being bullied, witnesses and other parties.
- Date, time when parents/carers were informed
- Details of immediate action taken
- Details of follow up strategies including outcomes of mediation and reconciliation process

When an incident of bullying is reported the school will endeavour to make a written record of this incident within 24 hours of the incident occurring. Written records are factual and where opinions are offered these are based on factual evidence. CYP are invited to contribute initially and on an ongoing basis throughout the follow up period. Where appropriate CYP are told what should happen to the information. Recording incidents helps to build a picture of behaviour patterns in school e.g. who, when, how, what action taken. It enables the school to manage individual cases effectively and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies.

Records of bullying incidents will be kept in the HoS's Office and / or on CPOMs.

The school will submit figures in relation to racist bullying / incidents to the local authority on a termly basis. This information allows local authorities to monitor the occurrence of incidents and identify underlying trends in racist bullying so that appropriate and relevant training and support can be provided to schools. An additional record will also be kept and shared with the Hub Board. The Hub Board will use this record to support the submission of figures in relation to racist bullying / incidents to the local authority on a termly basis.

Deciding upon a response. All incidents of bullying will be responded to seriously and the behaviour of those who have been bullying will be challenged. It will be made clear that such behaviour is unacceptable. In all cases of bullying the school will initially consider the use of a restorative approach to resolving the situation.

The school believes that CYP causing harm should be held to account for their behaviour. This means:

- Accepting responsibility for the harm caused to the individual being bullied;
- Accepting responsibility for the harm caused to others (for example staff, friends or family);
- Recognising the need to take action to begin to repair the harm caused; and
- Agreeing a range of actions – in conjunction with all those involved- which will be monitored over an agreed period of time.

This approach supports the person who is doing the bullying through a process of mediation to help them to understand and accept that it is wrong to bully, take responsibility for their behaviour and make amends. This involves the person focusing on their unacceptable behaviour in an emotionally intelligent way. The school believes that all bullying is unacceptable but that many CYP who display anti-social behaviour and lack empathy for others can be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and change their behaviour.

The school will consider the use of disciplinary sanctions when responding to incidents of bullying. This may be where the school's restorative approach has failed to prevent further incidents of bullying. Where appropriate the school may use sanctions in conjunction with the school's restorative approach. Sanctions will be applied fairly and proportionately in accordance with the school's behaviour policy, taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that CYP may have and taking into consideration the needs of vulnerable CYP. Bullying by children with disabilities or SEN is no more acceptable than bullying by other children. However for a sanction to be reasonable and lawful the school will take account of the nature of the CYP disability or SEN and the extent to which they understand and are in control of what they are doing.

Disciplinary sanctions are intended to:

- Impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable
- Deter him/her from repeating that behaviour
- Signal to other CYP that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold the CYP who bully to account for their behaviour and ensure that they face up to the harm they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the CYP to put right the harm they have caused. The consequences of bullying should reflect the seriousness of the incident. The school takes verbal and indirect bullying as seriously as physical bullying. When deciding upon appropriate sanctions for bullying the school will ensure that the sanctions address bullying behaviour in a way which does not lead to an escalation of the behaviour but instead supports a resolution to the problem. This approach gives the best chance that bullying will not be repeated. The school will draw upon the school's behaviour management policy and follow the system for sanctions, which includes:

- removing child / young person who is bullying from particular groups of CYP including withdrawing them from certain activities break times/ lunchtimes.
- involving CYP in developing appropriate 'fair consequences' for those who have been involved in bullying.
- withdrawing privileges such as excluding the child/ young person from school trips, confiscating personal property in accordance with the school's agreed criteria.

In the case of more serious and persistent bullying, where the perpetrator has not responded to the school's restorative strategies (see above) or sanctions, the school may consider excluding the perpetrator from the school. Serious cases of bullying can include where violence and damage to property has taken place. The DCSF guidance for exclusion appeal panels makes clear that 'pupils responsible for violence and threatened violence should not normally be re-instated'. Some CYP who have been subjected to bullying can be provoked into violent behaviour. Where an attack has been provoked after months of persistent bullying, this will be considered differently from an unprovoked attack.

Communicating with the whole school community.

The school will communicate to the whole school community that the bullying has been taken seriously and has been responded to well. This will include talking to parents/ carers. (See Section Working With Parents/Carers)

Monitoring and following up with all parties concerned, including parents/carers to ensure that the bullying has stopped. Part of the school's process of responding to an incident is to seek an agreement to meet at some point in the future to see whether the situation has been resolved or whether further work needs to take place. This will include evaluating the effectiveness of the follow up strategies that have been put in place to ensure that the bullying has stopped. The school does not assume that a situation requires no further attention simply because a CYP has made no further complaints. Where a problem has not been resolved to the satisfaction of all parties the follow up strategies will be reviewed and/or further advice sought.

Responding to incidents of bullying which occur off the school premises.

The school recognises that bullying can and does happen outside school and in the community. Bullying is a relationship issue and its occurrence reflects the ways in which CYP socialise in school and in the wider community. The school believes that bullying is unacceptable wherever and whenever it happens. When an incident of bullying is reported and has occurred off the school site and out of school hours e.g. walking to and from school, the school will follow the guidance in the Behaviour Policy on regulating the conduct of CYP at times when they are not on the premises of the school and not under the lawful control or charge of a member of staff. The school encourages CYP to seek help and to tell us about incidents of bullying that happen outside the school so that the school can:

- alert colleagues in other schools whose pupils are bullying off the school premises
- make contact with local police officers and representatives from the Youth Service, Connexions and other organisations (including sports clubs and voluntary organisations)
- map safe routes to school in the event of a CYP being bullied on their journey to school
- offer CYP and parents/cares strategies to handle bullying off the school premises and guidance on how to keep safe on the internet and when using their mobile phones

Working with Parents/Carers

Where the school has become aware of a bullying situation, parents/carers of the child/young person who is being bullied and the child/ young person who is allegedly bullying, will be invited to the school to discuss their children's behaviour. The school will endeavour to involve parents/carers constructively at an early stage to support the process of investigating allegations and positively working together to seek ways of resolving the situation and bringing about reconciliation. The outcome of the meeting and agreed actions/responses will be recorded by the school.

The school adopts a problem solving approach with parents/carers e.g. 'It seems your son/daughter and (other child) have not been getting on very well' rather than 'your son/daughter has been bullying...'. While the school firmly believes that all bullying is unacceptable and that the perpetrators should be made to accept responsibility for their behaviour and make amends, the school will refrain from apportioning blame to the different parties involved as this could undermine the cooperative ethos that the school is seeking to promote. A cooperative ethos is desirable when trying to reach a resolution that is effective and long lasting.

The school will work alongside those parents/carers whose children have been bullied to support them in developing their children's coping strategies and assertiveness skills. Parents/carers of those causing the bullying will also have support in coming to a balanced view of what is happening and appreciating their role in helping their children to learn about the consequences of their actions.

The school takes parents/carers reporting bullying seriously. Parents are initially encouraged to refer their concerns to the class teacher and more senior members of staff such as a senior teacher or HoS. The SENco will be involved where appropriate. Parents/carers are encouraged to note details of the incident to share with the class teacher or member of staff involved. A record of the incident and the agreed actions/response made at the meeting will be recorded by the school and added to the school's bullying incidents report form. The school will then invest the time to further establish and record what happened by listening to the different perspectives of all those reportedly involved in the incident, including those of the person bullied, the person doing the bullying and those that have witnessed the bullying ('bystanders'). The school ensures that staff and parents/carers remain fully aware of the measures that have been put into place to prevent the occurrence of further incidents. Follow up appointments are made with parent/carers to share these agreed measures and to monitor their success in preventing further bullying.

CYP's Consultation and Participation

The school considers listening to the voices of Children and Young People (CYP) and actively seeking their views and opinions regarding bullying as an important part of our preventative work. The school regularly audits the way in which bullying is being addressed which includes, listening to CYP and ensuring they are given the opportunity to speak out, and have their voices heard on their experiences of bullying. CYP are actively encouraged to participate in identifying both the problems and solutions to bullying; reviewing and developing the schools anti bullying policy and practice and engaging in initiatives to support an anti-bullying ethos in school. CYP actively participate in:

- Identifying when and where the bullying happens and who is doing it to whom
- Identifying new forms of bullying, such as cyber bullying
- Making decisions about how to address and tackle bullying

- Reviewing the development and delivery of the taught curriculum focusing on aspects of bullying and discrimination
- Learning how to play an active participant role in challenging bullying such as engaging in peer support schemes such as buddying, mentoring and mediating
- Pupil parliament work

Whole Staff Awareness and Training Opportunities

The school endeavours to ensure that teachers and other adults working with CYP are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify and address all types and forms of bullying effectively and safely. Training will include recognising the signs of bullying in CYP and how to identify vulnerable CYP who may be susceptible to being bullied or becoming actively involved in bullying and bullying type behaviour. Training for staff is provided to ensure that they feel competent and confident in appropriately challenging bullying. Training also provides staff with a clear understanding of the school's policy and procedures on preventing and responding to incidents of bullying including providing short and long term support to those affected by bullying.

The school's approach to anti bullying work is included within induction programmes for new staff (including temporary and supply staff) The views of staff are sought as part of the school's review and evaluation of the anti-bullying policy and used to inform developments and enhance the school's anti bullying ethos and practice.

Outside Agencies

The school seeks the support and guidance from relevant and local and national agencies and organisations that work collectively to ensure that those who work with and support CYP are equipped with the skills and knowledge to address bullying effectively. Local support and guidance is accessed from county wide services and through liaison with the school's multidisciplinary Locality Team and voluntary agencies.

Monitoring and Evaluating the Anti-Bullying Policy

The school's anti bullying policy and practice is regularly monitored and evaluate to ensure its effectiveness. This process includes reviewing the school's definition of bullying and identifying new types and forms of bullying as they emerge. The policy review is coordinated by the SLT and SENCo and involves monitoring and evaluating anti bullying preventative and responsive strategies to ensure the school's practice is effective and successful in fostering an ethos that inhibits bullying and promotes inclusion and respect for diversity. The review process involves collecting data on the prevalence of bullying at the school and gathers the views and different perceptions of the whole school community including: staff, Hub Board Members,

CYP and parents / carers using a range of methods such as:

- meetings, surveys and questionnaires
- pupil perceptions a
- whole school audit tools

The school regularly analyses records of bullying incidents to identify patterns of behaviour regarding individuals and groups of CYP, and places and times where bullying may be occurring. Other informative data includes:

- Pupil Parliament work
- Parental complaints to the school or local authority regarding bullying
- Records of the Educational Welfare Service identifying where bullying is a factor in non- attendance
- Exclusion data relating to bullying
- Risk assessment for CYP who exhibit sexually inappropriate or harmful behaviours.
- Transfer and admissions data, specifically requests for transfer due to bullying or harassment
- Information contained in School Development Plans

The results of the review are used to inform areas for school development, which are included in the School Strategic Plan and other appropriate actions plans. The revised Ofsted inspection framework focuses on the key contributions made by the school to the wellbeing of its pupils, based on the five Every Child Matters outcomes.

The results of the evaluation of the school's anti bullying policy and practice are used to inform the evidence presented in the school Self Evaluation Form (SEF). The evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of measures in place to report and respond to bullying, racism and other forms of discriminatory behaviour.

The policy is reviewed every two years. Review date due: Autumn 2020