



St Thomas More Anti-Bullying Policy

INTRODUCTION

At St Thomas More Primary School, we are aware that bullying can happen to anyone, can occur in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of all our pupils.

In line with the **Equality Act 2010** it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by this Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of our pupils and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

It is vital that: All staff should be aware that safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to, bullying (including cyberbullying), gender based violence/sexual assaults and sexting.

(**Keeping Children Safe in Education**, 2016, part 2, 42)

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550511/Keeping_children_safe_in_education.pdf

St Thomas More School Anti-Bullying Policy outlines what we will do to prevent and tackle bullying. The policy has been drawn up through the involvement of our whole school community including staff, pupils, parents and governors.

DEFINITION

Bullying is “**Behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally**”. (Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Department for Education, 2017)

What does bullying look like? Bullying can include:

- Physical pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching etc
- name calling,
- taunting,
- mocking,
- making offensive comments,
- taking belongings,
- cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging and emailing; sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet,
- producing offensive graffiti,
- gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours,
- excluding people from groups.

Why are children bullied? Specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying related to race, religion or culture
- Bullying related to special educational needs or disabilities
- Bullying related to appearance or health
- Bullying related to sexual orientation
- Bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Sexist or sexual bullying

There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.

We are aware that certain groups of children are known to be particularly **vulnerable to bullying** by others and these may include:

- Children with special educational needs such as learning or physical difficulties,
- Children who are gifted and talented
- Young carers,
- Looked After Children,
- Those from ethnic and racial minority groups,
- Those young people who may be perceived as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning their gender role

Bullying can take place between:

- Children
- Children and staff
- Between staff
- Individuals or groups

PROCEDURES

We will:

- Ensure that pupils are aware that all bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that pupils feel safe to learn; and that pupils abide by the anti-bullying policy
- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying
- Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying including through the curriculum, through displays, through peer support and through the School Council
- Train all staff including lunchtime staff to identify bullying and follow school policy and procedures on bullying (see Appendix 3: Where Bullying Happens and Appendix 4: Lunch Supervisor's Role)
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable pupils

We will involve our pupils by:

- Regularly canvassing children's views on the extent and nature of bullying
- Ensuring pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying
- Ensuring all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying
- Involving pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in schools

- Publicising the details of helplines and websites
- Offering support to students who have been bullied
- Working with pupils who have been bullying in order to address the problems they have

Parents/carers Guidelines:

- In the first instance, parents/carers to make contact with class teacher to discuss concerns.
- If there's no resolution after a suitable period of time, a parent can then contact the Principal.
- After the above processes have been exhausted, if there is still no resolution parents have the option to approach the Safeguarding Governor, Mrs Nickie Rogan who can be contacted via the school office.
- School will ensure parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively <http://st-thomas-more.oxon.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/dbmac-complaints-procedure.pdf>
- School will ensure parents /carers know where to access independent advice about bullying (including <https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-parents-and-carers/>)
- School will work with parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying

PREVENTION OF BULLYING

Preventing and raising awareness of bullying is essential to keeping incidents in our school to a minimum. Through assemblies as well as PSHE lessons, pupils are given regular opportunities to discuss what bullying is, how to respond to aggression or name calling and skills of positive assertiveness, as well as incidents we would not describe as bullying such as two friends falling out or a one-off argument. We also ensure all our children know class and playground rules and understand how they protect everyone's rights and responsibilities and help keep everyone safe. We participate annually in national anti-bullying week.

We ensure that pupils are aware that all bullying will not be accepted or condoned. Pupils are taught to tell an adult in school if they are concerned that someone is being bullied.

We have ongoing training for all staff helping them to promote positive relationships and to prevent and tackle bullying. We will use outside agencies where appropriate.

SIGNS OF BULLYING

All staff should be vigilant in looking out for signs of bullying and all safeguarding issues especially as some children can remain silent about bullying (see appendix 2).

Signs of bullying can include:

Physical: unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts missing belongings, damaged clothes or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, bedwetting, nightmares

Emotional: losing interest in school, withdrawn, secretive, unusual shows of temper, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches & stomach aches, signs of depression

Behavioural: asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asking for more money, using different routes to school or wanting to be driven to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties or deterioration in quality of schoolwork, truancy

REPORTING AND RESPONDING TO ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING

All cases of alleged bullying should be reported to the Principal or a senior leader.

In any case of alleged bullying either the class teacher, Principal or senior member of staff should first establish the facts and build an accurate picture of events over time. This should be done through speaking to the alleged person who is doing the bullying, the target of the bullying and any adult witnesses as well as parents and pupil witnesses if necessary and appropriate.

If the allegation of bullying is upheld, the Principal (or senior leader) should seek to use a restorative approach with the pupil who is doing the bullying and the target of the bullying. The person doing the bullying should fully understand the consequences of their actions on their target, and apologise without reservation. Both parties should be clear that a repeat of these behaviours will not be acceptable.

See appendix 1 for strategies for working with the pupil who has been the target of the bullying as well as the pupil who has been doing the bullying.

All bullying incidents must be recorded and stored by the Principal. Parents of both parties should be informed.

These will be recorded using the Oxfordshire Recording Prejudice-related incidents and bullying form (see Appendix 5)

Where appropriate, class teachers will also keep records in their class file which could be helpful in spotting any patterns in incidents.

If the situation does not improve, the Principal or senior leader should meet with the parents of the bullying child and agree clear expectations and boundaries which would be shared with the pupils involved. Any further incidents should lead to intervention (eg through outside agencies), further monitoring, support and sanctions as deemed necessary and in line with the school behaviour policy.

LINKS WITH OTHER SCHOOL POLICIES

This Policy links with a number of other school policies including:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Confidentiality Policy

MONITORING, EVALUATION & REVIEW

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school.

We will review this policy at least once every two years and as part of this process take into account any records of incidents, surveys of children and parents, developments in curriculum, school policy and government advice and strategy.

ACADEMY COMMITTEE ROLE

The Academy Committee have a duty to:

- Be fully informed on matters concerning anti-bullying
- Regularly monitor incident reports and actions taken to be aware of the effectiveness of this policy
- Appoint a Safeguarding Governor who will be the nominated link to the school leadership team discussing issues around Bullying.

Designated Teacher: Helen Skertchly

Date agreed by staff: 22.11.17

Date agreed with Governing Body: 22.11.17

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body: Mrs Nickie Rogan

Date of Review:

APPENDIX 1

Working with the pupil who has been the target of bullying:

- Look for signs of bullying. Such signs could include those described earlier such as unexplained cuts and bruises or his clothes or belongings ripped or missing or if the child is shy or withdrawn or displays an uncharacteristic lack of confidence.
- Teachers must act swiftly to deal with it remembering to stay calm and not to overreact.
- Talk to the child and find out what he/she thinks is happening. Compile a written record of what has happened - (where, what, when did the incident occur). Inform designated teacher.
- Find out as much as possible about what has happened and ask the child to describe how s/he sees the situation. Meet with individual witnesses to try to get a clearer picture.
- Reassure the victim that the bullying is not their fault and that you will support them.
- Ensure that the victim is protected from the bully or bullies.
- Help the victim to plan self-protection strategies and a response if the incident should re-occur.
- Agree action to be taken - eg interview the bully and let him/her know that this behaviour is unacceptable, talk to the victim's parents to inform them of incident/s, action taken and support available.
- Review date - agree to see the victim in an agreed, short period to review the situation.
- Possible referral to outside support agencies, if required. Permission from parent should always be obtained.

Working with the pupil who has carried out the bullying:

- Meet with the bully as soon as possible. Compile a written record from the bully's standpoint.
- Stress that it is the behaviour and not the pupil that is unacceptable.
- Suggest acceptable forms of behaviour and highlight any good form that the pupil has already demonstrated.
- Responsibility for any harm/hurt/damage must be accepted by the bully and recompense made.
- Possible contact with parents - discuss with parents what has happened and get them to agree on a form of action they will take, tell parents what action the school intends to take and ask for their support.
- Agreed action and consequences should be fully understood - inform the bully that his behaviour will be closely monitored, detention will be given, any repeat of the behaviour or recrimination will be dealt with severely. Ensure that positive behaviour is noticed and encouraged.
- Review date - arrange to see the bully in the short term as he/she may need support re positive behaviour.
- Possible referral to outside agency where appropriate.
- A record of the incident should be given to the Principal and a copy may be kept in the pupil's record folder.

The important thing is that we deal with incidents of bullying immediately, we can't ignore it!

APPENDIX 2

WHY DO CHILDREN REMAIN SILENT ABOUT BULLYING?

Children are often very frightened to tell adults they are being bullied. There are many reasons that children put up with bullying rather than tell:

FEAR

- that the bullying will get worse
- that they will not be believed
- of being seen as a cry baby
- of getting the bully into trouble
- of involving parents in case they get upset or angry
- of not being taken seriously
- of being ostracised by other students
- that they deserve it because they are worthless

IGNORANCE

They may keep silent because they don't know:

- what to do
- that the treatment they are receiving is bullying
- where or who to go to for help
- that the school takes it seriously

They may keep silent because they believe:

- it hasn't been dealt with properly before
- it will get worse
- the bully is popular

WISHFUL THINKING

They may keep silent hoping:

- that it will go away
- that the bully will get bored and stop
- that the bully will leave
- that the bully will turn their attention to someone else,

APPENDIX 3

WHERE DOES BULLYING HAPPEN?

Bullying in school often takes place unbeknown to the teacher. Bullies are able to take advantage of their victim where there is no adult in authority to check their behaviour eg coming to and going home from school. Research shows that most bullying takes place in the playground. There are various reasons for this:

- Children can “gang up” on their victim
- Noise level is high and can hide what is going on
- Physical nature of some games present possibilities to the bully
- Wide age range of pupils resulting in the vulnerability of smaller and younger children.

Other areas where there is opportunity for intimidation include: toilets, cloakroom areas, school buses. Close supervision is required if the incidence of bullying is to be reduced.

Bullying may also occur in the classroom. This is where the teacher plays an important role in providing an atmosphere of stability and security. Pupils must be discouraged from using verbal or physical abuse, however subtle. Teachers should also refrain from using demeaning or sarcastic language.

APPENDIX 4

LUNCH SUPERVISOR’S ROLE

The lunch-time supervisors have a vital role to play in countering bullying in the playground and elsewhere. They should:-

- Understand how serious bullying can be for some children
- Attend staff meetings and training sessions
- Be active in eliminating bullying
- Ensure that the playground is a safe and friendly place for our children
- Talk to the pupils - get to know as many as possible
- Help the children to play organised games and join in themselves
- Intervene positively when behaviour is unacceptable
- Talk calmly and rationally to children displaying aggressive/bullying behaviour
- Protect vulnerable children and, where possible, empower them to take action themselves
- Make class teacher or designated teacher aware of any concerns you have or of anything you have observed or had to deal with during lunch time.

APPENDX 5

Recording prejudice-related incidents and bullying



**OXFORDSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL**

- Collect details, either to keep on this form, or else to enter into your IMS.
- To enter details into SIMS .net, go to **Focus > Behaviour Management > Maintain Behaviour Incidents > New**
- Choose **Prejudice-related incident** or **Bullying** from the 'top level' **type**, then if appropriate, choose one **Type Of Bullying** as motivation.
- Choose one or more appropriate **Additional Types**.
- **NB** Record sufficient detail to identify exact nature of prejudice or type of bullying in **Comments**

Reason for prejudice-related incident / bullying Additional Type:

(delete as appropriate)

Young carers, looked after children	<input type="checkbox"/>	Assault	<input type="checkbox"/>
Appearance or health condition	<input type="checkbox"/>	Verbal abuse (pupil / teacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race Religion or Culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	Threatened	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEN or Disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theft / taking property	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexist or Sexual,		Cyberbullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
incl. transgender phobia	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation (homophobia)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Excluding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (record in Comments , below)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Written derogatory comments, incl. graffiti	<input type="checkbox"/>
Alleged	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (record in Comments , below)	<input type="checkbox"/>

The categories above put some equality groups together e.g. **Race, Religion or Culture**, so please use the **Comments** box to explain which.

Activity: (lesson where bullying took place, if relevant)

Locality

Bus

Classroom

Corridor

Dining Hall

Playground

To, or from, school

Toilets

Outside school premises

Other (record in Comments)

Date of Incident:

Time:

Comments

Unresolved

Further intervention needed

Staff recording the incident...

Name:

Role:

Staff involved:

Role: (Target / Aggressor / Witness)

Pupils involved:

Name:

Role: (Target / Aggressor / Witness / Participant / Bystander)

Individual Student Record

Have you had contact with the target's parent / carer? Yes No

If Yes, by phone / letter? Date of contact:

Have you had contact with the aggressor's parent / carer? Yes No

If Yes, by phone / letter? Date of contact:

Are any other agencies involved? Yes No

If Yes, which agencies?

Does the incident require a multi-agency response? Yes No

If Yes, or other agencies already involved, and incident was prejudice-motivated, consult local authority as to whether Hate Crime report appropriate.

Signed

Name

Details of any subsequent actions or follow-up (record in Comments)