

# St. Mary's Church of England Primary School

## Fownhope

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



*What we nurture today, flourishes tomorrow*

**UPDATED JANUARY 2019**

*A rich education is more than simply learning reading, writing and maths. It is about helping a child grow into their full potential as inquisitive, well balanced and cheerful adults. As a Christian school we nurture children to display the 'fruit of the Spirit', which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23). At St Mary's you will find children growing in mind, body and spirit as they form good relationships with each other, the staff and discover a faith which will sustain them in a rapidly changing world. As our motto has it: "what we nurture today flourishes tomorrow".*

## **Introduction**

At St Mary's CE Primary School, Fownhope (St Mary's), we believe that every member of our school community should feel valued, respected and treated as an individual. Through the implementation of this policy, together with the Safeguarding policy, we aim to help children grow in a safe and secure environment and become positive, responsible and increasingly independent members of our school community. Central to this aim is the expectation that the children of St Mary's will display high standards of behaviour and attitudes, and treat other people as they would wish to be treated themselves. Our school anti-bullying policy is designed to support the way in which all members of our school community can live and work together.

## **What is bullying?**

'Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms.' (DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying October 2014).

Bullying can be physical e.g. hitting, kicking, interfering with or taking belongings, or emotional e.g. name calling, teasing, spreading nasty stories, racial or sexual harassment and intimidation, or rude/aggressive gestures. Bullying can also be threatening looks, racial comments, cyber-bullying or simply being excluded by those believed to be friends. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power.

## **Why is an anti-bullying policy necessary?**

Pupils have the right to learn and play in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. All children (and adults) have the potential for bullying behaviour, given certain circumstances. It is important that the school has a clear written policy, where both pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

## **How can we prevent bullying?**

At St Mary's we use a variety of methods for helping children to feel safe and secure and to prevent bullying. These include:

- By working together with parents to promote a caring community based on Christian values and teachings that underpin our society.
- By having a focus on the School Vision ('What we nurture today, flourishes tomorrow') and through our Half-Termly Values.
- By giving children the opportunities to discuss issues surrounding behaviour problems and bullying, as well as self-esteem and confidence, during circle time and PSHE lessons.

- By ensuring all children feel they can talk to someone in school. All staff are approachable and willing to listen to pupils, and the school's Deputy Safeguarding Lead is available to listen to pupils' concerns.
- By focused work, exploring ideas around Anti-bullying and E-Safety during targeted lessons, as well as at other times.
- By ensuring children's concerns are listened to and acted upon.

The ethos and working philosophy of St Mary's means that all staff actively encourage children to have respect for each other and for other people's property.

Good and kind/polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded using both our House Points system and class Behaviour Boards. The whole school also uses a behaviour Traffic Light system. Low level misbehaviour leads to the child's name being moved to yellow, with that child then missing a playtime (or similar punishment). Serious bad behaviour (physical aggression, refusal to behave etc) results in their name being moved to red and incurs a more serious punishment at the Headteacher's discretion.

Staff will regularly discuss bullying, and help children to understand what bullying is and how it differs from more regular incidents of misbehaviour. This will inform children that we are serious about dealing with bullying and leads to open conversations and increased confidence in children to want to discuss bullying. Staff will reinforce expectations of behaviour as a regular discussion. Where necessary, staff will reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings.

### **How do we deal with bullying, if the problem arises?**

We must create a safe, secure learning environment where children have the confidence and strategies to speak up and tell of any bullying experiences, knowing that some positive action will be taken.

Children at St Mary's are actively encouraged to report any incident which they consider to possibly be bullying to an adult in school. They are also encouraged to talk to their parents about anything they are concerned about.

All staff must be watchful and aware of the problem of bullying and observe social relationships between pupils. Staff must remain vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other safeguarding issue, ie. do not wait to be told before you raise concerns or deal directly with the matter. Children may not be aware that they are being bullied; they may be too young or have Special Educational Needs.

Staff should be able to identify children who may be vulnerable and who could fall victim to bullying as well as those who may demonstrate bullying behaviour.

### **Procedure for dealing with reported incidents of bullying**

When an incident is reported...

At playtime / lunchtime, the member of staff will:

- Listen to the child's report of the incident.
- Where necessary, take notes of names of participating children, the incident and possible witnesses.
- Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing.
- Where this involves particularly vulnerable children, or serious incident, it may be appropriate to involve the Class Teacher / member of the senior management team immediately.
- Otherwise, pass this information on as soon as possible to the Class Teachers involved.
- Reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings.

The Class Teacher will:

- Listen to the child's report of the incident.
- Take notes of names of participating children, incident and possible witnesses.
- Reinforce a general message that children do not have to be friends with everyone else, but they must be respectful of everyone else's feelings.
- Reassure the pupil that they have done the right thing.
- Investigate further by talking to all children involved.
- Make sure the 'Vital Information File' is updated with the incident recorded.
- If bullying is not suspected, then the incident of misbehaviour will be dealt with according to our Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- In the case of potential racist bullying, this must be reported to the Head Teacher immediately.
- If bullying is suspected, this information will be passed on to Head Teacher.

The Head Teacher will:

- On receipt of this information the Head Teacher or teacher, will talk to all children involved again, to establish a clearer understanding. They will then decide if this is a bullying incident or not. If not, it will be dealt with according to our Behaviour Policy.
- If bullying is suspected, then they will decide on the best course of action.
- All incidents of bullying will be discussed with all relevant staff and parents of the children involved, in order that everyone can be vigilant and that bullying may be prevented from happening in the future.
- All incidents of bullying are recorded by the Head Teacher, who in turn notifies Herefordshire Council's Anti-Bullying Officer. Incidents of bullying will also be reported to the Governing Body.

Parents are asked to:

- Listen to the child's report of the incident.
- Take notes of names of perpetrators, incident and possible witnesses.
- Contact school as soon as possible to pass the information on to the Class Teacher or Head Teacher.
- On receipt of this information the school will then investigate further, talking to all children involved to establish a clearer understanding.

Parents, please do not:

- Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be the bully or by speaking to their parents.
- Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.

### **What happens next?**

- Where incidents are deemed to involve bullying the parents will be contacted as soon as possible.
- Perpetrators will be sanctioned appropriately. This may involve:
  - missing some playtime/lunchtimes.
  - writing an explanation for the incident or writing a letter of apology.
  - removal from the class.
  - loss of privileges / school trips / sporting events etc.
  - interview with the Head Teacher or Deputy head.

If the perpetrator repeats this behaviour on a number of occasions within a term, or a single incident is deemed serious, a fixed-term or permanent exclusion will be considered by the Head Teacher.

- Children who perpetrate frequent acts of bullying may be in need of support from external agencies, e.g. Behaviour Support Team, Educational Psychologist. A pastoral support plan may need to be put in place.
- Children who frequently report acts of bullying against themselves may also be in need of support. Following discussions with parents, appropriate support will be put in place.
- The victim should always be reassured and informed of any sanction given to the perpetrator, where appropriate.
- On a case by case basis, the school may decide to use other effective nationally recognised methods to support the bully and children being bullied, such as the 'no-blame approach,' 'peer counselling,' 'restorative justice,' and 'circle time.'
- Speak to the victim again, and explain actions, reassure and tell them that you will be checking regularly with them, and find out if issues have been resolved. Develop positive strategies to give them confidence.

- Monitor the situation carefully.

## **Support and Information for Parents and Families**

Parents and families have an important part to play in helping us deal with bullying.

Watch out for signs that your child is being bullied, or is bullying others. Parents and families are often the first to detect symptoms of bullying. It can be helpful to ask questions about progress and friends at school; how playtimes and lunchtimes are spent; and whether your child is facing problems or difficulties at school.

If you suspect your child is being bullied

- Calmly talk to your child about it
- Reassure your child that telling you about the bullying was the right thing to do
- Explain that any further incidents should be referred to their Class Teacher immediately.
- Make an appointment to see your child's Class Teacher and explain the problems your child is experiencing.

Talking to the Class Teacher about bullying:

- Try to stay calm - bear in mind that the teacher may be unaware that your child may be being bullied.
- Be as specific as possible about what your child says has happened - give dates, places and names of other children involved.
- Ask if there is anything you can do to support your child.
- Stay in touch with the Class Teacher.

If you feel your concerns have not been addressed:

- Make an appointment to see Mr Milne/ Mrs Gibbs to discuss the situation.
- If you still feel your concerns have not been addressed, then please follow the school's Complaints Procedure.

If you suspect your child is bullying other children:

Often parents are not aware that their child is bullying others. We ask parents to discourage their child from using bullying behaviour at home or elsewhere. Show how to resolve difficult situations without using violence or aggression.

Children sometimes bully because:

- they don't know it is wrong
- they are copying older brothers and sisters or other people in the family they admire

- they haven't learnt other, better ways to mix with their peers
- their friends encourage them to bully
- they are going through a difficult time and are acting out aggressive feelings

To stop your child bullying others:

- Talk to your child, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using aggression or force to get what they want
- Show your child how to join in with other children without bullying
- Make an appointment to see your child's Class Teacher; explain to the teacher the problems your child is experiencing; discuss with the teacher how you and the school can stop them bullying others
- Regularly check with your child how things are going at school
- Give your child lots of praise and encouragement when they are co-operative or kind to other people.

### **Information for Pupils**

If you think you are being bullied...

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can. It is not your fault.
- Ignore them and walk away from the situation.
- Tell an adult what has happened straight away.
- Never do what they say, get angry or look upset.
- Do not hit back / retaliate.

Always.....

- Tell a teacher or another adult in school.
- Tell someone at home.
- Talk to a friend and ask a friend to come with you if you are too worried to tell an adult yourself.
- Keep speaking up until someone listens and does something to stop the bullying.
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened.

When you talk to an adult about bullying, be clear about:

- What has happened to you.
- How often it has happened.
- Who was involved.
- Who saw what was happening.

- Where it happened.
- What you have done about it already.

In line with the school's guidelines this policy will be reviewed biennially.

This policy was approved by the Governing Body on:	
Signature of Headteacher:	
Signature of Chair of Governors:	
Review Date:	January 2021