

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The community of St. Mark's believes that every individual is created by God and is precious to God. Each person is called to serve God and their neighbour and to fulfil their potential.

St. Mark's is a Catholic School which has at its heart a love of God, the education of its students and a mission to serve our neighbours and community. We seek to foster a spirit of truth, reconciliation, justice and peace. We are committed to developing the spiritual, intellectual, moral, cultural, social and physical potential of all our members within a safe and supportive environment.

Principles

The focus of this policy is to ensure that pupils 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. A clear anti-bullying ethos will be maintained based on gospel values of love, justice, peace and reconciliation.

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

The three main types of bullying are:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, theft).
- Verbal (name calling, racist, homophobic remarks).
- Indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups).

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 changes in work patterns, lack of concentration or truanting from school.

Strategies

The school is seeking to deal with bullying in the following ways:

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff approached. This will involve giving reassurance to the bullied child and taking down information about the incident.
- Victims or bystanders must be able to report incidents in a safe and discreet manner and be reassured that reporting an incident will not make things worse. Where requested the anonymity of a witness will be protected.
- The member of staff concerned will pass information to the Form Tutor who will discuss the matter with the PPL (or mentor in the case of mentored students).

- Pupils who have been bullied will be offered reassurance and continued support by the PPL or tutor or mentor. They will be helped by discussing what happened and why. They will be given access to the Counsellor or Chaplain and some of the specialist telephone help-lines or web addresses on dealing with bullying. This is to help them restore self-esteem and confidence.
- Pupils who have bullied will need to recognise their wrongdoing and accept the need for change. Parents will need to support the child in their attempts to correct their behaviour.
- Some of the following disciplinary steps may be taken:
- Official warning, detention, minor fixed-term exclusion, major fixed-term exclusion, permanent exclusion.
- An Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator will appoint Anti Bullying Mentors (ABMs) from Year 11 to support Year 7 and 8 pupils. These ABM will receive appropriate training to enable them to offer advice or pass on information to teaching staff when necessary.
- ABMs will be attached to Year 7 and 8 Tutor Groups. They will participate in Anti-Bullying Assemblies.

Targets

- Raised awareness of the unacceptability of bullying in St. Mark's.
- Decreased chances of bullying taking place at break and lunchtime.
- Increased staff awareness of bullying in the classroom and around the school.
- Increased sense of Form and Year spirit.
- Strategies in place to tackle bullies and support their victims through behaviour management and pastoral care.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Records of bullying incidents will be maintained. The Pastoral Deputy will report to the Governors' Pastoral Committee and jointly evaluate the impact of anti-bullying strategies.

Last Reviewed: October 2018