



# Anti-Bullying Policy 2021-2022

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## 1. Principles

St. Mary's College is committed to all students' rights to learn in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and bullying.

Bullying is totally unacceptable. The College will challenge bullying in all its forms and take quick clear and decisive action to protect students.

St Mary's College believes that;

- Everyone has the right to feel safe at College
- Everyone has the right to be happy at College
- Everyone has a duty to help and support all members of the community.

All students have a right to feel safe and be protected in College from all types of harassment and bullying: derogatory name-calling; verbal intimidation; social exclusion; ridicule; humiliation; extortion; physical violence; sexual, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, peer on peer, racial and cultural harassment; cyberbullying and disability or SEN based bullying.

This policy applies to when students are on College premises; on College transport, or on College related activities off site. The College will take action where behaviour can be linked to the College; could bring College in to disrepute and/or could danger staff and students.

This policy is seen to be closely linked with the College's Safeguarding Policy, Digital Safety Policy, Mental Health Policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

## 2. Purpose

This policy aims to ensure that Governors, staff, parents/carers and students work together to make St Mary's College a place where Bullying will not be accepted.

The aims of this Anti-bullying Policy are to:

1. To foster respect for others.
2. To provide a clear message to all students that harassment and bullying, in any form, are completely unacceptable.
3. To provide student with an effective means of tackling bullying by ensuring that a known support network exists (using teaching staff, tutors and the Safeguarding Team).
4. To provide all staff and those adults who work with our students (e.g. supply teachers, trainee teachers, security officers), with a clear framework to enable effective handling of safeguarding issues.
5. To provide disciplinary action which ensures the bully is clear that such behaviour is not to be tolerated.
6. To investigate the reasons for such behaviour and offer support for the reform of the bully.

### 3. Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

#### **Governors**

The College Governing Body is responsible for taking a lead role in monitoring and reviewing of the policy.

#### **Safeguarding and Disciplinary Leads**

The Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline is responsible for the review, update and implementation of this policy. The Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline will communicate this policy to the College community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably (in line with our Disciplinary Policy and Procedures) and that each allegation is investigated thoroughly.

#### **Staff**

The Senior HR Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring anti-bullying training for staff.

All staff, including; Governors, Senior Leadership, teaching and non-teaching staff have a responsibility to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly. Tutors, teaching staff and the Safeguarding Team have a particular responsibility to support students through any investigation into an allegation of bullying and/or harassment.

#### **Parents & Carers**

Parents and carers have a responsibility to support their son/daughter and contact the College if they believe their son/daughter is being bullied or is bullying others. It is expected that the parent/carer will work in partnership with the College to resolve conflicts between students.

#### **Students**

Students have the responsibility to abide by the Student Code of Conduct and Anti-Bullying policy. All students will be aware of the penalties for failing to comply with the Student Code of Conduct and the implications as set out in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedures. We request that students report any incident of bullying immediately.

### 4. What is Bullying?

Bullying is the wilful and conscious desire to undermine, hurt, frighten, threaten or intimidate another person. Bullying can be physical verbal or take the form of psychological pressure. Bullying can happen face to face or through cyberspace, in the form of abusive and threatening text messages, emails or web based text or images.

Examples of bullying are:

- Emotional – excluding, tormenting, breaking equipment, threatening gestures, bribes, being unfriendly, spreading rumours
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, pinching or any use of violence
- Verbal – teasing, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, insulting, making offensive remarks
- Racist – racial language, taunts or gestures
- Sexual –unwanted physical contact, abusive comments
- Homophobic –bullying someone because of their sexuality
- Trans-gender –bullying someone with trans-gender identity
- Cyber –unwanted text messages, e-mails or comments on social networking sites
- Religious –taunting due to religious belief and appearance.

### **Links to statutory guidance and legislation**

This policy is based on DfE guidance ‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying’ July 2017 and supporting documents. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education’ 2021 and ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’ guidance 2018. There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for College in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986

## **5. Definition of Bullying**

- Bullying can be defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017)
- Bullying can include: name calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- Bullying includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying is recognised by the College as being a form of peer on peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s emotional development.

## **6. Forms and types of bullying covered by this policy**

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/students with protected characteristics):
- Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
- Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture
- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
- Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
- Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act)

## **7. Cyberbullying (inc: text message, websites, social media, email etc.)**

In the age of increasing communication by text, social media etc., the College is aware that cyber bullying as such will be far more prevalent. As such:

- Students should be aware of their responsibilities when logging on to a college computer (as per the ICT agreement, and Student Code of Conduct)
- Students should be careful to whom they provide personal details to
- Students should save any offensive messages etc.

## **8. Awareness of possible signs of bullying**

Parents and Carers, teachers, tutors and support staff are in an ideal position to observe changes in student behaviour which may indicate they are being bullied.

Staff should be aware of the student who:

- Becomes withdrawn or moody
- Becomes uncharacteristically withdrawn or argumentative
- Displays uncharacteristic aggressive or depressive behaviour
- Exhibits a sudden lowering of their self-esteem
- Shows a sudden decline in academic achievement
- Becomes agitated about missing possessions
- Develops unexplained injuries
- Is reluctant to eat
- Tells of sleep disturbance or nightmares
- Makes them aware of lack of money or transport

Taken individually these signs might not be because of bullying, but a combination of some of them could provide good reason to suspect it. In any occasion please refer to the Safeguarding team immediately.

## 9. Prevention

The College is committed to establishing a culture of tolerance and positive engagement so that bullying is prevented. To establish this ethos, the College has developed a number of strategies aimed at prevention. Underpinning these strategies are the College's core values of respect for staff and students, good discipline and inclusivity.

The involvement of students in prevention is essential. In managing its anti-bullying strategies, the College will engage with students through representative groups e.g. the Student Council and also through the tutorial framework.

The support of parents/carers is extremely important to the College and every effort will be made to communicate with them and involve them in the development of anti-bullying strategies.

The College identifies students who are vulnerable and or at risk via our Safeguarding Procedures. These students are monitored closely so early interventions can be put in place in prevent issues from escalating.

Staff and students will receive anti bullying awareness via the following;

### **Staff Development:**

- Inset training on policy and procedures
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Digital Safety Policy

### **Raising Student Awareness:**

- Consistent promotion of the College's Code of Conduct
- Tutorial presentation and Assemblies – Prevent, Radicalisation, Bullying, Gang Awareness
- IDEA Badges
- Side by Side Programme
- Involvement in thematic initiatives such as Anti-Bullying week
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Digital Safety Policy and Online Safety training
- ICT User Agreement
- Learner Surveys

### **9a Students who are being bullied should:**

- Talk to an adult they trust
- Be made aware that it is the bully who is wrong –not them
- Be made aware that they will be taken seriously
- Be made aware that they will be safe during any investigation

## 10. Peer on Peer Abuse

As a College we recognise that children/young people are capable of abusing their peers. And that it can happen both inside and outside of College or online.

All staff will receive training to clarify the College's policy and procedures with regard to peer on peer abuse as well be able to recognise the indicators and signs of peer on peer abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand that even if there are no reports of bullying in College it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. As such it is important if staff have any concerns regarding peer on peer abuse they should speak to the Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline/Safeguarding and Disciplinary Officer.

It is essential that all staff understand the importance of challenging inappropriate behaviours between peers, many of which are listed below, that are actually abusive in nature. Downplaying certain behaviours, for example dismissing sexual harassment as "just banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys" can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours, an unsafe environment for children/young people and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse leading to children/young people accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.

Peer on peer abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- Up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

## 11. Guidelines and Procedures: How the College responds to bullying

- **Staff**, who suspects a student is being bullied, who witnesses an incident of bullying, or in whom a student confides, should report to Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline/Safeguarding and Disciplinary Officer.
- **Students** are encouraged to take appropriate action i.e. make a disclosure to a member of staff, this should be a member of staff the student feels most comfortable with e.g. teacher, tutor, the Safeguarding Team or any other member of staff.
- **Parents and Carers** who suspect that their son/daughter is being bullied should do the same by phone call, and if possible make an appointment to discuss the issues.
- Staff who become aware of a bullying situation must:
  - Listen to the student
  - Take it seriously
  - Make it clear to the student that they have done the right thing by confiding in a member of staff
  - Make it clear to the student that the information must be passed on and cannot be confidential
  - Pass the information to the Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline/Safeguarding and Disciplinary Officer.
  - Provide a written account as per below.
- When an incident is disclosed to a member of staff, the following procedures will come into place;
  - The disclosure must be immediately reported to the Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline/Safeguarding and Disciplinary Officer. Incidents should be reported where possible in person.
  - Relevant staff will interview all parties concerned and a clear account of the incident will be recorded in writing by all parties concerned (the victim or the member of staff recording the victim's verbal statement.) These will be signed and dated for authenticity.
  - All incidents of bullying are recorded via the Safeguarding Pastoral Log on Cedar; in addition to this all bullying incidents will be logged on the central Safeguarding register kept by the Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline.
  - Where required parents will be contacted to ensure they are kept fully informed.
  - Where necessary and appropriate, the police will be consulted.
  - Incidents will be investigated and dealt with promptly. Every attempt will be made to educate the bullies to reflect and change their behaviour.
  - All incidents of racial abuse/bullying/harassment are to be reported to the Head of Safeguarding and Student Discipline/Safeguarding and Disciplinary Officer.

## 12. Outcomes

One or more of the following will be implemented in response to an incident of bullying;

- The “No blame’ approach – both parties will be interviewed separately, although the victim may require a friend for support.
- Discussions surrounding appropriate behaviour will take place
- Formal recording bullying incidents on a student’s College record
- Involving the parents of both the victim and the bully and informing them of the consequences.
- Restorative Justice Conferencing: the bully/bullies may be asked to genuinely apologise. Where possible the students will be reconciled and an agreed way forward found. This encourages acceptance of responsibility and sets clear boundaries.
- Suspension or permanent exclusion
- After the incident/incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.
- Where appropriate the college may involve the Police.

### **13. Monitoring, reviews and evaluation**

The Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed annually by:

- Students
- Safeguarding Team
- Executive Management Team
- Governing Body

The effectiveness of the policy is reviewed:

- Student survey feedback
- Monitoring of bullying incidents by the Safeguarding team and Governing Body
- Governors annually monitor the effectiveness of actions

### **14. Anti-Bullying Help Lines and websites**

National Bullying Helpline: 0845 22 55787 (open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday)

ChildLine: 08001111

Samaritans: 116 123 – (it's FREE -24 hours a day)

NSPCC Helpline: 0808 8005000 [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)

## Appendix 1 – Procedures for reporting bullying

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