COGNITA
TEACHING EXCELLENCE

St. Mary's School
Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2016

KEY FACTS:

- **The policy defines bullying and sets out our school procedures**
- **We take all concerns regarding bullying seriously and follow good practice guidance nationally**
- **We listen to pupils and take positive action to prevent bullying**
- **School must have measures in place to prevent all forms of bullying**
- **We wish to gain parental confidence, clear procedures and strategies for prevention and intervention by communicating this policy sucessfully to everyone and dealing quickly with incidents, where they occur.**
- **The ultimate sanction is school exclusion but our focus is preventive in providing a positive, safe environment where behaviour is good and pupils feel safe**
- **A bullying incident will be addressed as a child protection concern when there is risk of significant harm**

1 Introduction

1.1. St. Mary's School aims to establish a positive school culture in which all members of the community feel safe and confident, and treat each other with respect and courtesy, particularly with regard to individual differences. To this end, bullying will be eliminated.

1.2. This policy should be read and understood in the context of our behaviour policy, our Equalities and Diversity policy, and our approach to personal, social, health, care and education.

1.3. Our policy has been written in the context of our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010. The Act makes it unlawful in England and Wales for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil, exclude them or subject them to any other detriment.

1.4. We have taken full account of DfE policy guidance for all schools outlined in "Preventing Bullying in Schools" (DfE, May 2012), as well as good practice identified in "No Place for Bullying" (Ofsted, 2012).

1.5. Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there *is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm.* Where this is the case, staff will report their concerns to their local authority children's social care services, and inform the Cognita Education Officer, Education Compliance. The support of external services may be accessed to tackle any underlying issues which have contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

1.6. As a Cognita School, St. Mary's School has signed up to the principles embodied within our Group associate membership of the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), linked to the National Children's Bureau, including access to specialist training of staff to support our best efforts to eradicate bullying in school.

2 What do we mean by Bullying?

2.1. Bullying involves an imbalance of power which makes it hard for those being bullied to defend themselves. This may be seen or felt physically, online, or psychologically and includes social isolation or intimidation as well as any threat of violence. It is defined as follows:-

- it is deliberately hurtful behaviour;
- it is repeated over time

2.2. Bullying may take various forms, and is often motivated by prejudice, including:-

- Cyber - The use of electronic communications including email, mobile phones, text/multi-media messaging, photographs/video, online profiling, websites, social networks, and instant messaging; all with the intention to frighten, embarrass or harass. This can happen at any time of day with a potentially wider audience and more accessories as people forward on with a simple click;
- Disability – because, or focussing on the issue of disability;
- Emotional – being unfriendly, excluding tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures);
- Homophobic - because, or focussing on the issues, of sexuality;
- Physical – pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence inflicted on another individual;
- Racist/Cultural/Religious - racial, cultural or religious taunts, comments or gestures;
- Sexual – sexually abusive taunts, comments or gestures;
- Verbal – for example, name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teas

2.3. We believe that bullying is a behaviour choice and that anyone can be encouraged to change their behaviour. It can be an individual or a group.

2.4. We respect difference and welcome diversity in our children, young people and in society in general, and believe our school should be inclusive.

2.5. We believe that students should have the right to feel safe, secure and valued and that creating a safe environment and dealing with bullying is everyone's responsibility.

2.6. We support a range of positive strategies to deal with bullying and actively challenge the use of humiliation, fear, ridicule and other similar approaches in an effort to reduce bullying.

2.7. It can result in long-term psychological damage and, in extreme cases, suicide. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation including transgender, special educational needs and/or disability or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences. Any prejudice based language is unacceptable.

2.8. Bullying is not a criminal offence. However there are criminal laws in the UK which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour. If we feel that an offence may have been committed our staff will seek assistance from the police such as under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender. If we are in any doubt as to a criminal offence, we will request advice from the police.

2.9. School visits are a part of everyday school life and as such this policy applies in full. Moreover, teachers have a power to discipline pupils in a reasonable way for conduct off the school premises. As such any bullying incidents occurring off the premises such as on public transport,

school buses, in the local community, will fall under this policy and be treated accordingly. If the matter involves criminal activity, the police will always be informed.

Bullying which is illegal must be reported to the police

3 Our Objectives

3.1. Our policy is implemented whenever the school is responsible for the conduct and welfare of children and young people. The senior leadership team and all staff are responsible for its implementation.

- enable pupils to understand clearly what constitutes bullying and to understand that bullying, whatever its form, will not be tolerated by the school community;
- make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they feel assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.
- enable parents to feel confident that bullying incidents will be firmly dealt with by the school;
- create a safe environment and promote an inclusive ethos in the school where pupils can discuss the cause of bullying without fear of further bullying or discrimination;
- raise staff awareness of the presence of different types of bullying, and an awareness of groups of students who are bullied disproportionately;
- establish guidelines for action where bullying is evident;
- develop a range of effective strategies for pupils to learn about moral and social issues;
- ensure students are able to explain how we expect them to behave;
- celebrate success as an important way of creating a positive school ethos around anti-bullying

4 Our Procedures

4.1. Effective staff training is an important aspect of our work to prevent and tackle bullying, including the different types of bullying. All staff have had relevant training and understand the importance of this policy. In particular, our senior leadership team ensures that all staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, the legal responsibilities, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.We use specialised skills to help our staff understand the needs of any pupils, including special educational needs and/or disability and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGB&T) pupils.

4.2. We all understand that bullying can occur in any school and that we have a responsibility to be vigilant for incidents especially at times and in places where it is more likely to occur. We ensure that the physical layout of our buildings and our safety mechanisms such as CCTV all help to discourage and reduce the risk of bullying.

4.3. We aim is to ensure staff feel confident to consistently tackle all forms of bullying and that students are empowered to say "no" to bullying.

4.4. If a member of staff suspects that bullying is taking place, or a disclosure is made to them about an incident of bullying, they should always consult a senior member of staff. Under the guidance of a senior staff member, an age appropriate investigation should take place. Separate meetings, at which all conversations should be recorded in writing, should be arranged with those involved to establish their version of events and assure them that the situation will be dealt with sensitively but firmly and fully. Parents of both parties are always kept fully informed about how the bullying is being stopped.

4.5. Bullying behaviour will normally be addressed through the provision of counselling for all parties involved. A proven allegation of serious bullying will result in suspension or exclusion with the possible involvement of the police authorities. Following the incident, a senior staff member oversees the monitoring of the situation, liaising directly with the relevant teacher to check that further bullying is not occurring.

4.6. Parents are asked to keep the school and staff informed of any concerns, and encourage their child to report any incidents immediately to an appropriate staff member. The Headteacher will ensure that the incident and any action taken are formally recorded in the behaviour incident log.

5 Preventative Strategies

5.1. As a successful school, we create an environment that prevents bullying from being a serious problem in the first place.

5.2. We proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.

5.3. We talk with pupils through the curriculum about issues of difference and use dedicated project time and events such as special assemblies. We keep lines of communication open so pupils feel included.

5.4. We are aware that schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, British Values, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment. We reinforce these messages by the behaviour and attitudes of our staff who set a good example.

6 Successful Intervention Strategies

6.1. We apply disciplinary measures to pupils who bully in order to show clearly that their behaviour is wrong. In accordance with our behaviour policy, we apply sanctions fairly, consistently and reasonably, taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities that pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.

6.2. We also consider carefully the motivating factors which may have affected the bullying behaviour and whether it indicates any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case, the child engaging in the bullying behaviour may need support themselves.

6.3. We involve parents to ensure that they are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and that they are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. We make sure that our parents feel confident that we will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way which protects the child.

6.4. We involve pupils so they understand our approach towards bullying and so they are clear in the part they have to play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

6.5. We regularly evaluate our approach and ensure that our policy and practice is up to date.

6.6. We make sure that the consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

6.7. We teach children that using any prejudice based language is unacceptable.

6.8. We work with the wider community such as the police and children's services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.

6.9. We make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they feel assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted upon.

6.10. We draw on the expertise of specialist organisations with a proven track record in dealing with bullying to ensure our practices are effective and keep children safe.

6.11. We ensure that notices are placed around school which provide appropriate telephone numbers for children to contact organisations such as Childline, Kidscape and CEOP.

6.12. We listen to our pupils' voice at all times and act accordingly. We provide opportunity for pupils to alert the designated safeguarding lead or a teacher they trust in a safe and secure environment that they have a concern they wish to discuss with the school about stopping bullying. Every child has a basic human right to feel safe and protected from harm.

6.13. We aim to use restorative approaches in school which focus on reconciliation with those who have been harmed.This enables all those affected by any incident to play a part in repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward, enabling everyone to prevent conflict and build relationships.

7 Our Procedures

7.1. The immediate priority is to stop the bullying so instances will be dealt with without delay. St. Mary's School takes the standpoint that most pupils involved in bullying do not intend to inflict significant harm. As a first recourse those who bully will be counselled by pastoral staff, an appeal will be made to 'better nature' and a commitment to correct the behaviour will be elicited. The bully should apologise to the victim.

7.2. It is important for the School to understand the motivation behind any bullying and whether it reveals any cause for concern about the safety of the perpetrator. This is because the bully may need support themselves.

7.3. In serious or persistent cases parents should be informed and may be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem, and if necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted. All attempts will be made to help the bully or bullies change their behaviour. This may include referral to outside agencies or specialist programmes of support.

7.4. Our school uses restorative practice which includes a facilitated restorative meeting being held to enable individuals and groups to work together to improve their mutual understanding of what has taken place and to jointly agree the best solution moving forwards. Sometimes a less formal approach is used with the same principles in place, depending on the nature of the incident. Restorative practice provides an opportunity for everyone to reflect on how they interact with each other and consider how best to prevent harm and conflict, recognising everyone has a part to play and is responsible as such.

7.5. Incidents of bullying will be recorded by relevant pastoral staff. This will enable patterns to be identified, and keeping records of bullying incidents will also enable the school to:-

- manage individual cases effectively;
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of strategies;
- celebrate the anti-bullying work of the school;
- respond effectively and swiftly to concerns from parents.

7.6. The most obvious strategy is the use of disciplinary sanctions and learning programmes to deal with those pupils who are found to be bullying. Such disciplinary measures have three main purposes, namely to:-

- impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;
- deter him/her from repeating that behaviour;

- signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

7.7. Sanctions for bullying are intended to hold pupils who bully to account for their behaviour and to ensure that they face up to the harm that they have caused and learn from it. They also provide an opportunity for the pupil to put right the harm they have caused. Sanctions available are detailed in the school's behaviour policy and will be applied fairly, consistently and reasonably and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils. Ultimately, bullies will not be tolerated at this school and permanent exclusion will be used if, at the Headteacher's discretion, it is considered appropriate and that the relevant procedures have been followed accordingly.

7.8. Where a serious incident occurs, the School will complete a Serious Incident Report Form (SIRF) and escalate this to Head Office, following the Cognita guidance at all times. The designated safeguarding lead must be consulted.

We have powers to search included within the Education Act 2011 to tackle cyber-bullying, including where necessary deletion of inappropriate images or files on electronic devices including mobile phones. We use this power under the specific authority of the Headteacher only and where there is good reason to do so ie that it could be used to harm children, disrupt teaching or break the school rules. We do not search pupils in a blanket way

8 Monitoring & Evaluation

8.1. We regularly report to our senior leadership team on the views of our pupils, and in particular, the incidences of bullying in school including which types are prevalent so that we can continuously improve our practices.

8.2. A termly account of all bullying incidents recorded are reported to our Assistant Director of Education (chair of governors) where any patterns or trends are identified and strategies to be adopted are outlined. We pay particular attention to regularly evaluating and updating our approach towards technology, for instance, our acceptable use policy into practice.
A formal report is made to the Independent Chair of the School Safeguarding Governance Committee each year where further scrutiny of policy and practice as well as external accountability takes place. The Safeguarding Governance Committee meets biannual

• Ownership and consultation

Document sponsor (role)	Simon Camby
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Specialist Legal Advice	n/a
Consultation	n/a

Compliance	
Compliance with	ISSR 2014, Keeping Children Safe in Education, Statutory Framework for EYFS 2014, Complaints Procedure, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Health and safety policy, Special Educational Needs and Disability, Data Protection, Accident and Incident Recording and Reporting, Learning Outside the Classroom, Whistleblowing, Equalities and Diversity, Behaviour including written statement of behaviour principles, exclusion procedures, eSafety and Acceptable Use policy.

Audience	
Audience	Heads, DSLs, all school staff

Document application	
England	Yes
Wales	Yes
Spain	Yes but requires adaptation

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National Contacts	
NSPCC 24/7 Helpline	Tel: 0808 800 5000 Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC Text line	88858
NSPCC ChildLine	Tel: 0800 1111
NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline	Tel: 0800 028 0285 (8am – 8pm) Email: help@nspcc.org.uk
National Bullying Helpline	Tel: 0845 22 55 787
Anti-Bullying Alliance	www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
CEOP – allegation about an adult	www.ceop.police.uk
Childnet International	info@childnet.com Tel: 020 7639 6967
Child helpines across the world – outside the UK	www.childhelpineinternational.org
UK Safer internet Centre helpline for School Staff	Tel: 0844 381 4772 Email: helpline@saferinternet.org.uk
Internet Watch Foundation hotline	www.iwf.org.uk

for reporting criminal content	
Diana Award Anti-Bullying Campaign	www.antibullyingpro.com
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