



ANTI-BULLYING

ADVICE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Supporting your child to be safe and happy

OCTOBER 2021

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is an act or incident that causes alarm, harassment or distress to an individual or group, be it verbal, psychological or physical. Bullying is a wilful, conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten someone.

Bullying can include harassment, blackmail, or threats, it can involve taking money or belongings. Sometimes it takes the form of social isolation. Online it can involve the malicious use of photographs or circulating hurtful comments or rumours. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special needs, or because a child is adopted, in care, or has caring responsibilities. Differences can be real or perceived.

ANTI-BULLYING AT ST MATTHIAS SCHOOL

We believe it is every student's right to go to school in safety and to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse.

It is the responsibility of all members of the community to ensure that education takes place in an atmosphere that is caring and protective.

While we acknowledge that bullying behaviour is likely to occur in any institution, we will actively seek to prevent and reduce it and deal with any bullying effectively if it occurs.

FORMS OF BULLYING:

Bullying can sometimes be subtle, highly complex behaviour which takes many forms. The most common are:

VERBAL - put downs, nasty statements, name calling, taunting, racial slurs or threatening hurtful comments

PHYSICAL - punching, hitting, slamming, socking, spitting, slapping

EMOTIONAL - excluding, shunning, spreading rumours or mean gossip, ruining your reputation

SEXUAL - saying or doing things that are disrespectful in a sexual way

CYBER - using social media, text messaging, e-mail and other electronic mediums to say mean or embarrassing things

BULLYING OR ARGUING?

How does bullying differ from arguing?

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

A fight or argument between two people of equal power is NOT usually seen as bullying. Although many bullying episodes begin when friends fall out, we usually judge it to be bullying when one person or a group deliberately singles out others as a target and sets out to repeatedly humiliate or threaten them: a systematic abuse of power.

Several Times On Purpose



Several Times On Purpose

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF BULLYING?

Look for changes in your child:

- Avoiding school
- Appearing frightened of the journey to or from school
- Deterioration in their work
- Becoming anxious, moody, withdrawn, quiet
- Seeming unhappy but refuse to say why
- Complaining of headaches, stomach ache or other illnesses
- Having nightmares or sleeping difficulties
- Arriving home hungry
- Asking for extra money

- Torn clothes
- Missing or damaged possessions
- Unexplained cuts or bruises

Bullying doesn't just happen in school. It could happen anywhere at any time.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Reassure your child that it is not their fault
- Talk calmly about what is happening without involving your own emotions
- Listen and take what is said seriously
- Make notes of what has happened (who, what, where, when)
- Keep your child involved - it is important that they know what is happening and have a say
- Encourage your child to report incidents to a teacher
- Talk to a friend

TALKING TO SCHOOL

School has an anti-bullying policy that addresses all forms of bullying. It will make clear the measures that can be taken to respond effectively to bullying incidents whether inside or outside school.



HOW CAN SCHOOL HELP?

If you think your child is being Bullied or Cyber Bullied do the following:

- Read through the 'Is it Arguing or Bullying' student information leaflet. This is available on our website or you can request a paper copy.
- Decide what you want to do. Either:
 1. Complete a Restorative Justice Peer Resolutionor
 2. Complete an Allegation of Bullying Log.
- Inform school of your decision.
- School will then do the following.
 1. Complete a Restorative Justice Peer Resolution. You will be informed of the outcome, all families will be made aware.or
 2. Give student/family a copy of the Allegation of Bullying Log. These need to be completed and returned to school.
- Once the Allegation of Bullying Log has been completed and returned to school this will be reviewed. If appropriate this will initiate a thorough Bullying/Cyber Bullying investigation. This will be discussed with all students and families.
- Between home and school a decision will be made about the appropriate consequences. This is likely to include Police involvement.

ADDITIONAL ADVICE

- Give the school chance to investigate the situation.
- Keep in touch with school, especially if the incidents continue.
- Make sure that your child doesn't send/respond to any unwelcome messages. As frustrated as you might feel, don't start sending any messages either.
- Keep copies of any messages. Share these with school.
- Your child will feel safer and happier knowing that adults are working together to support them.

Contacts for Further Help and Advice

Help Lines

Childline

0800 1111 - www.childline.org.uk

Free confidential 24 hour telephone lines for children and young people

Family Lives

0808 800 2222 - www.familylives.org.uk

Confidential support and guidance for parents and families

Useful Websites Regarding Cyber bullying Information and Guidance

Child Exploitation & Online Protection (CEOP)

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

Report suspected online child abuse or grooming

Anti-bullying Alliance

www.anti-bullying.org.uk

Provides a wealth of information and advice from an alliance of the leading anti-bullying organisations.

Bullying UK

www.bullying.co.uk

0808 800 2222