



## Introduction

***“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven;” Matthew 5 - 44-45***

Our distinctive Catholic nature and ethos is at the heart of St. George's Catholic Voluntary Academy. This is reflected in the school mission statement:

***Grow in faith. Have faith in growing.***

As we aim to do this, all staff and pupils have a responsibility to promote good behaviour and this anti-bullying policy contains guidance to support our approach to this.

The school has an important role, in partnership with the family and the wider community, in nurturing mutual respect, a sense of responsibility and a positive work and behaviour ethic.

This Anti-bullying Policy works alongside other policies in school, particularly our Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy, which sets out to ensure that everyone - pupils, their families, staff and visitors to our school - understands and adheres to our school rules and expectations, and positively contributes towards making the school a safe and productive place to learn. We recognise the effect a calm, organised and productive atmosphere has on a child's learning, self-esteem and health.

St. George's is an inclusive school where we focus on the wellbeing and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth.

Our approach to equality is based on the following key principles:

1. To promote the ethos that all learners are of equal value.
2. To recognise, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength.
3. To foster positive attitudes and relationships.
4. To foster a shared sense of belonging.
5. To have the highest expectations of all our children.
6. To work to raise standards for all pupils, but especially for the most vulnerable.

The principles of our **DRAGON** Learning Code permeate through St. George's school; for example, the children ***Don't give up, Go for gold*** and understand that they are ***Not alone***.

Our Community Code brings in wider themes of kindness, respect, faith, perseverance, acceptance and service.

Both of these codes bring a uniqueness to the culture at St. George's such that bullying and child-on-child abuse is rare. Nevertheless, however much we strive to maintain a cohesive community, bullying and child-on-child abuse can sometimes occur. Our anti-bullying policy strives to explain how incidents of bullying and child-on-child abuse are handled.

## **Definitions of bullying and child-on-child abuse**

The DfE states that there is no legal definition of bullying; however, it is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

Child-on-child abuse can be defined as:

A form of abuse when there is any kind of physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse or coercive control exercised between children/young people both on and offline.

Bullying and child-on-child abuse can take on many forms and can include:

- physical assault
  - teasing
  - making threats
  - baiting
  - name calling
  - intimidation
  - cyberbullying - bullying via mobile phone or online, such as misuse of social media and types of instant messenger
  - coercive control between children\*
  - financial abuse\*
- (\*child-on-child abuse)

All forms of bullying and child-on-child abuse are hurtful and may have a devastating effect on those who are bullied/abused. Whilst some children may recover from bullying and child-on-child abuse, there are others who suffer lasting consequences.

Children who are bullied (or abused by other children) may see themselves as inadequate and friendless and suffer from loss of confidence and low self-esteem. Perpetrators may also suffer from long lasting consequences too and if offered no support, may continue with bullying behaviour into their adult lives. For this reason, it is important that they receive support to enable them to change their behaviour.

## **A proactive approach**

Bullying and child-on-child abuse is unacceptable at St George's CVA and, as such, we aim to:

- develop a school ethos where everyone is responsible for ensuring that bullying and child-on-child abuse is challenged and reported.
- provide a safe and secure environment where all can learn and work without anxiety, humiliation or oppression.
- respond effectively to any bullying and child-on-child abuse incidents that may occur record all incidents of bullying and child-on-child abuse
- ensure that everyone takes responsibility for the prevention and elimination of bullying and child-on-child abuse in the school

At St. George's, we monitor all behaviour very carefully so that instances of bullying or child-on-child abuse are extremely rare. We are vigilant for signs of bullying/ child-on-child abuse and always take reports of incidents seriously.

We foster an environment in which concerns can be aired. Staff are very approachable and bullying is regularly discussed in class and in assemblies. There is a strong focus on encouraging children to tell an adult if they are worried or concerned about anything.

We have a strong support mechanism in school through our SAFS (Student and Family Support) Team. Children know that they can turn to any adult in school to help them. However, they also know who

the members of the Vulnerable Learners Team and SAFS Team are and that they can turn to them if they have a particular issue that they want to discuss. There is also access to nurture groups for more vulnerable students.

By improving the school's grounds and creating a more cooperative play space and variety in the environment, we have been able to reduce the level of rough play and keep children occupied in positive play, thus reducing the chances and opportunities of bullying and/or abusive behaviour.

### **Children with SEND**

We are alert to the fact that children with SEND can be more vulnerable to bullying because they might:

- Rely on others more, or be more innocent or trusting
- Find it harder to tell someone about their situation
- Be less likely to understand their experiences
- Be more prone to isolation

All staff will receive regular CPD through staff meetings and weekly briefings to best understand how to spot the signs of a child who is at risk of, or being, bullied.

### **If a child is bullied/ the victim of child-on-child abuse**

Children at St. George's are actively encouraged to tell someone if they feel that they have been bullied.

The bullying/child-on-child abuse incident(s) are investigated initially by a member of staff and the SAFS team may become involved if it is deemed necessary. A 'Red Form' (copies kept in the staff room) is completed to record the bullying/child-on-child incident. School involves the parents/guardians of all parties.

Incidents are also recorded on our safeguarding tracking system (CPOMS) and are tagged as a bullying or child-on child abuse incident. Both victim and perpetrator are tagged.

The victim of bullying/abuse is given space and support, as appropriate, to enable them to talk through recover following the incident(s).

The matter is dealt with under the school behaviour policy and help is also given to perpetrator to enable them to have a period of reflection with a senior leader, in order to understand how their behaviour may affect other children.

Once a situation has been resolved, staff continue to monitor informally to ensure the bullying does not reoccur. If it does, the process is repeated and sanctions issued in line with our behaviour policy.

### **Advice to children about bullying/abuse:**

- If you are a victim of bullying/abuse, you can tell a member of staff (anyone you feel safe to talk to) - It is always ok to do this. Remember we have a SAFS Team too who can always help.
- We have our 'drop in den' each lunchtime, where one of our Mental Health Anti Stigma Ambassadors (and our MH lead-Miss Davis) will be, to offer support
- If you do not want to tell anyone at school, you can tell your parents who will tell us.
- Friends of victims should let staff know of bullying/abusive incidents.
- Nobody deserves to be bullied or abused – remember, you have a right for this not to happen to you and a right to feel safe.

### **Advice to Parents /Carers about bullying/child-on-child abuse:**

If your child is bullying/abusing or being bullied/abused they may:

- exhibit a change in their behaviour
- be unwilling to talk about their day—it is quite common for children not to want to talk about their day directly after school. You might find children more willing to talk during bath-time or bedtime story when they are more relaxed.
- look less happy
- come home with cuts and bruises
- come home with toys and things you have not bought for them
- not want to wear their glasses
- take things from home without you knowing
- avoid certain children or activities
- be reluctant to come to school

### **How can parents help to prevent bullying/child-on-child abuse?**

- Everybody gets angry. Help your child to express it without hurting others.
- Encourage your child to tell a member of staff straight away if they get hurt at school.
- Praise your child when they sort out problems by talking rather than hurting others.
- Involve yourself in school activities.
- Make immediate contact with the school at any time over bullying/ abusive incidents.
- Do not intervene with other children or children's parents, but let the school know.
- Support the school in seeking further professional advice and support where it is deemed appropriate.