

St Thomas More Catholic Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date of Policy:	October 2022
Member of Staff Responsible:	Jamie Stubbs
SLT: Headteacher:	Mark Rayner
Chair of the Academy Representatives: Nominated Academy Representative:	Rob Fello
Date of Policy Review:	October 2024

Publish: *Internal / website*

Key Information

Role	Name	Contact Details
DSL/ADSL	Mrs. J. Stubbs	01782 882900
Deputy DSL/ADSL	Mrs. A. Staton / Mrs K Williams	01782 882900
Early Help Champion	Mrs. A Staton	01782 882900
Nominated Academy Representative	Mrs. C. Goodwin	office@stmca.org.uk
Headteacher	Mr. M. Rayner	01782 882900
E-Safety Co-ordinator	Mr. P Shufflebotham	01782 882900
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)	John Hanlon	01782 235100
Safeguarding Referral Team (Children's Social Care Stoke-on-Trent)	Mon – Thurs: 8.30am - 5pm Fri: 8.30am – 4.30pm	01782 235100
Emergency Duty Team (Children's Social Care Stoke-on-Trent)	Out of hours (above)	01782 234234
Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board	www.safeguardingchildren.stoke.gov.uk	
Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board Agency Representative	Sangita Mishra sangita.mishra@stoke.gov.uk	01782 235897

In exceptional circumstances any member of staff can refer a child to Social Services on 01782 235100 or seek advice on 01782 232200
 Exceptional circumstances such as in an emergency or a genuine concern that appropriate action has not been taken to safeguard a child.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy
 All Saints Catholic Collegiate
United in Faith, Love and Learning

Mission Statement

Christ is at the centre of our community, where everyone is known and loved.
 In fulfilling our Mission we are a school of prayer. We live as community of love, peace and reconciliation, valuing everyone's dignity as a child of God to promote and celebrate the growth and achievement of the whole person.

CONTACT NAMES/NUMBERS

St Thomas More Catholic Academy		01782 882900	
Assistant Headteacher		Head Of Year	Student Support
Mrs Leese	Year 7	Miss E Warren	Mrs Britton
	Year 8	Mrs Rigby	
	Year 9	Mr Harvey	Mrs Martin
Mrs Todd	Year 10	Mr Dale	Mrs Hoskins
	Year 11	Ms Powell	
Mrs Bradbury	Miss Beasley		
Child Protection Officer (DSL):	Mrs J Stubbs (Assistant Headteacher)		
Deputy Child Protection Officers:	Mrs A. Staton Mrs K Williams		

Introduction

At St Thomas More Catholic Academy, we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all students. We endeavour to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected, valued and listened to. We are alert to the signs of bullying and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support and protection. We will always promote and prioritise the safety and welfare needs of our children and we are committed to providing the right help, support and intervention at the right time.

This policy applies to all staff and volunteers working in or on behalf of our school.

This policy should be read in conjunction with St Thomas More Catholic Academy's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Behaviour policy, Online Safety policy, Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy, DfE guidance Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment between Children in Schools and Colleges (September 2021) and Keeping Children Safe in Education part 1.

STATEMENT

"United in faith, love and learning."

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to reduce and prevent bullying in and around school and to make the school a safe, secure and caring environment. It is important to make the victims of bullying aware that there is help and support available and that they should not suffer in silence as any form of bullying will not be tolerated. Only when these issues are addressed will pupils be able to benefit from the opportunities available in school.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy believes that its students have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. This Anti-Bullying Policy aims to reflect the Catholic ethos of the school.

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch and less aggressive students can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group should have to accept this type of behaviour.

Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at St Thomas More Catholic Academy.

All institutions, both large and small, contain some numbers of students with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. St Thomas More Catholic Academy also has a clear policy on the promotion of good discipline where it is made clear, in line with the Equality Act 2010, that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is WRONG and will not be tolerated.

PURPOSE

Heads of Year and Student Support Officers play a key role in the management of bullying issues. They may inform parents. The Senior Leadership Team is consulted over persistent issues.

The policy is also in line with the school's Behaviour For Learning policy which promotes the responsibility of all adults in the school to deal with behaviour, including bullying, and to educate students to behave responsibly. The school has a system of rewards which aims to motivate and encourage students as well as helping to build individual self-confidence and self-esteem.

The anti-bullying policy also reflects the school's mission statement which states we are a "caring community..." it is expected that teachers use a 'bullying preventative' style of teaching which has a number of different outcomes for students:

- treating pupils with respect
- NOT setting up victims
- Presenting good role models – using power and authority appropriately
- Explicitly stating that bullying is not acceptable
- Active process aimed at changing pupil attitudes.

St Thomas More Catholic Academy is committed to its intent to:

- Ensure that bullying behaviour is not tolerated in our school, by members of our community or online
- Ensure that all students are included fully in the life of the school
- Provide a learning environment free from any threat or fear, where every student feels welcomed, safe and able to learn
- Create an emotionally positive environment, built on mutual respect, where positive relationships can develop
- Have a clear, shared and completely understood definition of bullying behaviour, including cyber bullying
- Create an environment where students, staff and parents are encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour and feel confident that this will be effectively dealt with
- Respond promptly and without prejudice to all instances of bullying which are reported, whether in school or online
- Reduce and to eradicate, wherever possible, instances in which students are subject to any form of bullying
- Establish a means of preventing, detecting and dealing with bullying in whatever form it may take
- Provide support to students who have been bullied

- Provide support for students who are accused of bullying, based on a restorative approach, as they may be experiencing issues which have led to an acceptance of bullying as acceptable behaviour
- Ensure that all students, staff, parents and governors are aware of this policy and their roles and responsibilities in contributing to its success

THE PREVENTION OF BULLYING

Our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of young people is of paramount importance and we believe that safer students make more successful learners.

The school will:

- Adopt a multi-strand approach to preventing and tackling bullying: proactive strategies, peers support strategies and reactive strategies.
- Have a consistent approach to any bullying incidents that occur.
- Raise awareness of bullying and promote positive relationships based on mutual respect.
- Seek to involve all stakeholders in the implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Promote positive action to prevent bullying through our PSHE programme and related activities.
- Provide support for all members of the school community that may be involved in dealing with an incident of bullying.
- Provide appropriate training for both staff and students to support the implementation of the policy across the school.

Ensure fair treatment for all, regardless of age, culture, disability, gender, religion or sexuality, and encourage understanding and tolerance of different social, religious and cultural backgrounds.

- Address with anyone involved with bullying, their problematic behaviour in a fair and firm manner in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning policy, providing support to enable them to change their behaviour.

Definition of Bullying

'Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally'.

(Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007), Safe to Learn)

Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult for victims to defend themselves against
- The result of an imbalance of power which is exploited by the bully

There are various forms of bullying which include:

- Physical – e.g. hitting, kicking, taking belongings.
- Verbal – e.g. name calling, insulting, racist remarks, comments related to any of the protected characteristics.

- Relational – e.g. spreading malicious rumours, excluding individuals from social groups, family feuds brought into school.
- Cyber – e.g. use of email, social networking sites, mobile phone messaging to spread rumours, make malicious comments

Bullying is not the occasional falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose and/or exploits an imbalance of power (e.g. due to age, physical stature, or numbers). Students sometimes fall out or say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, it is not necessarily bullying. It is an important part of students' development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns, the occasional name calling or joke which may offend. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop the necessary social skills including resilience. This relates to one of the key aims of creating an emotionally safe environment, built on mutual respect, tolerance and equality, where positive relationships can develop.

Types of bullying:

The following are some examples of unacceptable behaviour. This list is not an exhaustive list. Similar unacceptable behaviours may be considered as bullying.

General

- Harassment e.g. Sexual harassment, homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on any of the protected characteristics etc...
- Physical aggression, damage to property.
- Name calling.
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidation, name belittling and gestures.
- Graffiti, sniggering, sarcastic remarks and extortion.
- Intimidation.
- The "look", staring, degrading remarks re body shape.
- Putting down a student for working well and achieving.
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear.
- Invasion of personal space.
- A combination of any of the types listed.
- Abusing social network sites including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube during and outside of school hours, including all school outings and events.

Homophobic/biphobic/transphobic

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation and/or sexual identity.
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation/sexual identity.
- Behaviour which is prejudice-based, including towards a protected characteristic / discriminatory

Racial

Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background.

Relational

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Whispering in company so as to exclude another.
- Malicious gossip.
- Isolation & exclusion.

- Ignoring, turning others against a student.
- Excluding from the group.
- Taking someone's friends away.

Sexual

- Unwelcome sexual comments or touching.
- Unwelcome sexual texts or emails.
- Child-on-Child abuse

Further information relating to HSBs and bullying related to sexual behaviours can be found in the school's Harmful Sexual Behaviours Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Cyber Bullying

- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls.
- Use of mobile phones during school hours to access social network sites.
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls.
- Abusive text messages.
- Abusive email.
- Abusive website comments/blogs/pictures e.g. Facebook, Twitter and others.
- Any misuse of Information and Communication Technology.
- Video recording without the person's permission
- Taking/sending photographs by electronic device.
- Creating sites about a particular person.
- Spreading rumours.
- Breaking confidence.

'[Cyber-bullying] is an aggressive, intentional act carried out by a group or individual using electronic forms of contact repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.'

(Department for Education (2006) Research Brief: An Investigation into Cyberbullying)

Cyber bullying has similar features to other forms of bullying but also has distinct characteristics:

- There is the possibility of 24 hour contact
- A significant audience can be reached rapidly
- It can be difficult to trace the perpetrators (see Appendix 1 for further information)
- The perception of anonymity makes it more likely to say things that would not be said face to face.

St Thomas More will act wherever possible to support students who are recipients of cyberbullying. In cases where cyber bullying occurs while pupils are outside our direct supervision the Headteacher may exercise powers granted by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that enables them to police cyber bullying carried out by pupils even at home:

'[The Headteacher] may, to such extent as is reasonable, include measures to be taken with a view to regulating the conduct of pupils at a time when they are not on the premises of the school and are not under the lawful control or charge of a member of the staff of the school.'

(Education and Inspections Act, 2006: section 89(5))

Signs and Indicators of Bullying

Students who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with the consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Bullying may occasionally result in suicide. It is therefore important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

The outcomes of bullying and harassment on the victim often manifest in the following ways:

Psychological

- anger
- anxiety
- distress
- frustration
- depression
- panic
- indifference
- fear
- attempted suicide
- shame and feelings of worthlessness
- loss of trust in friends and their inability to support and protect

Behavioural

- increased irritability and nervousness
- unexplained changes in mood
- increased aggressiveness
- may believe that they deserve to be bullied
- becoming withdrawn
- excessive tearfulness or sensitivity to criticism
- substance abuse
- becoming obsessive
- nightmares

Social, Interpersonal and School Related

- anxiety about travelling to and from school
- mitching
- late home from school without any plausible explanation
- fear of using school toilet during breaks
- fear of being out of sight of adults
- becoming isolated in class
- becoming withdrawn
- reluctance to discuss the problem
- unwilling to go to school
- lack of creativity and initiative
- beginning to bully small/younger students
- possessions missing or damaged
- increased and excessive requests for money
- deterioration in school performance and motivation
- loss of interest or concentration in school
- unusual concerns about physical appearance, attributes, mannerisms etc.

Physical Manifestations

- chest pains
- pattern of minor illness
- insomnia
- stomach problems
- eating problems
- fatigue and lethargy
- headaches
- sweats
- inconsistent explanations for cuts and bruises

Proactive Strategies:

- Ensuring that there is a promotion of an open and honest anti-bullying ethos in the school
- PSHE programme and curriculum that discusses issues such as diversity, respect and anti-bullying message
- Assemblies that promote a sense of community

- Acceptable Internet Use policy is signed by all.
- E-safety as part of the curriculum.
- On going staff induction and training programme
- Adequate staff supervision at lunch and break times
- Outside agency support to promote self-esteem and confidence.
- Chaplaincy support.

Peer Support Strategies:

- Peer mentoring
- Buddy Systems
- Outside agency work in group settings.

Reactive Strategies:

Following appropriate investigation and considering the circumstances and history, any of these strategies may be applied in line with the school's Behaviour for Learning policy:-

- Fixed term inclusion
- After school detention
- Suspension
- Permanent exclusion
- Restorative approaches
- Referral for counselling
- Written or verbal apology
- Parent/carer interview with Student Support/HOY and/or Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for pastoral care leading to parental assistance in applying support or strategies or deterrents as necessary
- Referral to external agencies eg: Social Services, Educational Psychologist, Police, Changes, Young MIND, CAMHS if necessary

Bullying is recognised as being different from other kinds of aggressive behaviour: it is often ongoing and is an abuse of power.

Pupils should report bullying. They should never keep it to themselves no matter how worried they may feel about being found out they have told someone or how insignificant they may feel it is, or how much they may be perceived by others as being weak.

It is only when staff are told about the bullying that the school can take action to stop it and support the victim.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff, parents, carers and pupils have a particularly important role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Policy

- Excerpts from the Anti-Bullying Policy will be visible throughout the school in corridors and classrooms.
- Anti-bullying Charter on display in classrooms
- It will be published on the school web-site and excerpts will be included within the Student Handbook
- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be promoted at various occasions e.g. parents' nights, first year enrolment and open nights.

Supervision and Monitoring

- Bullying "black spots" within the school will be identified and monitored during break times.
- Staff will be vigilant and follow the procedures as outlined in this policy as incidents arise.
- Social networking sites will continue to be banned from student use during school time. The Anti-Bullying Policy operates in conjunction with the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

Student Involvement

- The Student Leadership Team supports the creation of a positive school atmosphere through the implementation of the Anti-Bullying policy.

PSHE Curriculum

The PSHE curriculum can be used to:

- Raise awareness about bullying and the anti-bullying policy.
- Increase understanding for victims, and help build an anti-bullying ethos.
- Teach pupils how to manage their behaviour with others constructively.

Raising awareness about bullying behaviour is an essential step if the policy is to be developed successfully. It is also vital to introduce new pupils to the policy. PSHE can be used to keep the policy alive throughout the school.

Continued reinforcement is necessary to prevent bullying behaviour being resumed.

Reporting procedures for Students:

Who to tell?

- Parents
- Any staff member with whom the student feels comfortable
- Friends who will speak on your behalf
- Form Tutor.
- Student Support
- Head Of Year

How to tell?

- Direct approach to the teacher at an appropriate time, e.g. after class, hand a note in with the homework.
- Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.

- Email the school
- Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Parents can inform the school.
- Witnesses can inform an appropriate person.

It is important to note that records of all incidents of bullying and action taken to resolve them will be kept.

Noting and Recording

- The relevant Student Support / Head of Year will record the bullying incident and will then decide on what action is to be taken and by which member of staff.
- Comments made should be factual, non-judgmental and objective.

Procedures for Dealing with Reported Incidents:

If a student informs you of an incident of bullying affecting either themselves or a friend, follow these steps:

- Listen; encourage the student to tell their story as this is a very important first step.
- Take notes; record all the details such as date, time, location, names of those involved, witnesses etc. student's own words must be recorded.
- Reassure; tell the student that help is available, action will be taken to investigate, it is not their fault and that they will not have to face this on their own.
- Satisfy yourself that no student is in immediate danger.
- Confidentiality is respected and the student's privacy is protected, but a teacher must not give guarantees not to tell anyone.
- Inform the Head Of Year.

Actions may include the following and may incorporate elements of 1 or more of the following responses to addressing bullying behaviour

1. Traditional Disciplinary Approach
2. Strengthening the Victim
3. Mediation
4. Restorative Practice
5. Support

- Once reported, the person concerned has a duty to inform the student's Student Support / Head Of Year

- In all cases of bullying, the incidents will be recorded, investigated (with all those concerned seen) and appropriate action taken by the Student Support / Head of Year or member of the leadership group.

- In serious cases, parents of both the victim and the bully should be informed and will be asked to separately come in for a meeting to discuss the problem. Possible sanctions include detentions and exclusion from school

- The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped immediately

- An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

- Any evidence of further bullying will be treated very seriously, including the possibility of exclusion from school

- The school has a complaints procedure available via the school's website.

The Head Teacher is ultimately responsible for the wellbeing of all students and staff. All staff, students, parents and governors should be made aware of the policy alongside awareness being raised of the issues associated with bullying in schools.

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for student pastoral care (Mrs Stubbs) has been designated to oversee the wellbeing of students. Her role includes the following responsibilities:

- To ensure all staff are aware of the contents of the 'Anti-Bullying Policy' and that its procedures are adhered to.
- To liaise with appropriate staff to ensure the implementation of whole school initiatives to highlight aspects of bullying, including Anti-Bullying Week.
- To ensure the use of appropriate assemblies to highlight aspects of bullying, including Anti-Bullying Week
- To monitor and record reports of incidents of bullying.
- To ensure the appropriate Student Support / Head of Year monitors students involved in bullying and promotes positive communication between the school and parents / careers.
- To liaise with the police as necessary.
- To liaise with the network manager over the monitoring of the network use. Any student violating the E-Safety Policy will be sanctioned.

School staff have the following responsibilities:

- Staff should be alert to any potential incident of bullying and intervene when instances are noticed.
- Minor incidents of disagreement should be addressed by form tutors/subject teachers.
- Incidents that potentially constitute bullying should be referred to the students' form tutors who will liaise with the Student Support / Head of Year over action to be taken.
- The Student Support / Head of Year is responsible for clarifying the facts through thorough investigation and taking statements from all students involved.
- The Head of Year/Head of Key Stage, having clarified the facts, will inform the parents / carers of the students involved.

The incident will be recorded by the Student Support / Head of Year and centrally through the school's tracking system. The Head of Year will liaise with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for pastoral care regarding the sanction.

Students have the following responsibilities:

- Ensuring that previous recipients of bullying are not isolated from groups of friends.
- Informing a member of staff that bullying is happening.
- Encouraging the recipient to join in activities and groups.
- Discussion and consideration of bullying issues in PSHE lessons and tutor time.

Parents and careers have the following responsibilities:

- To inform the appropriate Student Support / Head Of Year / Assistant Headteacher with Pastoral care responsibility of any concerns regarding bullying issues as soon as practically possible.

The school will:

- Organise the community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying, e.g. provide increased supervision at problem times.

- Use any opportunity to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other, e.g. the Pastoral programme, Student Leadership Team
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Continually review school policy and its degree of success.
- St Thomas More Catholic Academy staff will continue to have a firm but fair discipline structure. The rules should be few, simple and easy to understand.
- Not use teaching materials or equipment which gives a bad or negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, sex, etc.
- Encourage students to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes a review of what friendship really is.
- Encourage students to treat everyone with respect through the Pastoral programme and assemblies.
- Use the school's Behaviour For Learning policy to reinforce an anti-bullying stance.
- Record bullying incidents as necessary.
- Encourage openness through TELL SOMEONE in student planners.

We will treat bullying as a serious offence and take every possible action to eradicate it from our school. The use of SIMs computer data helps Head of Year/pastoral staff to monitor and interrogate incidents of alleged bullying.

Internet safety is supported by the school's monitoring and filtering partner: e-safe.

APPENDIX 1: Cyber Bullying Information

Key Safety Advice For Children & Young People	Key Safety Advice For Parents & Carers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Always respect others – be careful what you say online and what images you send. 2. Think before you send – whatever you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. If you wouldn't say it, don't type it. 3. Don't 'friend' or follow people in school that you wouldn't speak to in 'real life'. 4. Treat your password like your toothbrush – keep it to yourself. Only give your mobile number or personal website address to trusted friends. 5. Block the bully – learn how to block or report someone who is behaving badly. 6. Don't retaliate or reply! 7. Save the evidence – learn how to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. 8. Make sure you tell: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an adult you trust, or call a helpline like ChildLine on 0800 1111 in confidence • the provider of the service • check the service provider's website to see where to report incidents • your school – your form tutor or your Head of Year can help you. 9. Finally, don't just stand there – if you see cyber-bullying going on, support the recipient and report the bullying. How would you feel if no one stood up for you? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be aware, your child may as likely cyberbully as be a target of cyber-bullying. Be alert to your child seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone. This might involve subtle comments or changes in relationships with friends. They might be unwilling to talk or be secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use. 2. Talk with your children and understand the ways in which they are using the internet and their mobile phone. See the nine key messages for children (on the left) to get you started. 3. Use the tools on the service and turn on in-built internet safety features. 4. Remind your child not to retaliate. 5. Remember your child should not have a 'Facebook' account until they are 13 years of age. 5. Keep the evidence of offending emails, text messages or online conversations. 6. Report cyber-bullying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your child's school if it involves another student, so that they can take appropriate action. • Contact the service provider. • If the cyber-bullying is a potential criminal offence, you may wish to consider contacting the police