



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

The Nature of Bullying

There are many definitions of bullying, but most consider it to be:

- deliberately hurtful (including aggression)
- repeated often, over a period of time
- difficult for victims to defend themselves against.

Bullying can take many forms, but the three main types are:

- physical – hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- indirect – spreading nasty stories about someone, exclusion from social groups, being made the subject of malicious rumours, sending malicious messages.

Name-calling is the most common direct form of bullying. This may be because of individual characteristics, but pupils can be called nasty names because of their ethnic origin, nationality, colour, physical characteristics, sexual preferences in their families, or some form of disability.

Policy Statement

St Martin's School is committed to providing a positive environment where pupils and staff have the right to learn and work free from harm and intimidation. Each member of the school community is valued and all should work to promote a caring, supportive community. The school is resolutely opposed to any form of bullying, prejudice or discrimination. It will not only act against this in terms of discipline and sanctions, but through education, it will also work to promote understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and ethnicity.

Parents and children should know that they can share their worries with the class teacher, member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or a trusted adult in the school. Bullying will not be tolerated at St Martin's School and allegations of bullying are taken very seriously.

Policy Objectives

- To describe school systems for dealing with bullying.
- To have strategies in place to support victims and bullies.
- To ensure that parents know who to approach if they are worried that their child is being bullied.
- To ensure that children know what bullying is and know what to do when it occurs.

Implementation

At St Martin's, the curriculum is used to talk about bullying and to:

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

St Martin's School will implement our policy in the following ways:

1. Taking it seriously

Staff should be ready to listen – and should not tell children to stop telling tales. Staff should take the child seriously and investigate straight away; they should never ignore the problem.

2. Encouraging people to speak up

Pupils should be encouraged to report bullying behaviour. They should be offered confidentiality, and should be made to feel comfortable to approach the teacher. If it is easier, they should be encouraged to write down what is happening.

3. Talking about it

Pupils, parents and teachers should be made aware of what bullying is, why it is unacceptable, how victims feel, and the policy of the School.

Pupils will be made aware through lessons and direct teaching such as PSHE and Circle Time, assemblies, workshops, discussions and meetings.

4. Supervision at break times

All staff should keep a watchful eye on pupils, and should investigate if there are any signs of bullying. Staff should supervise playtimes vigilantly, keeping a lookout for victims or bullies. Boredom at playtime can lead to teasing, irritability and aggressive behaviour. Playtime supervisors should assist through managing playtime effectively.

5. Encouraging Positive Relationships

All staff should act fairly and consistently. They should promote equality and fairness, encouraging good relationships amongst one another, the pupils and parents. Staff should work towards helping children build friendships amongst themselves and should be alert to possible problems, investigating and assisting in solving these. Where there have been problems between pupils, staff should encourage discussion and resolution. Both the victim and bully should have the opportunity to talk and should be given an opportunity to write down their feelings too if they wish to do so.

6. Valuing all Pupils

All pupils should know they are valued. They should all know what they should do if they are unhappy or being bullied. They should know the School rules and should be made aware of what is acceptable or unacceptable.

Reporting Bullying

Anyone can and should report bullying. Bullying may be reported to any staff member. Children are encouraged to tell someone straight away if they think they are being bullied or if one of their friends is being bullied. In assemblies/PSHE lessons children are told they can tell any adult including:

- A member of staff in the playground.
- Their class teacher.
- The Deputy Headteachers.
- The Headteacher.
- Their parents.

Parents should approach the class teacher in the first instance if they have concerns about their child being bullied. A positive, harmonious relationship between home and school will create the best foundation for supporting children involved in issues of negative social behaviour. Open discussion between school, home and child is essential. If individual parental concerns continue, parents can contact and discuss the matter with a member of the school's SLT.

Action in Response to Allegations of Bullying

All staff should be ready and willing to deal with any incident brought to their attention. They should take steps to deal with the situation themselves initially, particularly if they are a class teacher. These would include:

- Investigating the allegations to obtain an account that is as accurate as possible. This is to be done by talking to both the victim and perpetrator. They should be interviewed singularly and together where possible, if it would not be too intimidating for the victim. The staff member should also find out if there are witnesses that can back up claims.
- Talking with all involved, so that agreement can be made on what is acceptable/unacceptable and so that appropriate steps can be taken to avoid a recurrence. Appropriate behaviour will be

suggested. This may include an apology, a commitment not to re-offend, and an explanation of possible consequences if the behaviour is not rectified.

- The teacher should make notes of the incidents, including the action taken and should follow up to ensure that the situation does not reoccur. Depending on the nature of the bullying – the seriousness of it, the context, the pattern or consistency, the teacher may wish to speak to parents to inform them of the situation and to request their support in dealing with the matter. They should also inform the Headmistress of any incidents of bullying.

Further considerations

There are occasions when children make accusations of bullying in order to cause trouble for, to hurt or upset the person they have accused. While it is very important for staff to take all allegations seriously, any report of bullying must be investigated thoroughly so that no one is accused unfairly.

At all times, staff should act fairly and consistently. They should share concerns with other colleagues. If the situation is very serious or the teacher's intervention has not resulted in a change of pattern, the situation should be referred to a member of the SLT.

Sanctions for bullying will be made at the discretion of the staff member investigating who may consult the class teacher and parents where appropriate. Discipline will be given in a fair manner that will consider all factors, such as the nature of the incident, provocation, or any previous involvements in bullying. While a response to bullying is always serious; in some cases, counselling for the bully may be deemed the most appropriate response.

According to the DfES, publication, 'Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence' in most cases, talking to the bully and getting them to realise the harm they are causing will work. However, there are times when dialogue is not enough to resolve incidents, and stronger measures, including exclusion will be needed:

Conclusion

Response to Bullying should:

- Help the victims – they should feel believed, reassured and protected. They should be helped to be assertive.
- Help the bullies – they should be encouraged to see that bullying is wrong and hurtful. They should be given the opportunity to change and should be made to feel that they are supported in changing their behaviour.
- Help to foster good relationships within the school community; it should make all children feel worthwhile and valued.

A Summary of 5 key points for staff, from notes in Part 4, pg. 22 of ***Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence***.

- ✓ never ignore suspected bullying
- ✓ don't make premature assumptions
- ✓ listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are all telling the truth
- ✓ adopt a problem-solving approach which moves people on from justifying themselves
- ✓ follow up repeatedly, checking bullying has not resumed

Outcome

A good outcome from all action taken will result in an improved quality of social interaction and the enhancement of feelings of well-being within the year group and school as a whole. Children will retain the sense that at St Martin's, we promote good, healthy relationships where we are kind, supportive and inclusive.

Last updated November 2023