



Maria Fidelis
Catholic School FCJ

Anti-Bullying Policy	
Committee	Curriculum
Author	Mark Anthony
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The FCJ Schools' Vision

Our vision is that FCJ schools are communities of personal and academic excellence.

Strong in companionship, the unique giftedness of every person in these faith communities is recognised, nourished and celebrated.

Our hope and expectation is that, through God's grace working in us all, each young person grows into their best self, with zest for life and the generosity and confidence to use their talents and gifts in the service of others.

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ Anti-Bullying Policy



Mission Statement

Maria Fidelis Catholic School FCJ is a learning community **“growing together, through Christ, with courage, confidence and dignity”**

Vision Statement

The vision for Maria Fidelis is to create an inclusive school equipped for the 21st Century which will enable all young people to maximise their potential in order that they leave school as educated, confident and courageous Catholics, prepared to challenge injustice and care enough to ‘live life to the full’.

Introduction

This policy is based on the following guidance:

- *Preventing and Tackling Bullying*¹ (2017) and supporting documents.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*² (2022)
- *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges* (2018)
- *Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and schools* (2022)
- *Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond*³.
- *The Education Inspection Framework* (2019)
- *Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities*⁴
- *Ofsted’s briefings on inspections in relation to preventing homophobic bullying and equalities*

School Ethos

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, respectful and safe learning environment for all of our pupils. We promote an inclusive ethos that focuses on respecting one another and celebrating difference and diversity.

Bullying and prejudice-based language of any kind, involving pupils, adults towards pupils, staff or parents are unacceptable and will not be tolerated at our school.

We understand the devastating and lasting effect being bullied can have on some children and we will deal with all incidents equally seriously, quickly and effectively, whether it has taken place in or outside of school.

¹ Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (July 2017)

² Keeping children safe in education Statutory guidance for schools and colleges (September 2022)

³ Cyberbullying: Understand, Prevent and Respond: Guidance for Schools (2016)

⁴ Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities: guidance for teachers and other professionals

Purpose of the policy

This policy sets out the school's approach to preventing and dealing with bullying that occurs between pupils of this school which takes place:

- On the school premises;
- Outside the school
- On the journey between school and home;
- Online or by text at school or outside of school hours.

The policy aims to ensure that

- Governors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents and carers have an understanding of what bullying is.
- Governors and teaching and non-teaching staff know what the school policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying occurs.
- Pupils and parents and carers know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying occurs
- Pupils and parents and carers are assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported.
- Effective, consistent action is taken both to prevent and address bullying behaviour.

How we define bullying at Maria Fidelis

Bullying can be defined as "behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally". (DfE "Preventing and Tackling Bullying", July 2017)

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos (KCSIE 2022).

Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of child on child abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development.

People can be bullied because they are different or are perceived to be different and it is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups or because of characteristics or features about which the person under attack can do nothing.

Bullying can relate to

- race, religion, culture or belief (or no belief)
- special educational needs and disabilities
- young carers
- looked after children
- background
- gender
- appearance and size
- ability and attainment

- Sexist or sexual bullying (bullying based on a person's sexuality)
- Homophobic bullying (a dislike or fear of someone who is or is perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual)
- Transphobic bullying (a dislike or fear of someone who is or is perceived to have changed their gender from male to female or female to male or someone who is difficult to categorise as female or male)

The difference between bullying and other hurtful behaviour

Our definition of bullying does not include conflict and/or friendship problems between children and young people or one off incidents. These problems will still be taken seriously and dealt with immediately to prevent them developing into bullying behaviour.

Bullying can also happen between adults and children and between adults. We believe that all forms of prejudice and prejudice-based behaviour and bullying are unacceptable and should be dealt with seriously.

Child on Child Abuse

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- Bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- Abuse in intimate personal relationships between peers;
- Physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
- Sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi-nude images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- Abuse where students are perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- Initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

Bullying related to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Children and young people with SEND are more at risk of bullying than their peers. Public bodies have new responsibilities to actively promote equality of opportunity for all disabled people and eliminate disability-related harassment. Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, whether in mainstream or special schools, do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence and the robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying.

Cyber-Bullying

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 himself/herself.

By cyber-bullying, we mean bullying by electronic media:

- Bullying by texts or messages or calls on mobile phones
- The use of mobile phone cameras to cause distress, fear or humiliation
- Posting threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating material on websites, to include blogs, personal websites, social networking sites
- Using e-mail to message others
- Hijacking/cloning e-mail accounts
- Making threatening, abusive, defamatory or humiliating remarks in chat rooms or via social media

Legal Issues

Cyber-bullying can be a criminal offence.

- It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information in any media including internet sites.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by public means of a public electronic communications network, a message or other matter that is grossly offensive or one of an indecent, obscene or menacing character.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.

All bullying is damaging, but cyber-bullying and harassment can be a far more serious invasion of privacy. These incidents may also be criminal acts, and the school will work with the police to tackle those involved in such criminal activity.

School responsibilities

We are aware of our statutory responsibilities in regards to preventing and tackling bullying as set out in

(i) *Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006:*

- Every school must have measures to encourage good behaviour and **prevent all forms of bullying** amongst pupils. These measures should be part of the school's behaviour policy which must be communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents;
- Headteachers can discipline pupils for poor behaviour that occurs even when the pupil is not on school premises or under the lawful control of school staff.

(ii) *Equality act 2010*

- We are committed to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation through addressing prejudice and prejudice based bullying. This is part of the Public Sector Equality Duty which is required under the Equality Act 2010 and covers these protected

characteristics; disability, gender, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity.

- We take our responsibility for meeting the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) seriously and take active steps to:
 - eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation
 - advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

(iii) Safeguarding children and young people-Children Act 1989

- A bullying incident will 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, the school staff will report their concerns to Camden Local Authority
- Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, we will draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, and to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

(iv) Criminal law

- Bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence. However some types of harassing, threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence. 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 to send an electronic communication 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 staff feel that an offence may have been committed they will seek assistance from the police.

(v) Bullying outside school premises

- Headteachers have a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour when they are outside of the school premises and not under the lawful control or charge of a member of school staff
- This could relate to bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport or outside local shops
- Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on.
- The headteacher will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or local authority
- If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

Roles within the School

The *Headteacher* will:

- Ensure that the policy is implemented and reviewed regularly
- Monitor bullying and harassment of pupils in terms of difference and diversity (i.e. different groups) and take action if there is a cause for concern
- Provide a report on the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Ensure the policy is regularly publicised to the whole school community and the message that bullying is not accepted is reinforced through whole school activities and information
- Ensure that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to identify and deal with bullying
- Regularly review the policy in the light of any incident
- Include regular updates to staff through the annual safeguarding training
- Include information in the newsletter/on the website about what the school is doing to prevent and tackle bullying

The *Governing Body* will support the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. The governing body will:

- Require the Headteacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and report on them to the governing body.
- Require the Headteacher to report annually to the governors about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.
- Notify the Headteacher of any request from a parent or carer to investigate incidents of bullying and ask the head teacher to conduct an investigation and report back to the governing body. The governing body will respond within ten days to the parent or carer and keep them regularly updated with regards to the investigation and, where possible, meet with the parent or carer to ensure they are satisfied with the outcome.

Preventing bullying

Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via peer on peer abuse. This is most likely to include, but not limited to: bullying (including cyber bullying), physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos, initiation/hazing type violence and rituals and upskirting (KCSIE 2022).

Our approach to preventing bullying involves direct teaching about bullying and its consequences, celebrating difference and diversity and promoting positive behaviour.

We do this through

1. *Whole school ethos and environment*
2. *Whole school activities*
3. *Curriculum*
4. *Training and support for staff*
5. *Involving pupils*
6. *Involving parents and carers*

Teaching about bullying and its consequences is taught through PSHE and is covered through RE and literacy as well. Pupils learn

- what bullying is, how it feels, why people bully, what to do about it and how to prevent it
- about the differences between people and about the importance of being inclusive and celebrating difference and diversity
- about the impact of prejudice and discrimination

- skills to manage feelings, develop empathy, resolve conflict fairly, to cope with friendship problems and make and maintain positive relationships
- how to keep safe and behave responsibly when using the internet and mobile phones

Training and support for staff

We have annual safeguarding training which includes an update of this policy and to ensure that staff know how to identify bullying and what to do if it occurs. We attend Camden's annual anti-bullying seminar to gather ideas and approaches from other schools.

Involving parents and carers

We believe that parents and carers have a very important role in supporting the school's anti-bullying policy and in actively encouraging their child to be a positive member of the school. We ask all parents and carers to sign the Home-School agreement when their child starts at Maria Fidelis. This agreement sets out what parents and carers can expect from our school and what is, in turn expected from parents and carers. This includes our approach to preventing and dealing with bullying and is clear that bullying is unacceptable.

We run regular workshops for parents and carers about what bullying is, what to do if their child is bullied and how the school will deal with it as well as workshops on e-safety and what to do if their child experiences cyberbullying.

Dealing with bullying

All the staff in our school take all forms of bullying and prejudice-based language seriously and will deal with it promptly and seek to prevent it from taking place. There is guidance in the staff handbook on how bullying and prejudice-related incidents should be identified, assessed, recorded and dealt with. We treat all bullying incidents equally seriously, no matter what type of bullying it is.

We will investigate and act upon any bullying incident that is reported to school staff, including taking place outside of school e.g. on school or public transport, outside local shops or online. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the incident.

We will:

- Record all incidents of bullying and prejudice-based language, including race, disability, religion, ethnicity, gender, SEND, homophobic/transphobic, and appearance and describe how they have been dealt with
- Spend time talking to the child who has been or is being bullied to see if they could benefit from further support such as counselling or from any interventions to help them develop their personal and social skills
- Spend time talking to the child who has done or is doing the bullying and try to find out if there are underlying reasons for their behaviour and if they could benefit from support or interventions to help them manage their behaviour and/or develop their personal and social skills

- Address with other children and young people who may have been bystanders, observing or supporting the bullying behaviour, how they could intervene to stop bullying behaviour in future.
- Provide training for staff to help identify bullying and work to prevent it happening and to intervene effectively to stop it.

Recording and Reporting

Staff who identify or who are told about bullying or prejudice-based language make a written record of this. All incidents whether one off or defined as bullying are logged by the school.

We encourage staff, pupils, parents and governor to report bullying or prejudice-based language and we have a range of ways this can be done including

- Talking to any member of staff
- Talking to the lead teacher responsible for behaviour
- Writing a note and handing it to any member of staff in the school

Links to other policies

This policy links to our behaviour, equalities, safeguarding and PSHE policies and is part of our approach and commitment to promoting positive behaviour, dealing with inappropriate behaviour and improving the health and wellbeing of children.

Evaluation

Following any bullying we use the feedback from parents and pupils to evaluate our approach and make changes as needed. We analyse data on bullying and prejudice-based language to help plan future actions to reduce bullying and eliminate discrimination.

Signed by Chair of Governors	
Date	
Date of next review	

Appendix 1: Guidance on ways of dealing with Cyber-Bullying

GUIDANCE FOR PUPILS

If you believe you or someone else is the victim of cyber-bullying, you must speak to an adult as soon as possible. This person could be a parent/guardian or any members of staff at the school.

- Do not answer abusive messages but log and report them
- Do not delete anything until it has been shown to your HOY (even if it is upsetting, the material is important evidence which may need to be used later as proof of cyber-bullying)
- Do not give out personal contact details
- Never reply to someone you do not know
- Stay in public areas in chat rooms

GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

If you suspect or are told about a cyber-bullying incident, follow the protocol outlined below:

Mobile Phones

- Ask the pupil to show you the mobile phone
- Note clearly everything on the screen relating to an inappropriate text message or image, to include the date, time and names
- Make a transcript of a spoken message, again record date, times and names
- Tell the pupil to save the message/image
- Go with the pupil and see a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Computers

- Ask the pupil to get up on-screen the material in question
- Ask the pupil to save the material
- Print off the offending material straight away
- Make sure you have got all pages in the right order and that there are no omissions
- Accompany the pupil, taking the offending material, to see a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Normal procedures to interview pupils and to take statements will then be followed particularly if a child protection issue is presented.

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS

It is vital that parents and the school work together to ensure that all pupils are aware of the serious consequences of getting involved in anything that might be seen to be cyber-bullying. Your child may not tell you that he or she is being bullied. However, you may notice some changes in his or her behaviour, including:

- Being unwilling to talk about their day
- Looking less happy
- Coming home with cuts and bruises
- Coming home with toys and things you have not bought for them

- Taking things from home without you knowing
- Avoiding certain children or activities
- Being reluctant to go to school
- feeling unwell, often with a headache
- anxiety
- aggression towards you or others in your family
- bedwetting
- waking in the night

These things can happen for other reasons but they can be a sign of bullying so it's important to find a quiet time to talk to your child about your concerns. It might also help to talk to others who know and care for your child including their teachers.

If your child is being bullied,

- Take time to listen to your child and stay calm
- Calmly talk with your child
- Explain to them that bullying is unacceptable and that no one should have to put up with it. Promise to do all you can to stop it.
- Write down what your child has said. If it involves cyberbullying, keep any evidence of emails and texts
- Encourage your child to talk to their teacher or someone at the school
- Never intervene with other children or children's parents, but let the school know.
- Contact your child's class or form teacher as soon as possible to let them know your concerns. The school will take any incident of bullying extremely seriously and will deal with it quickly to find out why it has happened and to prevent it happening again
- Staff may not know about the bullying and will need to know what has happened and will discuss with parents and carers action to be taken
- Staff will update parents and carers about what they are doing to resolve the issue and when it has been resolved
- If you are not satisfied with the response you get and any action taken, you should contact the Head of Year or Headteacher with your concerns.
- If you remain dissatisfied, you should follow the school's complaints procedure, as detailed in the school prospectus. There is a leaflet on Camden Council's website giving advice about how to complain about a school service: <http://www.camden.gov.uk/schoolcomplaintsleaflet>
- Call or go on the website of one of the organisations dedicated to supporting parents and carers. They will give you independent advice and support. For example, Parentline Plus on 0800 800 2222 or the Parents Anti-Bullying Helpline on 08451 205 204.

What to do if your child is bullying someone else

It can be a shock to parents and carers that their child could be bullying another child in the school. There are many reasons why some children and young people bully others. Sometimes it's because they are copying someone at school or elsewhere, or being encouraged to bully or that they have been a victim of bullying themselves. It may be hard to spot although one sign could be that they come home with toys, food and other things that you have not bought for them.

Children who bully others may also suffer from long lasting consequences and may continue with bullying behaviour into their adult lives. It is important that children receive help and the

issues are dealt with straight away. You should:

- Talk with your child and explain why bullying is wrong
- Contact the HOY as soon as possible.
- Make sure their child understands how seriously we take incidents of cyber-bullying at Maria Fidelis.
- Explain the legal issues relating to cyber-bullying
- Call or go on the website of one of the organisations dedicated to supporting parents and carers. They will give you independent advice and support. For example, Parentline Plus on 0800 800 2222 or the Parents Anti-Bullying Helpline on 08451 205 2