Antibullying Policy

Last Review: July 2025 / Richard Foster

Next Review: June 2026 / Richard Foster

A Family of Faith & Learning

Antibullying at Mount Carmel

At Mount Carmel, our aspiration is to cultivate an environment entirely free from bullying, where every student feels safe, valued, and respected, rooted in the rich tradition of Catholic Social Teachings (CST). Our anti-bullying policy is designed to reflect the core principles of dignity, respect, and community, which are central to our faith and our mission to protect every member of our school family.

Catholic social teachings emphasise the inherent dignity of every person, the importance of community and participation, and the call to live in solidarity with others. These principles guide our unequivocal stance against bullying, ensuring that our school is a sanctuary where every student can feel safe, supported, and secure.

Dignity of the Human Person
We believe that every student is created in the image of God and deserves to be treated with respect and kindness. Bullying is a direct assault on this God-given dignity. Our anti-bullying policy, therefore, identifies and challenges any behaviour that violates the dignity of an individual, fostering a culture of profound mutual respect and compassion.

Community and Participation
Our school is a community where everyone must be free to contribute positively without fear. Bullying fractures our community and prevents individuals from participating fully in school life. We, therefore, promote behaviours and restorative practices that build a strong, supportive, and inclusive community where bullying cannot take root.

Solidarity and the Common Good
We teach our pupils to stand in solidarity with others, recognising that we are all responsible for protecting one another. Our anti-bullying policy encourages pupils to be "upstanders," not "bystanders" - to speak out against injustice and support their peers. This commitment is essential for promoting peace, justice, and well-being of all, which is the foundation of the common good.

Definition of bullying

The government defines bullying as "behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying

Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Many believe bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the target. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Bullying can take many forms which include:
• emotional (being unfriendly, threatening looks/gestures, tormenting e.g., hiding belongings)
• physical (pushing, hitting, shoving or any form of physical violence)

• verbal (name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours)
• sexual and sexist (unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or those which are sexist)
• homophobic, biphobic or transphobic (behaviour or language which makes a person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their sexual orientation or gender identity, whether actual or perceived, or because of their association with people who are, or perceived to be, gay, bisexual, or transgender e.g., children of same-sex couples)
• racism (negative behaviour or language towards an individual's ethnicity, skin colour, country of birth, speaking a different language or different religious beliefs)
• cyber (all forms of abuse involving the internet, social websites, chat rooms, mobile phones, email, text messages, photographs etc)
• relational (excluding, isolating and ostracising someone usually through verbal or emotional bullying)
• interference with possessions (hiding, stealing and destroying belongings)

These definitions are important as there is a need to make a distinction between things that may cause a young person distress during their time in school, and bullying. A friendship that has broken down for example, and has led to insults being exchanged, though distressing, would not be considered to be bullying as it was neither deliberate nor repeated. There are occasions in school when a young person is quite unaware of the hurt that they have caused to a fellow pupil, as the target had kept their feelings to themselves.

The definitions outlined above must be sensitively and thoughtfully applied; a hasty classification helps neither the 'target' nor the 'perpetrator'.

Aims

- To raise awareness of bullying and create an ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour.
- To bring about conditions in which bullying is less likely to happen in the future.
- To ensure bullying is prevented in so far as reasonably practical.
- To clarify the reporting processes.
- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate, and consistent way.
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.
- To provide support for the perpetrator whilst developing strategies to enable perpetrators to be accountable for their behaviour.
- To support the mission, vision and values of Mount Carmel R.C. High School.

Mount Carmel strategies for ensuring pupils are aware of their rights and responsibilities with respect to bullying.

- Induction and Primary Liaison
    - Pupils will be informed about our expectations during their step-up days and their first week at Mount Carmel. Pupils will know what bullying is and how to report concerns.
- Code of Conduct
    - Pupils will be given information about expectations and procedures regarding bullying and will be told what to do if they see it or experience it and how to report it.
- PSHCE and RE Programmes
    - Pupils will be educated about the signs and effects of bullying, ensuring that pupils know what to do if they feel they are being bullied and the consequences of bullying.
- Assemblies
    - Each half-term Safeguarding assemblies take place to inform pupils how to keep themselves safe across a range of personal issues of which bullying is one.
- Outside agencies
    - Advice and support is regularly sought from other agencies that contribute directly or indirectly to the school's anti-bullying strategy. These include school nurse, PCSOs, MHST, Children's Social Care, NEST, Maundy Relief, YNOT and ELCAS.
- Pulse
    - Pupils have access to a website / app called Pulse which is a 'check in' system for pupils to use to gauge their wellbeing. They are emailed a reminder each week encouraging them to 'check in'. Key staff can then follow up instances where pupils have low mood, including those perceived to be being bullied.
- Safeguarding systems and procedures
    - All school devices are monitored to ensure that any written communication around the topic of bullying is detected and reported to the DSL and Pastoral team.

Supporting pupils with SEN and/or disabilities.

At Mount Carmel, we recognise that pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and disabilities can be particularly vulnerable to bullying. Our commitment to the inherent dignity of every person extends unequivocally to all members of our school community, ensuring that all pupils, regardless of their needs or abilities, feel safe, valued, and respected.

In line with our anti-bullying policy, we are committed to:

- Proactive Identification: Staff are trained to be especially vigilant in identifying potential signs of bullying affecting pupils with SEN or disabilities, understanding that their communication methods or social interactions may differ.
- Tailored Support: We will work closely with pupils, parents/carers, and relevant support services (including the SENCo and external agencies) to ensure that anti-bullying interventions and support strategies are adapted to meet the individual needs and communication preferences of pupils with SEN or disabilities. This may include visual aids, social stories, or alternative reporting methods.
- Promoting Understanding and Empathy: Our PSHCE and RE programmes will actively promote understanding, empathy, and respect for diversity, including differences related to SEN and disabilities, to foster an inclusive environment where such bullying cannot take root.

- Empowerment: We will empower pupils with SEN and disabilities to understand what bullying is and how to report it, providing accessible information and trusted adults they can approach.
- Robust Response: Any bullying motivated by prejudice against groups, including those based on perceived or actual differences related to SEN or disabilities, will be dealt with rigorously and with appropriate sanctions, making it clear why this behaviour is unacceptable.

Reactive Strategies to incidences of bullying.

Although all teaching and support staff are asked to be vigilant about signs of bullying, it is often the case that bullying is carried out away from 'public' view and so must be reported by the victim or another pupil in order that it can be dealt with.

For any action to be taken it is essential that a member of staff is made aware of the fact that a child is being or has been bullied.

Pupils and/or parents/carers are encouraged to disclose problems relating to bullying (whether directed at themselves or others) using a variety of mechanisms. Pupils may disclose bullying issues in the following ways:

- To any member of staff. All staff receive annual safeguarding and anti-bullying training and have a duty of care in this respect, but it is anticipated that Form Tutors, Pastoral Leaders and Assistant Pastoral Leaders will be the usual route for such disclosures. Staff have a duty to maintain confidentiality and pass such disclosures to pastoral staff immediately.
- To Anti-bullying Ambassadors or Prefects. This facility is regularly publicised, and training will be given to all the pupils involved. Issues around confidentiality are discussed prior to any disclosures. Support from school staff is then instigated.
- Through Pupil Questionnaires and the Pulse app. These are useful in determining the extent of bullying problems within school and the effectiveness of school responses.
- A centralised bullying log will be maintained to monitor reports of bullying to ensure that bullying is robustly identified and support is put in place for both victims and perpetrators.

Supporting children who have been bullied by others

Pastoral staff will work with the pupils to establish the nature and extent of the bullying. This may require further interviews with parents and pupils. Parents will be informed of the problem.

Where appropriate the 'support group' approach to anti- bullying is used.

The victim is encouraged to use any medium that they are comfortable with to express how the bullying is making them feel.

With the consent of the victim, the bullies and pupils who will support the pupil are interviewed. The pupil may or may not choose to be present at this meeting. Using the resources produced by the victim the group are made aware of how the bullying is making the victim feel.

The group are asked to share their reactions to the information and encouraged to formulate a strategy for supporting the pupil.

Counselling sessions aimed at raising the self-esteem and assertiveness of the victim may be arranged with the Pastoral Leaders.

The parent and victim are contacted regularly to ensure that the problem has been resolved.

Counselling children who have bullied others

Every attempt is made to help a child understand why he/she has been in serious trouble for behaving in a way that is unacceptable.

In some circumstances it is possible to identify underlying problems that contribute towards ~~antisocial~~ bullying behaviour. These problems may be addressed through further counselling or through the intervention of other agencies. In such cases referral will be made in consultation with the Pastoral Leader.

Pupils are given every opportunity to start afresh and in many cases an incident in which they have bullied is a 'one off' situation that is never repeated.

A record is kept of incidents involving bullying of any kind on the 'Conduct Log' of the pupil or pupils responsible.

In all cases we avoid the labelling of parties in terms of 'bully' and 'victim'. It is the behaviour we criticise not the person. The terms such as these throughout this policy is unavoidable.

Physical bullying
In circumstances which clearly indicate that the attack was **unprovoked** then the child guilty of this action may be sanctioned as per the behaviour policy. Their parents will be asked to come into school with the child to discuss the serious nature of the offence and the consequence of further behaviour of this kind.

In cases of serious physical assault i.e., those requiring medical treatment the incident may involve the Police as per the decision of the victim and their parents. The child who has been bullied will be counselled and reassured by their tutor or (Assistant) Pastoral Leader and asked to report immediately any repercussions, physical or verbal.

Where bullying is physical but cannot be said to be unprovoked where practicable all children who were involved or who witnessed the incident and so are in a position to offer their 'version' of events would be interviewed by a member of staff. Having had the benefit of all sides of a particular story the staff involved will then decide on appropriate action. This will include informing parents either by phone or letter and a written record of the incident being placed in the pupil's 'conduct log'.

Verbal and Online Bullying
In many ways just as unpleasant as physical bullying and is regarded as a very serious matter.

Name calling, threatening or menacing behaviour are three ways in which this type of bullying presents itself. Again, as in physical bullying the key to stopping the behaviour is through the matter being reported to a member of staff.

In all cases of this kind of bullying being reported the pupils involved will be interviewed and action appropriate to the situation taken. The sanctions imposed are the same as for physical bullying though

it is unlikely that an exclusion would be appropriate unless the incident was a repetition of an earlier incident or physical threats continued.

Friendship issues

On many occasions children temporarily 'fall out' with each other and bullying can take place in subtle but effective ways such as making unpleasant comments or 'dirty looks' or keeping a child out of social groups.

In these cases, when staff are informed, both parties are to be interviewed separately and then, if agreed with the pupils, together to 'smooth the waters' and to make the child see why their behaviour is not acceptable. Ownership of the solution will be given to the pupils and a method of monitoring the situation using third parties will be agreed. The consequences of continuing to behave in an unacceptable way towards each other must then be made clear. Regular contact will be maintained over the next few weeks to monitor progress.

Out of School Bullying

In cases of bullying outside of school hours either on the way to or from school we employ the same procedures as for incidents within school to promote the good behaviour of our pupils. The responsibility for the behaviour of pupils in these circumstances, however, lies with their parents/carers and pupils. The 'school's' powers are limited in these situations and in some cases police involvement may be appropriate.

Recording Bullying Issues

All reports of bullying will be recorded in the school central bullying log.

Bullying incidents that occur will be documented through the completion of the central bullying log or CPOMS log.

The Pastoral Leaders will ensure appropriate action is taken to gather the required information to support all parties and ensure swift and appropriate action is taken.

Actions taken will be recorded in the central bullying log and on CPOMS as appropriate.

This document will be viewed in conjunction with the school's Behaviour Policy and other related policies.