

Saint Matthew Catholic School
Anti-bullying Policy – Adopted by the School Commission 2006

The aim of this anti-bullying policy is to ensure that students learn in a supportive, caring, and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behavior and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will students be able to fully benefit from the educational opportunities available at Saint Matthew.

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behavior, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are:

- ❖ physical (hitting, kicking, theft)
- ❖ verbal (name calling, racist remarks)
- ❖ indirect (spreading rumors, excluding someone from social groups)

Students who are being bullied may show changes in behavior, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truancy from school. Students will be encouraged and supported to report bullying at school to teachers, their principal, their parents, or other responsible adults.

School staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with this school policy.

Statutory duty of schools

Indiana schools have a legal duty under Indiana law to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among students and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents, and students.

Implementation

School

The following steps may be taken when dealing with incidents:

- ❖ If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- ❖ A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the office
- ❖ The principal or his designee will interview all concerned and will record the incident
- ❖ Parents will be kept informed
- ❖ Punitive measures will be used as appropriate and in consultation with all parties concerned

Students

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- ❖ offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a member of staff of their choice
- ❖ reassuring the pupil
- ❖ offering continuous support
- ❖ restoring self-esteem and confidence

Students who have bullied will be helped by:

- ❖ discussing what happened
- ❖ discovering why the pupil became involved
- ❖ establishing the wrong doing and need to change
- ❖ informing parents or guardians to help change the attitude of the pupil

The following disciplinary steps can be taken:

- ❖ official warnings to cease offending
- ❖ detention
- ❖ exclusion from certain school activities
- ❖ minor fixed-term exclusion
- ❖ major fixed-term exclusion
- ❖ permanent expulsion

Within the curriculum the school will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in the Second Step program, assemblies, and subject areas, as appropriate, in an attempt to eradicate such behavior.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The school will review this policy as needed and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school beginning Fall 2006.