



11th November 2016

Dear Parents,

Part of the SMSC: social, moral, spiritual and cultural education in schools means we link in with Anti-bullying week and later this year E safety week.

I thought it may be helpful this year to send out some information to you as part of the November 2016 Anti Bullying week. We seldom have reported bullying at St Michael's, but as school is a microcosm of society we cannot be complacent. Every child has the right to feel safe at school. Schools are excellent environments for children to develop basic life skills of emotional and social resilience. Research indicates that more than 15% of employee's experience bullying at work. Therefore, teaching our children and ourselves bully blocking skills can be useful for future employment. (source: Bully Blocking by Evelyn M Field)

We have an anti-bullying policy, and take consistent action to ensure we deal with bullying. We aim to create a culture where each member of the school community is respected, involved and validated, which reduces the likelihood of bullying. We endeavour to create a safe, empowering environment for all children to learn and all staff to work.

We ensure that mutual respect is valued more highly than bullying, and that this is reflected in our everyday language. Each year in November during anti-bullying week we revisit our policies and procedures and review bully blocking behaviour with the children and we believe collaboration with parents is essential.

Advice to staff

- Ensure a target feels safe to report bullying
- Ensure that targets should expect a fair investigation followed by some kind of resolution
- Use Trafford's recommended Restorative justice model to facilitate resolution when simple methods have not worked.
- Establish a safe school culture in the classroom
- Be role models of respect and empathy, and not bullies themselves
- Support all children to obtain perspectives of the situation and support basic assertive communication and counselling skills to assist the target and confront the bully.
- Support children with limited social skills to join in school activities
- Coach provocative children to relate with respect to each other
- Work with parents who may feel angry or vulnerable themselves and remain firm, calm, empathetic, neutral and respect confidentiality.
- We aim to support children's self-esteem, mediation, conflict resolution skills, motivation, cooperative learning and problem solving skills, anger resolution skills, empathy and assertive training and social skills.
- We have non-competitive activities at lunchtimes and sporting activities and quiet spaces to ensure we offer constructive lunchtime play with appropriate midday supervision
- We use collaborative learning approaches, and peer partnership in classes to encourage a constructive and supportive learning environment.
- Our Friday celebration assembly ensures achievement is recognized in all areas

METHODS TO DEAL WITH A BULLYING ISSUES – RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IS USED IN A CLEAR CASE OF REPEATED BULLYING BEHAVIOUR. OTHERS ARE USED TO INTERVENE QUICKLY ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS.

Simple Approach

The teacher or student or playground buddy approaches the bully and finds out what is going on." I've heard you have been saying mean things lately. What's wrong?' or I've just seen you do/ say something that is against the school rules. If you don't stop, you know the consequences. '

Shared Concern Approach

This problem solving approach is designed to encourage pupils to co-exist and take responsibility for their own behaviours rather than identify targets and perpetrators. The mediator operates the process of trying to get the bully to show concern for the target. The bully is then asked for constructive suggestions about how he/she can help the target. This is followed by a meeting to help the target explore their role in the bullying, and finally a support group is established to secure a social conscience and maintain improvements.

The no-blame approach

The teacher acts as a mediator, interviewing the target first, then meeting the bully, the bully's group and others who could exert a positive influence to relay the targets distress. They usually meet without the target. The students are not blamed but are encouraged to become supportive and demonstrate responsibility for helping the target. The teacher follows up with the target and the group after few weeks.

Restorative Practice

This method is democratic, respectful and empathetic. All parties are brought together, in small or large groups, including targets and bullies, on lookers. Each person gives their side of the story and describes the impact on her/him. The facilitator then structures the session to help the participants, resolve differences, repair harm, and restore relationships. The focus is on developing empathy, dealing with conflict, teaching responsibility, making amends and negotiating solutions.

- We recognize that there are at least two parties to a bullying situation, and everyone needs to know they will be given a fair hearing
- The goal is respectful resolution, not blaming or shaming
- We use restorative practice and non-punitive practice where possible

Our Anti Bullying Policy details further consequences for breaking the rules, ultimately leading to exclusion.

Advice to Parents

- We aim to ensure you are aware of our policies and preventative strategies
- Sometimes it is difficult to realise what child is doing to be a target or a bully
- Sometimes it is hard to acknowledge your own child's limited social skills or emotional resources
- We ask you to work with school to support interventions can provide your child with the right skills to enjoy life.
- We aim to support you to understand about bullying in all its forms; support your child's development of friendship skills; offer effective parenting and resilience building in your children.
- We will collaborate with you in any difficult situation which needs resolution beyond the day to day management of falling out and making up.
- We do not tolerate parents who seek revenge or intervene themselves.
- Try and switch off your own feelings in order to empower your child
- Don't blame the bully- children should respond not retaliate

There are many reasons people bully. Bullies may attack first to prevent themselves from being attacked. Alternatively, they may sense your anger and fear and this reminds them of their own painful feelings inside so they attack to expel their pain.

When an ordinary bully can't detect your fear of anger, they lose power and stop.

We need to teach ourselves to use our power and not lose or abuse it.

We express our feelings in three different ways passive, aggressive or assertive. If a bully says ' You're fat'

1. A passive reply: ' I'm not fat'.
2. An aggressive reply: ' And you are stupid. '
3. An assertive reply: ' No, I'm nicely padded! '

We need to teach ourselves to use self-respect to protect ourselves without being disrespectful to others. Assertive people create a win win situation. An assertive person identifies when they are feeling safe, comfortable or threatened. They notice if they feel happy, sad, angry or scared and refer these feelings appropriately.

DEVELOPING YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL SKILLS

1. Encourage your child to play with other children
2. Practice chatting at home at meal times without any electronic equipment
3. Limit electronic time which interferes with social skills
4. Arrange get together a with extended family
5. Organise outings where your child can socialize with others their own age. This builds social confidence.
6. Point out when your child interacts positively with others - you can smile and show interest and have fun with just do the same at school.
7. Encourage your child to have assertive friendships
8. Some adults believe they are helping a child by allowing some friends and eliminating others. Children play with children who reflect the way they see themselves. If your child chooses an 'unusual ' child, this often reveals their self-image. Be careful about eliminating friends, as long as the friend doesn't cause trouble, it's a start. Your child will become more selective as their social skills improve.
9. Remember, no one has a lot of real friends. Most children are like adults, they have a core of true close friends with whom they share their ups and downs. They then have a group of acquaintances with whom they socialize. Both groups can change constantly depending on what is going on in your life and theirs.

BUILDING ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS TO PREVENT YOURSELF BEING BULLIED

There are six secrets of reacting to others that you can work with school to teach your child to prevent them from being a target or a bully and support them building life skills for the future.

1. **REGULATE feelings.** Bullying arouses many bad feelings like fear, anger, shame, hurt, confusion, and powerlessness. It arouses a fight or flight mode and the survival mode sends a cocktail of bio chemicals including adrenaline and cortisol into the body. If you learn to regulate these feelings, you can think more clearly to block the bully. Most bullies don't mean to hurt.
2. **UNDERSTAND why you are bullied or bully:** wrong time wrong place, social difficulties, personality, genetic factors, environmental factors, adolescence, your family, school? ie: Not playing sport, wearing glasses, wealthy or poor parents, being talented at something, being an angry person or a highly sensitive person.....accept yourself as you are.
3. **BUILD YOUR SELF ESTEEM.** Understand no one can put you down except yourself. There is an odd paradox about blocking bullying: once you respect yourself, protect yourself and stop others bullying you, then some children start respecting you and want to be your friend. Play the confidence game: clear gaze, calm expression, relaxed mouth, straight shoulders, chest forward, arms move gracefully, a balanced walk, voice, firm clear and steady, deep breathing Fake it and you'll make it!
4. **BECOME A CONFIDENT COMMUNICATOR** - speak calmly and clearly, make eye contact without jiggling, have a friendly neutral look, express frustration to non-malicious bullies.
5. **CREATE AN ACTION PACK:** act assertive, be cool, get comfortable by finding something neutral, non-threatening, talk to the hand response, don't retaliate, be honest and express how the bully has made you feel, don't lie and say everything is fine. The bully will know it isn't. Get in first by making fun of yourself, laugh at yourself within the family, ask the family to tease you until you reply naturally to their teasing with comfortable retorts. Practice safe silly retorts.....like and? Or and I like ice cream so? Be positive: you have a different way of viewing things, have you thought of saying that in a different way.
6. **DEVELOP A SOCIAL NETWORK:** life has its ups and downs. Adults who cope best with the stresses and traumas of life generally have a caring and supportive network. Children with good social skills have more fun, share their problems, work out solutions, and obtain group support for their activities and actions. When you belong to a group you obtain the self-esteem and emotional support you need to cope during stressful times. You are not limited to your own resources. Most bullies are wimps who avoid children with a strong network of assertive friends.

Advice to pupils

- understand what bullying involves, the school's role, the targets and the bully's perspective, and their role as the peer group.
- learn how to support, show empathy, intervene and resolve conflicts.
- know that the majority of bullying incidents are witnessed by peers. When peers intervene they are successful in blocking bullying in the majority of cases (Bully Blocking Evelyn M Field)
- show their displeasure and discomfort with bullying and dissociate themselves from it.
- know they can report bullying without the fear of being labelled a 'dibber' 'rat' 'telltale'
- Use our playground monitors and a buddy system. Mentor your peers which reduces or prevents bullying.

THE SOCIAL SKILLS FORMULA FOR PUPILS.

There are core elements in developing effective social skills and friendships. They include the following

1. Be friendly and chat to lots of children. Make good eye contact and have a relaxed face, smile and show you are not shy, arrogant or mean. Your manner is more important than words. Chat can lead to trust.
2. Show real interest in others. Don't worry about how you feel you appear. The more genuine interest you give others, the more they will give you. Show special interest in at least 5 children
3. Give empathy. Show care and concern by sharing another's fear, fun or frustration.
4. Be yourself. Most people feel uncomfortable with someone who is always nice. People need to know what you really think and feel and want before they will trust you.
5. Negotiate difference. It is normal to discuss confront and negotiate difference. Sometimes you will win, sometimes they will win. At other times you will both compromise. If you can't create a win win with your current friends, find friends who will listen, share and resolve differences together. Avoid those who denigrate or control you.
6. Real friends are committed to one another. Casual friends will come and go. Real friends really care about you. They will show commitment by maintaining regular contact. They invest in the friendship and don't expect more than they give. They don't take each other for granted. They mend their disappointment and have realistic expectations. They forgive, forget and move on. Find friends who respect and help you.
7. Just do it. Invite friends round
8. Use feedback from others
9. No one is perfect, don't expect your friends to be perfect - be happy if they are 75% of the time!
10. Collect a variety of friends.

TOOL BOX

• VERBAL BULLYING	NON VERBAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negotiate • Agree and acknowledge • Baffle block or fluff • Question or clarify • Intellectualize • Be truthful, it takes people by surprise • Challenge • Confront • Disagree • Exaggerate , • contradict or surprise • Find an audience to expose the bully • Find alternative options to their comments 	<p>EMAIL/TEXT Don't reply to nasty comments</p> <p>Change your password, code</p> <p>Alter your voicemail so bully doesn't know who they are calling</p> <p>Inform your parents and get them to reply</p> <p>Block the bully</p> <p>Record or save the text and report to the police if it is a criminal offence</p> <hr/> <p>PUSHING SHOVING BUMPING</p> <p>Say ' don't come close my socks are smelly' or similar silly retort</p> <p>If your hair is pulled tickle the bully under the arm</p> <p>Be clumsy and let your books fall over the bully and make a fuss apologizing to draw attention to it.</p> <p>Make a noise like a squeaky duck when you are bumped into</p>
<p>EXCLUSION FROM THE GROUP</p> <p>Be friendly, blend in and have fun</p> <p>Identify the leader and ask about the child's hobbies or weekend and show an interest in them.</p> <p>If you are suddenly isolated by the group then ring each individual and say ' I'm feeling hurt, what have I done to upset you? They will know how you feel because everyone has been excluded at some time. alternatively, if they don't care they were never real friends so move on.</p> <p>Find other friends</p>	<p>FLICKING THINGS</p> <p>Save them in a pile and show the teacher</p>
<p>WHISPERING GIGGLING PASSING NOTES</p> <p>Say ' I don't like you doing X behind my back. If you have guts tell it to my face or stop.</p> <p>Take them to the teacher</p> <p>Take a bow- you have obviously entertained them.</p>	<p>POINTING STARING MIMICKING</p> <p>Ask ' what else could you do to have fun instead of'</p> <p>Mirror the behaviour back, or even better your group of friends all mirror the behaviour back</p> <p>When the bully displays nasty nonverbal gestures with his eyes, eyebrows, lips etc. identify this party of the body, look concerned and ask ' What's wrong with you?</p>