

ST MARY'S CE (A) FIRST SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

*"Our Vision is to provide the best opportunities to become life-long learners.
Our Christian values rooted in the Good Samaritan recognise everyone is loved by God.
Our ethos is to show love and respect - to ourselves, each other and God's creation."*

Philosophy

At St Mary's, we believe that every child has the right to learn and thrive in a safe, caring and inclusive environment where they are treated with dignity, respect and compassion. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Our Christian vision is rooted in the parable of **The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)**, which inspires us to show kindness, compassion and respect for others. Our Christian values encourage us to recognise the dignity and worth of every individual. We seek to follow the example of the Good Samaritan by showing compassion, standing up for others and ensuring that nobody feels alone or unsupported.

Through Collective Worship, Relationships Education, PSHE, the wider curriculum and everyday interactions, we encourage our children to care for one another, celebrate difference and act with courage when they see someone in need. We teach pupils that speaking out about bullying, whether for themselves or others, is an act of kindness and responsibility, helping to create a school where everyone feels safe, valued and included.

In line with Department for Education guidance, bullying is defined as behaviour that is **intentional**, **repeated over time** and involves an **imbalance of power**, making it difficult for the person experiencing the behaviour to defend themselves. Bullying may take many forms, including physical, verbal, emotional or relational, prejudice-based and online (cyber) bullying.

The school is committed to preventing bullying through a whole-school approach that promotes positive relationships, inclusion, respect and safeguarding. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated promptly and responded to fairly and consistently, ensuring appropriate support is provided for all children involved.

Aims

The school aims to:

- Promote kindness, respect, compassion and consideration for the thoughts, feelings, dignity and wellbeing of others through all aspects of school life, including Collective Worship, Relationships Education, PSHE, the wider curriculum and the school's Christian values and ethos.
- Foster a culture in which positive relationships are valued, diversity is celebrated and every member of the school community feels safe, included and respected.
- Prevent and reduce all forms of bullying, including physical, verbal, relational, prejudice-based and online bullying, through education, early intervention and a consistent whole-school approach.
- Encourage all pupils to respect their own property, the property of others and the shared learning environment.
- Promote self-discipline, personal responsibility and respect for others, enabling pupils to understand the impact of their behaviour and make positive choices.
- Encourage pupils to speak out if they experience or witness bullying, reassuring them that concerns will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
- Ensure all reports of bullying are investigated fairly, sensitively and consistently, with appropriate support provided for all pupils involved and restorative approaches used where appropriate.
- Develop staff understanding of the different forms of bullying and ensure that concerns are identified early, distinguishing bullying from isolated incidents of conflict, friendship difficulties or inappropriate play, whilst recognising that repeated behaviours may develop into bullying if left unaddressed.
- Monitor bullying incidents and emerging patterns to inform preventative strategies, curriculum development and ongoing improvements to safeguarding and pupil wellbeing.

St Mary's First School recognises that preventing bullying requires a whole-school approach. Through our curriculum, values, relationships and daily interactions, we teach pupils how to respect others, resolve disagreements and contribute positively to our school community. Pupils are encouraged to speak to any trusted adult if they experience or witness bullying. Reports will always be taken seriously, and pupils will be supported to share their concerns in a way that feels safe for them.

Types of Bullying

Types of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that is **intentional**, **repeated over time** and involves an **imbalance of power**, making it difficult for the person experiencing the behaviour to defend themselves. Bullying can take many forms and may occur face-to-face or online.

Physical Bullying

Physical bullying involves deliberately hurting or intimidating another person through physical actions. This may include hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, pinching, spitting, damaging belongings or any unwanted physical contact intended to cause harm, fear or distress.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying involves the repeated use of words to hurt, intimidate or humiliate another person. This may include name-calling, insults, teasing, threatening behaviour, offensive language, mocking or making inappropriate comments about a person's appearance, abilities, family, culture or identity.

Emotional or Relational (Social) Bullying

Emotional or relational bullying is behaviour intended to damage a person's self-esteem, relationships or social standing. This may include deliberately excluding someone from activities or friendships, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, encouraging others to ignore or reject someone, embarrassing them publicly or intimidating them through non-verbal actions.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place through digital technologies, including mobile phones, computers, tablets, gaming platforms or social media. It may involve sending or posting unkind, threatening or abusive messages, sharing images or personal information without consent, creating fake accounts, excluding someone from online groups or encouraging others to target an individual online.

Although cyberbullying often takes place outside school, the school may take action where it affects a pupil's safety, wellbeing or education, or where it impacts on the school community.

Prejudice-Based Bullying

Prejudice-based bullying is bullying motivated by prejudice or negative attitudes towards a person's actual or perceived characteristics. It may target a person's:

- race, ethnicity or culture;
- religion or belief;
- disability or special educational needs;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- family circumstances or caring responsibilities; or
- any other characteristic that makes them feel different or vulnerable.

Such incidents are taken seriously, recorded appropriately and may also be treated as discriminatory incidents.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Some bullying behaviours may also constitute child-on-child abuse. This may include serious physical abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, abusive initiation or hazing behaviours, coercive or controlling behaviour, sharing sexual images without consent, or other behaviour that causes significant harm.

Where behaviour meets the threshold for child-on-child abuse, it will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)**.

Appropriate safeguarding procedures, referrals and support will be implemented alongside any behaviour management measures.

Impact of Bullying

Bullying can have a significant and lasting impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, physical health, relationships and educational outcomes. Even where incidents may appear minor, repeated or targeted, they should never be dismissed as "just falling out" or "part of growing up". Children who experience bullying may:

- Feel frightened, anxious, upset, isolated or unhappy and experience a loss of self-esteem.
- Become reluctant or refuse to attend school, resulting in poor attendance or persistent absence.
- Find it difficult to concentrate, engage in learning or achieve their potential.
- Experience changes in behaviour, mood or relationships with others.
- Develop physical symptoms such as headaches, stomach aches or disturbed sleep.
- Become withdrawn or reluctant to participate in school activities and friendships.
- Feel unsafe both in school and online.

Children who display bullying behaviour may also require support to:

- Understand the impact of their behaviour on others.
- Develop empathy, emotional regulation and positive relationship skills.
- Take responsibility for their actions and repair relationships where appropriate.
- Learn strategies to make positive behaviour choices and prevent future incidents.

Whole School Strategies to Minimise Bullying and create an Anti-Bullying Culture

We are committed to fostering a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where everybody feels valued, supported and able to learn. We work to promote a positive school culture in which:

- Everyone understands what bullying is, including prejudice-based bullying and cyberbullying, and recognises that it is unacceptable.
- Pupils feel safe, respected and confident to report bullying, either for themselves or on behalf of others, knowing that all concerns will be taken seriously.
- All reports of bullying are listened to, investigated promptly and responded to fairly and appropriately.
- Pupils are encouraged to develop empathy, respect, resilience and positive relationships through the school's values, curriculum and restorative approaches.
- Children who experience bullying receive appropriate support, while those displaying bullying behaviour are helped to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility and make positive changes.
- Bullying incidents are monitored to identify patterns or emerging concerns, enabling the school to take proactive action to prevent recurrence.

Responsibilities of All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to promote a culture of respect, inclusion and kindness, and to challenge bullying behaviour whenever it occurs. Staff will:

- Promote the school's values, equality objectives and inclusive ethos by modelling positive relationships and ensuring all pupils are treated with dignity, respect and compassion.
- Support pupils' self-esteem, emotional wellbeing and resilience through daily interactions, the curriculum, Collective Worship, PSHE/RHE and opportunities to learn about respectful relationships, diversity, equality, protected characteristics, online safety and bullying.
- Ensure pupils understand how to stay safe online, recognise cyberbullying and know how to report concerns or seek support.
- Remain vigilant for all forms of bullying, as well as less obvious signs such as social exclusion, repeated low-level incidents or changes in behaviour.
- Respond promptly, sensitively and consistently to all concerns or allegations of bullying, ensuring that all pupils involved are listened to, supported and treated fairly.
- Use restorative approaches alongside the Behaviour Policy, where appropriate, to help repair relationships, develop understanding and prevent recurrence.
- Apply appropriate consequences where bullying behaviour is confirmed, while supporting pupils to understand the impact of their actions and make positive changes.
- Record all suspected or confirmed bullying incidents on CPOMS and report serious, persistent, discriminatory or safeguarding-related concerns to the Headteacher or appropriate senior leader.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and, where appropriate, external agencies, to ensure effective support and positive outcomes for all pupils involved.
- Contribute to the monitoring and review of bullying incidents and trends to inform preventative strategies, staff training and ongoing improvement.

Supporting Children Who Experience Bullying

St Mary's recognises that experiencing bullying can have a significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, confidence, relationships, attendance and ability to engage fully in learning. Children who experience bullying will be listened to, taken seriously and supported throughout the school's response.

Support may include:

- Providing a safe opportunity for the child to share their concerns with a trusted adult and ensuring they feel heard, valued and supported.
- Regular check-ins with an appropriate member of staff to monitor wellbeing, provide reassurance and ensure the child feels safe within school.
- Supporting the child to rebuild confidence, self-esteem and positive relationships through appropriate interventions and encouragement.
- Providing support to develop friendships, social skills and strategies for managing relationships where appropriate.
- Working with parents/carers to ensure effective communication and a shared approach to supporting the child.
- Monitoring attendance and engagement with learning, recognising that bullying can affect a child's willingness or ability to attend school.
- Making reasonable adjustments and providing additional support where needed to help the child feel secure and included in school life.
- Referring to appropriate external services or agencies where additional emotional, social or mental health support is required.

St Mary's school will continue to monitor the situation following any reported bullying incident to ensure that the bullying behaviour has stopped, the child feels safe and supported, and appropriate action has been taken to prevent recurrence.

Supporting Children Who Display Bullying Behaviour

St Mary's recognises that children who display bullying behaviour may also require support to understand the impact of their actions, develop positive relationships and make appropriate choices. While bullying behaviour is unacceptable and will be addressed consistently, the school will seek to understand any underlying needs or circumstances that may be contributing to the behaviour.

Support may include:

- Helping the child to understand the impact of their behaviour on others and develop empathy, respect and an understanding of how their actions affect the wellbeing of others.
- Providing opportunities for reflection, discussion and restorative approaches, where appropriate, to help repair relationships and rebuild trust.
- Identifying any underlying needs, including emotional, social, communication, behavioural or additional needs, which may be contributing to the behaviour and considering appropriate support.
- Teaching and reinforcing alternative behaviours, including positive communication, problem-solving, conflict resolution and respectful ways to manage relationships.
- Supporting the development of emotional regulation, resilience and self-management skills through targeted interventions, pastoral support or curriculum approaches where appropriate.
- Working collaboratively with parents/carers and, where necessary, external agencies to ensure a consistent approach and appropriate support.
- Applying proportionate consequences and interventions in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, ensuring that children understand expectations, take responsibility for their actions and are supported to make positive changes.

The school will monitor the behaviour of children involved in bullying incidents to ensure that appropriate changes are made, relationships improve where possible and further incidents are prevented. All actions will consider the age, developmental needs and individual circumstances of the child, while maintaining the safety and wellbeing of all members of the school community.

Governing Board Responsibilities

The Governing Board has a strategic responsibility to ensure that the school provides a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where bullying is prevented and addressed effectively. The Governing Board will:

- Approve and regularly review the school's Anti-Bullying Policy to ensure it reflects current legislation, Department for Education guidance and the school's values.
- Ensure that appropriate systems and procedures are in place to prevent, identify, record and respond to bullying effectively.
- Work with the Headteacher to support the implementation and effectiveness of the policy, including the impact of preventative strategies.
- Ensure that bullying is recognised as a safeguarding and wellbeing issue and that appropriate links are maintained with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection procedures.
- Monitor trends and patterns in bullying incidents through appropriate reporting, while maintaining confidentiality, to ensure that actions taken are effective and that improvements are made where required.
- Ensure that pupils, parents/carers and staff have confidence in the school's approach to preventing and responding to bullying.
- Ensure that the school promotes equality, inclusion and respect for all members of the school community, including addressing prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- Support the Headteacher in ensuring that staff receive appropriate guidance and training to identify, prevent and respond to bullying behaviour.

Policy Links

Behaviour & Restorative Practice policy
Safeguarding policy
Public Sector Equality Duty policy
PSHE/RHE policy
SEND policy
Vexatious policy
British Values policy

Agreed by Governors: September 2026

Reviewed: September 2028

Appendix A

Information and support

There is a wealth of information available to support schools, colleges and parents to keep children safe online. The following list is not exhaustive but should provide a useful starting point:

Organisation/Resource	What it does/provides
thinkuknow	NCA CEOPs advice on online safety
disrespectnobody	Home Office advice on healthy relationships, including sexting and pornography
UK safer internet centre	Contains a specialist helpline for UK schools and colleges
swgfl	Includes a template for setting out online safety policies
internet matters	Help for parents on how to keep their children safe online
parentzone	Help for parents on how to keep their children safe online
childnet cyberbullying	Guidance for schools on cyberbullying
pshe association	Guidance and useful teaching resources covering online safety issues including pornography and the sharing of sexual images
educateagainsthate	Practical advice for parents, teachers and governors on protecting children from extremism and radicalisation.
the use of social media for online radicalisation	A briefing note for schools on how social media is used to encourage travel to Syria and Iraq
UKCIS	The UK Council for Internet Safety's website provides: • Sexting advice • Online safety: Questions for Governing Bodies • Education for a connected world framework

Organisation/Resource	What it does/provides
NSPCC	NSPCC advice for schools and colleges
net-aware	NSPCC advice for parents
commonsensemedia	Independent reviews, age ratings, & other information about all types of media for children and their parents
searching screening and confiscation	Guidance to schools on searching children in schools and confiscating items such as mobile phones
lgfl	Advice and resources from the London Grid for Learning