

Being different, Belonging together in the family of God

Anti-Bullying Policy

St Mary and St
Joseph's RC Primary
School

Review date September 2024



St. Mary & St. Joseph's
R.C. Primary School

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Statement of intent

St Mary and St Joseph's RC Primary School believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school's curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school's response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behavioural Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.

1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011

1.2. This policy has been written in accordance with guidance, including, but not limited to:

- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

1.3. This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behavioural Policy
- Cyber Bullying Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Primary Relationships and Health Education Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy

2. Definition

- 2.1. For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.
- 2.2. Bullying is generally characterised by:
 - **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
 - **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
 - **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
 - **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.
- 2.3. Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.
- 2.4. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:
 - Pupils with SEND.
 - Pupils who are adopted.
 - Pupils suffering from a health problem.
 - Pupils with caring responsibilities.

3. Types of bullying

- 3.1. Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything.
- 3.2. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.
- 3.3. Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:
 - Verbally
 - Physically
 - Emotionally
 - Online (Cyber)
- 3.4. **Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
- 3.5. **Homophobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

- 3.6. **Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- 3.7. **Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- 3.8. **Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.
- 3.9. **Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.
- 3.10. **Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. The **governing body** is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory.
- The overall implementation of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

4.2. The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- All reported incidents are recorded on CPoMs, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.

- Analysing the data in the bullying record at **termly** intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented. These are reported on the Head teachers Report to Governors.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

4.3. Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and that they inform the pupil's SLT of such observations.
- Refraining from gender stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

4.4. The Pupil Support Mentor is responsible for:

- Offering emotional support to victims of bullying.
- Alerting the relevant SLT regarding any incidents of bullying.

4.5. Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

4.6. Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyber bullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyber bullying.

5. Statutory implications

5.1. The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- 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.
- 5.2. The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of children and young people at the school to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously.
 - 5.3. The headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.
 - 5.4. Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:
 - Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
 - The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
 - Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
 - Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

6. Prevention

The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the relationships and health education curriculum, in line with the Primary Relationships and Health Education Policy. The school uses the TenTen curriculum to deliver RHE.

Our curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.

- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events.

Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying. Potential victims of bullying will be placed in working groups with other pupils who do not abuse or take advantage of others.

All staff have an 'open door' policy allowing pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

7. Signs of bullying

7.1. Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Asking to be driven to school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Truancy
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered

- Change in behaviour and attitude at home
- 7.2. Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.
 - 7.3. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.
 - 7.4. In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the pupil becoming aggravated
 - They have been the victim of domestic abuse
 - Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed
 - 7.5. If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's Class Teacher, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

8. Staff principles

- 8.1. The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.
- 8.2. Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and they will not ignore signs of suspected bullying.
- 8.3. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is always challenged and never ignored.
- 8.4. Staff act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.
- 8.5. Staff always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless it is in a setting that the victim has given consent to, or there is a safeguarding concern.
- 8.6. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL / Head teacher immediately.
- 8.7. Follow-up support is given to both the victim and bully in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

9. Preventing child-on-child sexual abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the [Prevention](#) section of this policy.

All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

The school’s Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines the school’s stance on addressing child-on-child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances are uncovered or disclosed.

10. Cyber bullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

All members of staff will receive training on an **annual** basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the '[Signs of bullying](#)' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Parents will also be invited to attend training sessions in order to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyberbullying, and will be advised to report to the headteacher if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

All learning at home will follow procedures outlined in the Remote Education Policy. During times when remote education is being utilised, the school will frequently be in contact with parents to make them aware of their activities online, but also to reinforce the importance of pupils staying safe online, and explaining how filtering and monitoring procedures work.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- **The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- **The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to their DSL or the headteacher for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided. Pupils will report incidents to a trusted member of staff.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or pupil, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the school, the headteacher will request they remove it directly.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. In these cases, the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy will be followed.

11. Procedures

- 11.1. Minor incidents are reported to the victim's **class teacher**, who investigates the incident, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and informs the **SLT** in **writing** of the incident and outcome via CPOMS.
- 11.2. When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures are adopted:
- The victim, alleged bully and witnesses are all interviewed separately
 - Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication
 - If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately to the school nurse for a medical opinion on the extent of their injuries
 - A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
 - A witness is used for serious incidents
 - If appropriate, the alleged bully, the victim and witnesses, are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
 - Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
 - Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete
 - All concerned pupils are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils
- 11.3. Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic, sexual, etc bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

12. Sanctions

- 12.1. If the headteacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents.
- 12.2. The headteacher informs the pupil of the type of sanction to be used in this instance and future sanctions if the bullying continues.
- 12.3. If possible, the headteacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain a genuine apology from the bully. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion is used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the bully.

13. Support

- 13.1. If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.
- 13.2. The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

- 13.3. The victim is encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school club or activity.
- 13.4. The school, particularly the Pupil Support Mentor, will work with the victim to build resilience.
- 13.5. The school, particularly the Pupil Support Mentor, will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

14. Follow-up support

- 14.1. The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored by their Class Teacher and Pupil Support Mentor.
- 14.2. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and bully are progressing may be appropriate.
- 14.3. If appropriate, follow-up discussions are arranged with parents regularly after the incident.
- 14.4. Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:
 - Being listened to
 - Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their Class Teacher or a member of staff of their choice
 - Being reassured
 - Being offered continued support
 - Being offered counselling, where appropriate
- 14.5. Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:
 - Receiving a consequence for their actions
 - Being able to discuss what happened
 - Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
 - Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
 - Appropriate assistance from parents
- 14.6. Pupils who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

15. Bullying outside of school

15.1 Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

15.2 The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives

the headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

15.3 Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, e.g., on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

15.4 Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

15.5 The headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

16. Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions. Records will be kept electronically on CPoMs.

The headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.

17. Monitoring and review

17.1. This policy is reviewed every annually by the headteacher and the DSL.

17.2. The scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.