



ST.MARY'S RC
PRIMARY SCHOOL

WE PRAY, PLAY & RESPECT ALL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Overview

At St. Mary's RC Primary School, bullying, harassment, discrimination and intimidation are not tolerated. We are committed to providing a warm, welcoming, inclusive and safe environment in which every child can learn without fear.

Bullying may be physical, verbal, psychological, emotional or online and may include threats, harassment or exclusion. Bullying is generally characterised by behaviour that is repeated over time and may involve an imbalance of power. A one-off incident may not meet the definition of bullying but may still be serious and will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately.

Bullying may take place in school, on the journey to or from school, during school activities, online, or outside school where it affects pupils or the school community. Bullying may also form part of child-on-child abuse and become a safeguarding concern. Where this is the case, the school will act in accordance with its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

2. Aims

The policy aims to:

- ensure that all pupils feel safe, respected and free from bullying and intimidation;
- prevent and respond promptly to all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying;
- recognise and respond to bullying linked to prejudice or discrimination, including racism, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or other forms of prejudice-based bullying;
- identify and protect pupils who may be particularly vulnerable, including pupils with SEND, children experiencing personal or family difficulties, children known to social care and young carers;
- make sure pupils know how and where to report concerns and are listened to and taken seriously;
- provide support for children who experience bullying and appropriate, proportionate intervention for children whose behaviour has caused harm;
- promote respectful relationships, empathy, dignity and inclusion through the school's Catholic ethos and PSHE/RSE provision;
- ensure incidents are recorded, monitored and used to identify patterns and improve prevention.

3. Definition and forms of bullying

Bullying is behaviour that is repeated over time and is intended to hurt another person or group physically or emotionally. It may involve an imbalance of power.

It can include:

- physical bullying – hitting, kicking, pushing or deliberately causing physical harm;

- verbal bullying – name-calling, insults, threats or repeated hurtful comments;
- psychological or emotional bullying – intimidation, humiliation, manipulation, deliberate exclusion or spreading rumours;
- cyberbullying – harmful behaviour using phones, messaging, social media, gaming platforms or other digital technology;
- prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying – behaviour targeting a person's identity, background or a protected characteristic, including racist, faith-targeted, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, sexist or disability-related abuse;
- harassment or sexual harassment – unwanted sexual comments, jokes, remarks or online behaviour.

Not every disagreement, friendship difficulty or isolated unkind act will meet the definition of bullying. However, such behaviour will still be taken seriously and addressed appropriately. Any concerns involving harmful, discriminatory, abusive or unsafe behaviour will be responded to promptly and in accordance with the school's relevant policies and procedures.

4. Safeguarding and child-on-child abuse

Bullying may form part of child-on-child abuse and may constitute a safeguarding concern.

Where bullying raises safeguarding concerns, staff must act in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a deputy.

Where appropriate, the school will involve external agencies, including children's social care and/or the police, in accordance with its safeguarding procedures.

5. Prevention

The school uses a whole-school approach to prevent bullying. This includes:

- a clear Behaviour Policy and consistent expectations for respectful behaviour;
- PSHE and RSE teaching, including Life to the Full/Plus, to develop empathy, healthy relationships, emotional literacy, resilience, respect and help-seeking;
- Anti-Bullying Week and regular opportunities for pupils to discuss bullying, kindness, inclusion and safe online behaviour;
- work on racism, diversity, equality and acceptance, including age-appropriate responses to prejudice and discriminatory behaviour;
- pupil voice, questionnaires and opportunities for children to report concerns safely;
- staff vigilance in classrooms, playgrounds, corridors, online learning and other school activities;

- appropriate online safety education and clear expectations for digital behaviour;
- engagement with parents and carers so that concerns are shared and addressed promptly.

6. Reporting concerns

Pupils are encouraged to tell a trusted adult if they are being bullied, if they see someone else being bullied, or if they are worried about harmful behaviour. Reports may be made verbally or in writing.

Parents and carers should contact the school as soon as possible if they have concerns. All reports will be listened to and taken seriously. Staff will record and pass on concerns in line with school procedures.

Anonymous information or reports will be considered and followed up where possible. The school recognises that children may find it difficult to report bullying and will provide appropriate support and alternative ways to communicate.

7. Responding to an allegation or incident

All allegations of bullying will be addressed promptly. The response will be proportionate, child-centred and based on the circumstances of the incident.

The school will:

- make sure the immediate safety and wellbeing of the child affected are addressed;
- listen to the child and record the concern accurately;
- establish the relevant facts without making assumptions;
- consider whether the incident is bullying, discriminatory behaviour, harassment, child-on-child abuse or another behaviour/safeguarding concern;
- consider the needs and circumstances of all children involved, including SEND, communication needs and vulnerabilities;
- involve the DSL where safeguarding concerns are present;
- inform parents/carers as appropriate and in accordance with safeguarding procedures;
- apply proportionate consequences in line with the Behaviour Policy;
- provide support, education and restorative or relational work where appropriate;
- monitor the situation afterwards to reduce the risk of recurrence.

8. Online and cyberbullying

Online bullying will be taken seriously whether it happens on or off school premises where it affects pupils, staff or the school community. This includes harmful messages, posts, images, videos, gaming communication, group chats and other digital content.

Where online behaviour creates harm or affects the school environment, the school may use its behaviour procedures and safeguarding processes. Staff will consider online safety, filtering and monitoring arrangements and will preserve relevant evidence where appropriate.

Children will be taught age-appropriate digital citizenship, how to block/report harmful content, how to seek help and why harmful online behaviour can have serious consequences. AI-generated or manipulated content that causes harm will also be treated as an online safeguarding concern.

9. Equality, diversity and protected characteristics

St. Mary's is committed to preventing discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The Equality Act 2010 provides protection in relation to protected characteristics, and the school will meet its duties in the way it provides education and responds to discriminatory behaviour.

Particular attention will be given to racism, faith-targeted abuse and other prejudice-based harm because such behaviour can have a significant effect on a child's welfare, wellbeing and sense of safety.

The school will promote dignity, respect and acceptance through its Catholic ethos, PSHE/RSE curriculum and wider school life. Appropriate adaptations and support will be provided for pupils with SEND and other additional needs.

10. Support for pupils

Children affected by bullying will be offered appropriate support. This may include pastoral support, check-ins, friendship support, curriculum-based work or involvement of other professionals where required.

Children whose behaviour has caused harm will also receive appropriate support and education to understand the impact of their actions, develop safer and more respectful behaviours and reduce the likelihood of recurrence. This does not remove the need for proportionate consequences where these are required.

11. Staff responsibilities

All staff are expected to model respectful behaviour, remain vigilant and act promptly when bullying or harmful behaviour is observed or reported. Staff must follow the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and safeguarding procedures.

All staff must report any instances of bullying to the Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator.

All staff must report safeguarding concerns without delay to the DSL or deputy. Records should include the concern, actions taken, decisions made, rationale and outcomes where applicable.

The school will also take seriously bullying or harassment directed towards staff. Incidents involving staff will be managed through the appropriate behaviour, safeguarding, staff conduct, grievance or parental engagement procedures.

12. Monitoring and recording

Bullying and related incidents will be recorded using the school's agreed systems, including CPOMS where appropriate. The school will monitor incidents for patterns, repeat behaviour, locations, times, protected characteristics and groups of pupils who may be particularly affected.

Information from incidents, pupil voice, questionnaires, staff feedback and Anti-Bullying Week activities will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and identify further action. Confidentiality will be maintained and information shared only where appropriate and necessary.

13. Parents and carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school. They should report concerns promptly, provide relevant information and support agreed actions. The school will communicate appropriately with families while protecting the confidentiality and safeguarding of all children involved.

Parents and carers are expected to communicate respectfully with staff. Concerns involving bullying or harassment of school staff will be managed through the school's appropriate procedures.

14. Links with other policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct / Staff Behaviour Policy;
- RSE Policy;
- Online Safety / Acceptable Use Policy;
- Equality information and objectives;
- Complaints Policy;
- SEND Policy.

The policy has been updated with regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, the Department for Education's Preventing and tackling bullying guidance, Preventing and tackling the bullying and harassment of school staff (2026), Behaviour in Schools guidance, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.

15. Impact

St. Mary's will continue to provide a warm, friendly, welcoming and safe environment where bullying and discrimination are not tolerated. Pupils will understand what bullying is, how to report concerns and how to treat others with dignity and respect.

The school will take particular care of vulnerable pupils and will use safeguarding, behaviour, PSHE/RSE and pastoral systems together to prevent harm, respond to concerns and support children to develop positive relationships.

Revised and adopted by the Governing Body

Date September 2026

Review Date September 2029