



**St Joseph's Catholic Primary School**



**Anti-Bullying Policy**

Reviewed September 2025



## Statement of intent

St Joseph's Catholic 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.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy sits alongside our Mission Statement 'Love One Another' as well as aligning with our Vision Statement 'Just as St Joseph the Worker did.... Stepping up to Achieve Excellence – Worship Opportunity Resilience Knowledge Enjoyment Respect.

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 a number of 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 Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents/carers.

All staff, parents/carers and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero tolerance policy for deliberate bullying at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989
- 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



## 2. Definition

For the purpose of this policy, bullying is deliberate, persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.

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.

We also use the STOP acronym to explore the nature of the incidents:

### *Several Times On Purpose*

The above list is not exhaustive, nor proof of intentional bullying – it is a list of general characteristics that may warrant further investigation.

**The school does differentiate between bullying and the ebbs and flows of childhood relationships, including wider context, and will make the final decision if incidents are categorised as deliberate bullying or not by considering the criteria above.**

## 3. Types of bullying

Many different kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or special educational needs are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying can be acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbally
- Physically
- Emotionally
- Online (Cyber)

**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.



**Homophobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

**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.

**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.

#### 4. Statutory implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, the school understands that 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; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, the school understands that 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.

The National Association of Head Teachers has guidelines that Principals / Head of Schools must 'satisfy themselves' that their school's Anti-Bullying Policy complies with the HRA; the Headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

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 which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or 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 police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.



## 5. Prevention

- The school clearly communicates a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying in the form of a written statement (Statement of intent at start of this document) which is regularly promoted across the whole school.
- The school ensures that the Mission and Vision Statements are lived out by all
- All types of bullying are discussed as part of the curriculum, and diversity, difference and respect for others is promoted and celebrated through various lessons.
- Children are taught the role they play in creating a world of love and tolerance
- All reported or witnessed instances of bullying in the school are challenged by a member of staff.
- Staff encourage pupil co-operation and the development of interpersonal skills through the use of group work and pair work.
- Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills are provided through participation in special events, for example, drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.
- All members of the school community are made aware of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- The school makes use of pupil roles to encourage peer to peer support and supervision, such as Prefects and Play Leaders
- All staff members receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

## 6. Signs of bullying

Some of the signs that a pupil may be victim of bullying include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 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

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental issues, so are still worth investigating.

Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are engaged with, in order to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.

## **7. Staff principles**

Prevention is at the forefront of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Staff treat reports of bullying very seriously.

Staff do not ignore signs of suspected bullying.

Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another is always challenged and never ignored. Staff may not feel the actions/words constitute bullying, but if they go against our Vision, Values and Mission, they will still be dealt with under our Behaviour Code of Conduct and Policy.

Staff take action immediately; this applies to all staff, not solely teaching staff.

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.

Follow-up support is given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following any incidents, to ensure all bullying has stopped.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities**

The governing body evaluates and reviews this policy to ensure that it is non-discriminatory.

It is the responsibility of all staff to be alert to possible bullying of pupils and to deal with incidents as the highest priority.



The Headteacher reviews and amends this policy, taking account of new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in the previous year to improve procedures.

The Headteacher and school will keep a record of incidents of behaviour, including any confirmed bullying, and which type of bullying has occurred to allow for proper analyses of the data collected.

The Headteacher analyses the data at regular intervals in order to identify any trends in the types of behaviours occurring and implement the appropriate measures to tackle it.

Each teacher corresponds and meets with parents/carers where necessary. They also provide a point of contact when more serious bullying allegations occur.

Teachers are alert to social dynamics in their class and are available for pupils who wish to report perceived bullying. They also provide follow-up support after incidents.

Teachers ensure that they are alert to possible situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups.

All staff will avoid gender stereotyping when dealing with behaviour or bullying.

Throughout the year, the composition of pupil groups shows sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.

Parents/carers are advised to inform the school if they are concerned that their child may be bullied or be involved in bullying. This will then be looked into.

Pupils are advised to inform a member of staff if they witness bullying, or are a victim of bullying.

Pupils are taught not to make counter-threats if they are victims of bullying, harassment or inappropriate behaviour.

Pupils are taught to walk away from any dangerous situations and avoid involving other pupils in incidents.

Pupils are advised to retain all evidence of cyber-bullying.

## **9. Procedures**

Minor incidents are reported to the pupil's teacher who investigates the incident, takes appropriate action, sets appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator (following the school Behaviour Policy and Systems), and informs senior leaders if the incident is being defined as bullying (as opposed to one off arguments, fallings out, tensions within social groups etc). It is up to the investigating teacher to determine if the incident is bullying (considering context, history and the criteria in section 2)

When investigating incidents, the following procedures are generally used:



- Staff will talk to both parties
- Staff will talk to any witnesses
- Staff will enquire with colleagues regarding history
- If appropriate, children may be asked to provide written accounts
- If appropriate, children may be asked to provide evidence of any online incidents
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not attaching blame until the investigation is complete

Due to the potential for sexist, transphobic and sexual 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 also be implemented.

## **10. Sanctions**

Incidents are dealt with following the school behaviour policy and system, as well as applying Government guidance on suspensions and exclusions where appropriate.

The member of staff informs the pupil of the type of sanction to be used in this instance and future sanctions if the behaviour/bullying continues. These sanctions may include but are not limited to, reduced privileges, informing parents, and, if authorised by the Headteacher, Suspensions and Exclusion.

If the Headteacher is satisfied that deliberate 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.

There will be an attempt toward reconciliation and a genuine apology from the bully.

The bullying pupil is made to realise that some pupils do not appreciate the distress they are causing, and that they should change their behaviour.

Parents/carers are informed of confirmed bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

Senior leaders informally monitor the pupils involved over the next half-term.

## **11. Support**

The teacher informally checks whether the behaviour/bullying has stopped on a regular basis.

If necessary, group dynamics are broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes.

The victim is encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if the behaviour/bullying is repeated.

## **12. Follow up support**



The progress of both the bully and the victim are monitored. One-on-one sessions to discuss how they are progressing may be appropriate.

If appropriate, follow-up correspondence is arranged with parents/carers after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied are supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate

Pupils who have bullied others are supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Reflecting on why they became involved
- Understanding what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents/carers

### **13. Managing Allegations of peer-on-peer abuse**

#### **Introduction and Principles**

This section of the policy sets out the school response to allegations of peer-on-peer abuse.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is committed to ensuring the welfare of all children, including taking steps to ensure that they are not victims of peer-on-peer abuse. We are clear that peer-on-peer abuse will never be accepted or dismissed.

We have clear expectations that violence and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated, and we support children to have a good understanding of consent and healthy relationships and provide immediate support for victims of abuse.

Peer-on-peer abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- physical and sexual abuse
- sexual harassment and violence
- emotional harm
- on and offline bullying



- teenage relationship abuse

It can also include grooming children for sexual and criminal exploitation.

The school has in place safeguards to reduce the likelihood of peer-on-peer abuse. There is an established ethos and culture of respect, kindness, courtesy and friendship, with clear, high profile behaviour procedures which set out the school's expectations and consequences for unacceptable behaviour, together with visible staff presence.

All of the school systems and practice are underpinned by our Mission, Vision and Values. Through our culture of 'Love One Another' and 'Just like St Joseph the Worker...Stepping Up to Achieve Excellence – Worship - Opportunity – Resilience – Knowledge - Enjoyment – Respect'.

### **Details**

- The school seeks to educate all pupils on healthy relationships through the curriculum, however we recognise despite this, we need to be alert to peer on peer abuse.
- It is important to recognise that children do engage in sexual play and experimenting, which is usually age appropriate. Child sexual abuse is a subject many people find very difficult to talk about. It is important not to criminalise behaviour that is a perfectly normal and healthy part of growing up. However, the idea that children can sexually abuse others is still very hard to accept.
- The presence of one or more of the following points in situations where there has been sexual activity between children should always trigger some concern:
  - There is an age difference of two years or more between the children
  - One of the children is significantly more dominant than the other
  - One of the children is significantly more vulnerable than the other eg. in terms of disability, confidence, physical strength
  - There has been some use of threats, bribes or coercion to secure compliance or to maintain secrecy.
- We have staff trained in, and use the Brook Sexualised Traffic Light Tool for further guidance
- Any peer-on-peer allegation must be referred to the DSL immediately, using the school's child protection procedures and logging on CPOMS.
- Where a concern regarding peer-on-peer abuse has been referred to the DSL, advice and guidance will be sought from the Integrated Front Door. Where it is clear a crime has been committed, or there is a risk of crime being committed, the Police will be contacted.
- Peer-on-peer abuse that involves sexual assault and violence must always result in a multi-agency response. As well as supporting and protecting the victim, school will consider whether the perpetrator could be a victim of abuse too. We understand that



children who develop harmful sexual behaviour have often experienced abuse and neglect themselves.

A typical response will involve:

- children's social care
- the police
- any specialist services that support children who demonstrate harmful sexual behaviour
- the family
- any other professionals who know or have had contact with the child
- If the children involved are in the same class, school will consider carefully whether to separate them while the concerns are being investigated. In situations of alleged rape and assault by penetration, the alleged perpetrator will always be removed from classes they share with the victim.
  
- School will also consider how best to keep the victim and alleged perpetrator a reasonable distance apart while they are on the same premises, as well as on transport to and from school, where appropriate.
  
- School will continue to provide support to the victim and alleged perpetrator 'for as long as necessary'. Therefore, any separation arrangements will also be continued with for as long as is necessary to make sure children are safe.
  
- School will also consider risks to other children.
  - If there's an incident in a school, has this put other children at risk?
  - Have other children witnessed the incident?
  - Could any siblings of the perpetrator be at risk?
  
- There may well be a need for a range of assessments and interventions for different children affected and so a multi-agency approach may be needed.
  
- School will also consider the potential vulnerabilities of the victims and any risks to them, including their potential abuse by others.
  
- Schools will have extra consideration for pupils who may have additional vulnerabilities due to protected characteristics.
  
- School will consider how to support pupils with regard to their sex, sexuality, and if relevant, gender reassignment.
  
- The School will also identify any potentially unsafe spaces on the premises. This may include areas such as toilets, and changing areas, especially if mixed gendered. Staff will be vigilant and monitor
  
- The school will also consider the local area to identify any contextual potential concerns. For example, if there are any known unsafe areas in the local area, if there been any incidents of sexual harassment or violence involving children in the local



park or other places where young people congregate? In these cases, school will take account of this information, and pass on concerns to the police

## **14 Policy review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and as appropriate by the Headteacher and in partnership with other members of staff.