



Anti-Bullying Policy

Revised by: A. Pierce

Date for review: September 2026

Signed Chair of Governors

Date

Mission Statement

As a Catholic community, we value every single member as a unique creation made in the image of God. We work together to help everyone to realise their God-given talents and their part in God's plan. Our school is a place of peace, tolerance and fairness where we follow Christ's example of loving God and loving others. Our ultimate aim is to give our community the prospects, belief and hope that every tomorrow can be a better day.

St. Anne's - making tomorrow a better day.

Introduction

Bullying behaviour is wrong and has no place in our Catholic school. We therefore do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable and through teaching a comprehensive and progressive anti-bullying programme. Our ultimate aim is for our children to bear witness to Jesus' greatest commandments:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. Love your neighbour as you love yourself."

Objectives

- To give a clear definition of bullying behaviour.
- To set out the school's strategy for preventing bullying behaviour.
- To set out the school's strategy for managing any bullying behaviour that arises.
- To set out the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in preventing and managing bullying behaviour.

Definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, special educational need/disability, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Online Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside school. Online bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle Online bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones.

The main types of bullying behaviour can be identified as:

Physical

Kicking, hitting, pushing, taking belongings

Verbal

Name calling, taunting, making offensive comments

Indirect

Excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Peer-on-peer sexual abuse is sexual abuse that happens between children of a similar age or stage of development. It can happen between any number of children, and can affect any age group (Department for Education (DfE), 2018). It can be harmful to the children who display it as well as those who experience it. It can take place in spaces which are supervised or unsupervised. Within a school context, for example, peer-on-peer sexual abuse might take place in spaces such as toilets, the playground, corridors or when children are walking home (Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020). As children develop healthily, it is normal for them to display certain types of sexualised behaviour. It is important that adults who work or volunteer with children can identify if any sexualised behaviour has become harmful or abusive, and respond proportionally to keep all the children involved safe.

Examples of sexually abusive behaviour may include:

- inappropriate or unwanted sexualised touching
- pressurising, forcing or coercing others to perform or take part in sexual acts
- pressuring, forcing or coercing someone to share nude images (sexting)
- sharing sexual images of a person without their consent
- taking a picture under a person's clothing, without their consent ('upskirting')
- sexual harassment
- sexual or sexist name calling

(Contextual Safeguarding Network, 2020).

Indicators that a child has experienced peer-on-peer sexual abuse may be physical or behavioural. A child or young person may appear withdrawn, frightened or begin to act differently from usual. They may also display physical signs such as noticeable discomfort in their genital.

Children may not always understand that they have experienced or carried out peer-on-peer sexual abuse. This might be because:

- they don't understand what constitutes appropriate, inappropriate, problematic or abusive sexualised behaviour
- they have experienced sexual abuse themselves and don't realise that what happened to them was wrong
- they don't know whether consent was given
- the abuse happened between friends or partners
- the abuse took place online
- they blame themselves for the abuse they received
- younger children lack knowledge of sex and sexuality as they are less likely to have received any relationships and sex education

(NSPCC, 2018).

If we identify that a child had experienced peer-on-peer sexual abuse or there are concerns a child might be displaying harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), we will take child protection action, in line with our Child Protection And Safeguarding Policy.

Supporting the child who has experienced abuse

Every child who has experienced abuse should receive tailored support to meet their needs. We will:

- Listen carefully to the child and reassure them that we are taking them seriously.
- Record the incident, noting all the relevant facts as fully as possible. Write down the language used by the child. This will help us to record precisely what happened and understand how the child has been affected.
- Consider what support the child may need in the short-term, for example making sure they will not come into contact with the child who has displayed abusive behaviour.
- Consider what long-term support the child may need to help them recover from the trauma of what they have experienced. This may include therapeutic support.
- Understand the child's support network and consider what help they need to protect and care for the child.
- Include the child in any decisions that affect them.

Supporting the child who has displayed abusive or harmful sexual behaviour

It is important to protect and support children who have displayed abusive or harmful sexual behaviour. We will:

- Consider any risks to the child's safety and what multi-agency responses are needed to support the child and their family.

- Talk calmly to the child. Remember that they may not realise they have behaved abusively and avoid using language that may make them feel judged or criminalised.
- Consider appropriate sanctions in light of this behaviour policy and the level of intent or understanding involved. Peer-on-Peer abuse is not listed on the Behaviour Management Structure as each case will need to be considered individually before any sanctions are put in place.
- Work with the child and their support network to put measures in place that will help the child change their behaviour.
- Consider what targeted therapeutic support the child may need.

Multi-agency responses

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will work with relevant agencies to protect and support all the children involved in an incident of peer-on-peer sexual abuse. This includes children's social care and the police if necessary.

It is a legal obligation to report a single incident of racist, homophobic or sexual harassment bullying.

Strategy For Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Every year, early in the Autumn Term we will hold an Anti-Bullying Week. The purpose of this week is to give the children a comprehensive, age-appropriate understanding of issues related to bullying and strategies for safeguarding themselves and others. (See Anti-bullying Week Scheme of Work). The key learning in this week will then be referred to throughout the year as we support our children in preventing and managing bullying behaviours. Throughout this week we teach our children that we are a 'telling school' and ensure that they know the mechanisms both in and out of school that they can use to report bullying behaviours. These mechanisms include: reporting to any member of school staff; using the class worry box; reporting to School Councillors, telling a friend; telling an adult at home, contacting Child Line. **(ALL children will be taught the number for Child Line 0800 1111)**. We will also hold a yearly parent/carer meeting so that they are well informed of our policy and procedures. All disclosures will be taken seriously and managed according to the school's procedures (see below).

Strategy For Managing Bullying Behaviour

All reports of bullying behaviour involving St. Anne's pupils will be taken seriously and investigated fully. This refers to behaviours that are reported to have happened both inside and outside of school, including those involving children that attend other settings.

Reported incidents will be investigated by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. If it is found that the behaviour is indeed bullying, as defined in this policy, it will be referred to the Head Teacher. If the Senior Leader does not feel that the reported behaviours amount to bullying, they will action the school behaviour policy where appropriate and will undertake to reconcile relationships between the children involved. A full written report will be handed to the Head Teacher as a record of our actions and for future reference. The Senior Leader will also report back to the person who made the allegation to explain the findings of the investigation and how the issue has been resolved.

If the Senior Leader refers an incident to the Headteacher, the following procedures will apply:

- Standard letter to parents informing that their child's behaviour is a cause for concern. Appointment made by the parents to see the Headteacher and the child is placed on a daily report. Subsequent review meeting will consider next steps.
- The issue of two Standard Letters from the Headteacher in one half term: a fixed term exclusion of up to 15 days (formal procedures followed).
- Dangerous behaviour which puts other pupils at serious risk will result in a fixed term exclusion for up to 45 days or in very serious cases, a permanent exclusion.
- However, as a Catholic school, we believe deeply in Reconciliation and we also recognise that many pupils exhibit bullying behaviours due to difficulties they themselves are experiencing. Therefore, any pupil found to have exhibited bullying behaviours will be referred to both our Family Support Worker and our SEMH Lead. This will help us to identify and manage any problems this child may be facing and will afford them the opportunity to reflect upon the teachings of our church and how they should behave in the future.
- The child/ren at whom the bullying behaviour was directed will also be referred to the Family Support Worker and the SEMH Lead in order to support them in processing and moving on from the incident.
- We will also arrange a safe and supportive meeting between the parties involved so that their relationship can be reconciled. Parents/carers may also be involved if it is thought that this would be beneficial.
- Parents and carers who have concerns over how an incident related to bullying or perceived bullying can contact the Chair Of Governors, via the school office.

Roles And Responsibilities

- **All school staff and pupils** must be vigilant in identifying bullying behaviour and reporting it. We are a telling school.
- **All school staff** - do not investigate accusations of bullying. Refer **all accusations** to the relevant Key Stage Leader.
- **Key Stage Leaders** must investigate all reports of bullying thoroughly, as per section 5 of this policy.
- **The Head Teacher** must apply the behaviour management policy as per section 5 of this policy, including referral of all parties to the Family Support Worker and the R.E. leader.
- **Pupils** must apply what they have learnt in school through Anti-Bullying Week, RE lessons and liturgies so that they do not engage in bullying behaviours.
- **Parents and carers** must report concerns to the Senior Leadership Team, via the school office. Social networking is not an appropriate place to discuss or manage allegations of bullying. We also discourage parents and carers from managing accusations themselves as this policy sets out a clear, reconciliatory approach that we believe to be the best way of resolving concerns.
- **Governors** must monitor the implementation of this policy and will investigate all parent/carers concerns over the school's management of allegations of bullying behaviour.

Monitoring and Review

The success of this policy will be monitored in respect of all working within the school environment and community, by discussion between staff and all involved in the Policy's implementation, including the children themselves and their parents. It will be reviewed bi-annually or sooner if the need occurs.

