



Anti-Bullying Policy

Revised by: A. Pierce

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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.

1. Introduction

At St Anne's R.C. Primary School, bullying behaviour is unacceptable and has no place within our school community.

Our Catholic ethos teaches us that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and must therefore be treated with dignity, compassion and respect. We aim to create a safe, inclusive and nurturing environment in which every child feels valued, listened to and able to flourish.

We take a proactive approach to preventing bullying through high expectations for behaviour, positive relationships, our curriculum, safeguarding education, pastoral support and opportunities for pupils to develop empathy, respect and understanding.

Our approach reflects 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."**

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report
- Equality information and objectives
- Relationships, Health and Sex Education (RHSE) Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion procedures

2. Aims and Objectives

This policy aims to:

- provide a clear and shared understanding of bullying behaviour;
- prevent bullying through a positive, inclusive and respectful school culture;
- ensure pupils understand how to recognise and report bullying;
- ensure all reports and concerns are listened to and taken seriously;
- establish clear procedures for responding to suspected or confirmed bullying;
- safeguard and support children who experience bullying;
- support children displaying bullying behaviour to understand and change their behaviour;
- ensure appropriate consideration is given to SEND, communication needs, vulnerability and reasonable adjustments;
- identify and address prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- ensure appropriate action is taken when bullying occurs online or outside school and affects pupils within the school community;
- establish clear responsibilities for staff, pupils, parents/carers and governors; and
- ensure bullying incidents and patterns are appropriately recorded, monitored and reviewed.

3. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying commonly involves an imbalance of power between the person or people displaying the behaviour and the person experiencing it. This imbalance may be physical, psychological, social or intellectual. It may also arise where an individual has the support of a group or has the ability to isolate another person socially or online.

Not every disagreement, argument, friendship difficulty or isolated incident of unkind behaviour constitutes bullying. However, **all harmful or concerning behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately**, regardless of whether it meets the definition of bullying.

A single incident may also constitute a safeguarding concern, discriminatory incident, harassment or another serious behaviour incident and will be responded to accordingly.

4. Forms of Bullying

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

Physical bullying: hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, damaging or taking belongings, intimidating physical behaviour or threats of violence.

Verbal bullying: name-calling, insults, threats, taunting, offensive comments, humiliating remarks or persistent teasing.

Social or relational bullying: deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, encouraging others to exclude somebody or deliberately damaging another child's reputation or relationships.

Online bullying: using digital technology, social media, messaging services, online games, photographs, videos or other online platforms to threaten, humiliate, exclude, intimidate or cause harm.

Prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying: behaviour related to an actual or perceived characteristic, identity, difference or vulnerability.

This may include behaviour relating to race, religion or belief, disability, SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, family circumstances, appearance, medical needs, adoption or caring responsibilities.

St Anne's will challenge discriminatory and prejudicial language and behaviour whenever it occurs.

5. Online Bullying

Online bullying can take place both during and outside the school day and can have a significant impact on a child's wellbeing and experience in school.

Examples may include:

- abusive or threatening messages;
- deliberately excluding somebody from online groups;
- spreading rumours online;
- sharing embarrassing, altered or harmful photographs or videos;
- sharing content without consent;
- impersonating another person;
- creating harmful posts or accounts;
- using group chats to target, humiliate or exclude another pupil; and
- encouraging others to participate in harmful online behaviour.

Where online behaviour outside school affects the wellbeing, safety or education of pupils within school, St Anne's will consider what action it is appropriate for the school to take.

Where online behaviour raises a safeguarding concern, the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed and the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or a deputy DSL, will be informed.

6. Child-on-Child Abuse

Bullying can form part of **child-on-child abuse**.

Child-on-child abuse can happen both inside and outside school and online. All staff must recognise that children can abuse other children and that such behaviour must never be dismissed as "banter", "part of growing up" or an inevitable part of childhood.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying, including online bullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying;
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent;
- upskirting; and
- initiation or hazing-type behaviour.

Any concern that behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse must be reported immediately in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff must not undertake their own safeguarding investigation.

The DSL will consider the needs and safety of **all children involved**, including the child who has experienced the behaviour and the child who has displayed it.

7. Supporting a Child Who Has Experienced Bullying or Abuse

Every child who experiences bullying or abuse will be treated with dignity, sensitivity and respect.

Staff will:

- listen carefully and take the child seriously;
- reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone;
- avoid making promises of confidentiality;
- record the child's account accurately, using their own words wherever appropriate;
- report safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL;
- consider the child's immediate safety;
- consider whether arrangements are required to reduce further contact or risk;
- identify appropriate pastoral, emotional or therapeutic support;
- consider the child's SEND, communication needs and any reasonable adjustments required;
- involve parents/carers where appropriate and safe to do so;
- seek the child's views when considering support and next steps; and
- monitor the child's wellbeing following the incident.

The response will be proportionate to the individual circumstances and level of risk.

8. Supporting Children Who Display Bullying or Harmful Behaviour

St Anne's recognises that children who display bullying, abusive or harmful behaviour may themselves have unmet needs or require support.

Supporting a child does not mean minimising the impact of their behaviour or removing appropriate consequences.

The school will consider:

- the seriousness and impact of the behaviour;
- the child's age and developmental understanding;
- SEND and communication needs;
- whether reasonable adjustments are required;
- whether the behaviour indicates an unmet safeguarding or pastoral need;
- whether the child has experienced abuse, trauma or other adverse experiences;
- appropriate consequences under the Behaviour Policy;
- pastoral or SEMH support;
- targeted interventions;
- work with parents/carers;
- external agency involvement where appropriate; and
- measures required to prevent the behaviour from happening again.

Where behaviour constitutes or may constitute a safeguarding concern, the DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

9. SEND and Vulnerable Pupils

St Anne's recognises that some pupils may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and that pupils with SEND may experience, understand, communicate or display behaviour differently.

When responding to incidents, staff will consider:

- the pupil's individual needs;
- communication and interaction difficulties;
- developmental understanding;
- sensory needs;
- cognition and learning needs;
- SEMH needs;
- whether the pupil understands the impact of their behaviour;
- whether behaviour may be linked to an identified need; and
- reasonable adjustments that may be required.

SEND does not mean that harmful behaviour will be ignored. However, responses and consequences will be individualised, reasonable and proportionate, with appropriate support put in place.

10. Preventing Bullying

Prevention is central to our approach.

St Anne's promotes positive relationships, kindness, respect and inclusion throughout school life.

Pupils are taught about bullying, healthy relationships, online safety, equality, respect and how to seek help through appropriate curriculum opportunities, including RHSE, RE, computing/online safety, assemblies, pastoral work and wider curriculum activities.

Anti-bullying learning will be reinforced throughout the year rather than being limited to a single event.

Pupils will be taught:

- what bullying is and is not;
- different forms bullying can take;
- how their behaviour can affect others;
- how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- how to stay safe online;
- the importance of being an active bystander and seeking adult help;
- how and where to report concerns; and
- that adults will listen and take concerns seriously.

We are a **telling school**.

Children may speak to any trusted adult in school. They may also use age-appropriate reporting mechanisms available within their classroom or pastoral provision.

Children will also be taught how to access external support such as Childline on 0800 1111.

II. Reporting Bullying

Pupils and parents/carers are encouraged to report concerns as early as possible.

A pupil can report bullying to any member of staff.

Parents/carers can report concerns to the class teacher, a member of the Senior Leadership Team or through the school office.

Staff receiving a report should:

1. listen calmly and carefully;
2. establish enough information to determine the immediate response required;
3. reassure the child that the concern will be taken seriously;
4. record the concern appropriately;
5. pass the concern to the appropriate member of staff; and
6. immediately refer the matter to the DSL/deputy DSL where there is a safeguarding concern.

Staff should not conduct their own safeguarding investigation or promise confidentiality.

12. Responding to Reports of Bullying

All allegations of bullying involving St Anne's pupils will be taken seriously.

The school will respond proportionately and fairly and will establish what has happened before determining the appropriate response.

Where appropriate, this may include:

- speaking separately with the children involved;
- obtaining information from relevant staff or witnesses;
- reviewing previous incidents or patterns of behaviour;
- considering relevant online evidence where appropriately available;
- speaking to parents/carers;
- considering SEND and communication needs;
- considering whether reasonable adjustments are required;
- establishing whether the behaviour meets the school's definition of bullying;
- considering whether a safeguarding response is required; and
- determining appropriate support, intervention and consequences.

Where the behaviour does not meet the definition of bullying, this does **not** mean that no action will be taken. The Behaviour Policy, safeguarding procedures or appropriate pastoral support will be used as required.

13. Recording and Monitoring

Bullying concerns and confirmed incidents will be appropriately recorded using the school's agreed recording systems.

Where there is a safeguarding element, the concern will be recorded on the school's safeguarding recording system in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Records should enable school leaders to identify:

- repeated incidents;
- patterns of behaviour;
- pupils repeatedly experiencing or displaying bullying;
- locations or times where incidents frequently occur;
- online trends;
- prejudice-based or discriminatory incidents; and
- areas requiring additional intervention or education.

The Senior Leadership Team and DSL will review relevant information to identify patterns and ensure appropriate action is taken.

Governors will receive appropriate anonymised information to enable them to monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

14. Consequences and Sanctions

Where bullying is established, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

Consequences will be proportionate and will take account of:

- the seriousness of the behaviour;
- the impact on others;
- frequency and persistence;
- the child's age and developmental understanding;
- SEND and other additional needs;
- previous incidents and interventions;
- safeguarding considerations; and
- any reasonable adjustments required.

Serious or persistent behaviour may result in **suspension or permanent exclusion**.

Any decision to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil will be made by the Headteacher in accordance with current statutory guidance.

Suspension will **not** be an automatic consequence of receiving a particular number of warnings, letters or previous sanctions. Each decision will be made on the individual circumstances and evidence available.

A pupil may receive one or more suspensions, but these must not exceed the statutory maximum of **45 school days in a single academic year**.

Permanent exclusion will only be considered in accordance with the statutory test and current Department for Education guidance, including where there has been a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's Behaviour Policy and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school.

15. Restorative Practice and Reconciliation

As a Catholic school, we believe strongly in forgiveness, reconciliation and helping children repair relationships.

Where appropriate, restorative work may help children understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, rebuild trust and develop healthier relationships.

However, restorative conversations or meetings will **only take place when they are safe, appropriate and in the best interests of the children involved**.

A child who has experienced bullying or abuse will not be required to participate in a face-to-face restorative meeting.

Restorative approaches will never replace appropriate safeguarding action, consequences or referrals to external agencies.

16. Working with Parents and Carers

St Anne's values positive partnerships with parents and carers.

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- report concerns promptly;
- provide school with relevant information;
- encourage their child to speak to a trusted adult;
- avoid confronting another child or family directly;
- avoid discussing identifiable children or allegations on social media; and
- work constructively with school to resolve concerns.

School will communicate appropriately with parents/carers while respecting confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.

Information about another child, including specific consequences or safeguarding arrangements, may not be shared with other families.

Parents/carers who remain concerned about the school's handling of an issue may use the school's Complaints Policy.

17. External Agencies

Where appropriate, the DSL and/or Headteacher may seek advice or make referrals to relevant external services.

Depending upon the circumstances, this may include:

- Children's Social Care;
- the police;
- health professionals;
- SEND or specialist services;
- Early Help;
- SEMH services; or
- other relevant agencies.

Not every bullying incident requires external referral. Decisions will be based upon the individual circumstances, safeguarding thresholds and applicable statutory requirements.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

All Staff

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting a safe, respectful and inclusive culture;
- modelling respectful relationships;
- remaining vigilant to signs of bullying;
- challenging inappropriate and discriminatory language or behaviour;
- listening to pupils and taking concerns seriously;
- recording and reporting concerns appropriately; and
- following safeguarding procedures whenever a concern may involve harm or abuse.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- ensure safeguarding concerns relating to bullying or child-on-child abuse are appropriately managed;
- determine whether further safeguarding action or referral is required;
- work with external agencies where appropriate;
- ensure appropriate support is considered for children involved; and
- monitor patterns and emerging safeguarding concerns.

Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and SLT will:

- ensure this policy is implemented consistently;
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities;
- oversee the investigation and management of serious or repeated bullying;
- ensure appropriate support and intervention are provided;
- apply the Behaviour Policy where appropriate; and
- monitor patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's response.

Pupils

Pupils are encouraged to:

- treat others with kindness and respect;
- follow the school's expectations for behaviour;
- report bullying or unsafe behaviour;
- tell an adult if they are worried about themselves or somebody else;
- avoid joining in with, encouraging or sharing bullying behaviour; and
- use what they have learned through school to help create a safe and inclusive community.

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- report concerns promptly;
- work constructively with school;
- support their child to behave respectfully;
- reinforce safe and responsible online behaviour; and
- inform school of relevant circumstances that may affect their child.

Governing Body

Governors will:

- monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy;
- ensure school leaders fulfil relevant statutory responsibilities;
- receive appropriate anonymised information about bullying trends and actions; and
- provide appropriate challenge and support to school leaders.

19. Equality

St Anne's is committed to equality of opportunity and to creating an environment where every pupil is treated with dignity and respect.

The school will take appropriate steps to prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation and to advance equality of opportunity.

Prejudice-based language and behaviour will be challenged and addressed.

The school will consider its responsibilities under the **Equality Act 2010**, including the need to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.

20. Safeguarding

Safeguarding takes priority over behaviour management.

Where an allegation of bullying indicates that a child may have suffered, or may be at risk of suffering, harm, staff must follow the school's **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** and report the concern to the DSL or deputy DSL without delay.

Staff should never assume that somebody else has reported a safeguarding concern.

All safeguarding action will be undertaken in accordance with current statutory safeguarding guidance, including **Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026**.

21. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- analysis of bullying and behaviour records;
- safeguarding information;
- pupil voice;
- parent/carer feedback;
- staff feedback;
- monitoring of discriminatory incidents; and
- governor oversight.

The policy will be reviewed **annually**, or sooner where:

- statutory guidance changes;
- legislation changes;
- monitoring identifies an area requiring improvement;
- a significant safeguarding or bullying incident indicates that procedures should be reviewed;
or
- the school considers an earlier review necessary.