



St Mary's R.C. Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed and updated September 2026

Vision:

We believe that every child is a gift from God, therefore, we aim to provide an outstanding and happy Catholic education which develops the 'whole child' whilst enabling them to reach their full potential.

Mission statement:

We love God ... so we follow the examples of Jesus

We love learning ... so we always do our very best in everything

We love each other ... so we treat each other as we want to be treated

1. Catholic Ethos and Purpose

At St. Mary's R.C. Primary School, we believe that every child is a gift from God and that every person is made in the image and likeness of God. Bullying, discrimination, prejudice and harassment are incompatible with our mission and Gospel values. We seek to create a community in which every child feels safe, respected, valued and able to flourish.

Our response to bullying reflects the dignity of every person. We protect and support children who experience harm, challenge harmful behaviour, help children understand the impact of their actions, and seek reconciliation and restoration where this is safe and appropriate. Safeguarding and the protection of children remain paramount.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power, which may be physical, psychological, social or based on access to information or technology.

Not every incident of unkindness, disagreement or friendship difficulty constitutes bullying. However, a one-off incident can still be serious and may constitute harassment, discrimination, violence, sexual harassment or another safeguarding concern. An incident does not have to meet the school's definition of bullying before action is taken.

3. Forms of Bullying

Bullying may include:

- physical bullying, such as hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging belongings or deliberately intimidating another child;
- verbal bullying, such as name-calling, threats, insults, mocking or repeated unkind comments;
- relational or emotional bullying, such as deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, humiliation, manipulation or damaging friendships;
- online/cyberbullying through messaging services, group chats, social media, gaming platforms, websites, photographs, videos or other digital technology;
- prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying relating to race, religion or belief, disability or special educational needs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or another aspect of a person's identity, background or circumstances.

Racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disablist and faith-based language or behaviour will be challenged and addressed. Such behaviour may also require action under the school's safeguarding, behaviour and equality procedures.

4. Bullying and Safeguarding

St. Mary's recognises that bullying can be a form or indicator of child-on-child abuse. Child-on-child abuse can take place inside or outside school and online. All staff must remain alert to the possibility that behaviour initially described as bullying may indicate wider abuse, exploitation or harm.

Bullying or abusive behaviour must never be dismissed as 'banter', 'just having a laugh', 'part of growing up' or similar. Where there is a safeguarding concern, staff must act immediately, report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or a Deputy DSL without delay, and follow the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

All staff follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and receive appropriate safeguarding training. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the best interests of the child remain central to decision-making.

5. Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Sexualised comments, sexual jokes, unwanted touching, sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercive or harmful sexual behaviour, and the sharing of nude, semi-nude or otherwise intimate images must not be treated simply as ordinary bullying. Such behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse and will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.

6. Online Bullying

Online bullying can occur through social media, messaging services, group chats, gaming platforms, websites, photographs, videos and other digital technology. It may include abusive or threatening messages, deliberate exclusion from online groups, impersonation, sharing embarrassing or harmful content, or the creation, alteration or sharing of images intended to humiliate or harm.

The school recognises that online bullying may take place outside school hours and away from school premises. Where behaviour outside school affects the safety, wellbeing or education of pupils at St. Mary's, the school will respond appropriately and, where necessary, follow safeguarding procedures.

7. Aims and Objectives

The school aims to:

- provide a safe, welcoming and inclusive Catholic environment in which bullying is not tolerated;
- ensure pupils know what bullying is, what it is not, and how to seek help;
- prevent bullying through a positive culture, curriculum, pupil voice and early intervention;
- respond promptly, consistently and proportionately to concerns and reports;
- support and protect children who experience bullying and ensure their views are heard;
- support children displaying bullying behaviour to understand its impact, change their behaviour and address any underlying needs;
- work constructively with parents/carers and, where appropriate, external agencies;
- record, monitor and analyse bullying concerns so that patterns and emerging risks are identified.

8. Prevention

Everyone involved in the life of the school shares responsibility for preventing bullying. Prevention is embedded through the school's Catholic ethos, Behaviour Policy, RSHE, RE, PSHE/personal development, online safety teaching, assemblies, circle time, class and school councils, the GIFT Team, staff modelling and opportunities for pupils to discuss worries.

Children are encouraged to speak to a trusted adult before concerns escalate. Class worry boxes and other age-appropriate reporting routes are available. Staff actively teach pupils that reporting bullying or harmful behaviour is a positive and responsible action.

9. Vulnerable Pupils and SEND

Staff recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to bullying or may find it more difficult to recognise, communicate or report concerns. This may include pupils with SEND or disabilities, communication needs, children known to social care, looked-after and previously looked-after children, and other pupils whose circumstances increase vulnerability.

Reasonable adjustments will be made when receiving reports, investigating incidents, communicating with pupils and determining support or consequences. Staff will consider whether behaviour may be linked to a child's additional needs while ensuring that harmful behaviour is addressed and other children remain safe.

10. Reporting and Responding to Concerns

All members of the school community are expected to report bullying or suspected bullying. Staff must listen carefully, take concerns seriously and avoid promising confidentiality. The child's immediate safety and wellbeing will be considered first.

When considering an incident, staff should establish:

- what happened before, during and after the incident;
- the views of all children involved and any witnesses;
- whether there have been previous incidents or a developing pattern;
- whether there is an imbalance of power or deliberate targeting;
- whether prejudice, discrimination, sexualised behaviour, online harm or another safeguarding concern is present;
- whether any child requires immediate safeguarding, pastoral or SEND support.

The fact that an incident is not ultimately classified as bullying does not mean that no action is required. Unkind, unsafe, discriminatory or harmful behaviour will still be followed up and addressed appropriately.

11. Recording on CPOMS

All reported or potential bullying incidents will be recorded on CPOMS. A senior member of staff will ensure that records are updated as necessary throughout an investigation.

Records should include, where appropriate:

- a clear summary of the concern and the views of the children involved;
- the nature and location of the behaviour, including whether it occurred online or outside school;
- whether the incident is prejudice-based or discriminatory;
- whether a safeguarding concern has been identified and whether the DSL has been informed;
- actions taken, decisions made and the rationale for those decisions;
- support and reasonable adjustments provided;
- communication with parents/carers and relevant professionals;
- outcomes and planned follow-up or review.

The Headteacher, DSL and other appropriate leaders will periodically analyse recorded information for patterns and trends, including repeated pupils, locations, year groups, online incidents and prejudice-related incidents. Relevant information, including nil returns where appropriate, will be reported to governors so that they can evaluate the effectiveness of the school's approach.

12. Working with Parents and Carers

Parents/carers of children involved will normally be informed of significant bullying concerns and the action being taken, subject to safeguarding considerations and the best interests of the child. Parents/carers are encouraged to share information with school promptly and to work in partnership with staff.

When establishing what has happened, the school will consider the context and the actions of all involved without attributing blame to a child for being bullied or abused.

13. Support and Consequences

The school will provide appropriate support to the child who has experienced bullying and will consider their wishes and feelings. Support may include a trusted adult, check-ins, pastoral support, adjustments to routines, peer support and liaison with parents/carers or external services.

Children displaying bullying behaviour will be supported to understand the impact of their actions and change their behaviour. Staff will consider underlying needs and vulnerabilities while maintaining clear boundaries and protecting others.

Consequences will be proportionate, consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy and sensitive to safeguarding and SEND considerations. Restorative approaches may be used where appropriate, but only where safe, voluntary and in the interests of the child who has experienced harm. Responses may include reparation, loss of privileges or activities, meetings with parents/carers, pastoral plans, time away from an activity or classroom, suspension or, in the most serious circumstances, permanent exclusion.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented consistently, that staff understand their responsibilities, and that bullying information is monitored and reported appropriately to governors.

The DSL and Deputy DSLs provide safeguarding oversight where bullying raises or may raise a child protection concern. All staff have a responsibility to prevent, identify, challenge, report and respond to bullying and harmful behaviour.

The governing body will maintain oversight of the policy, receive appropriate information about incidents and trends, and seek assurance that the school's arrangements are effective.

15. Pupil Voice

Pupils will be involved in developing and reviewing age-appropriate anti-bullying messages and the pupil-friendly policy. The school will use pupil voice to understand whether children feel safe, know how to report concerns and have confidence that adults will respond.

16. Related Policies and Guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety / Computing Policy;
- Equality Policy and Equality Objectives;
- SEND Policy and SEN Information Report;
- RSHE / Personal Development Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct and relevant STOCCAT safe-working guidance.

Key national guidance includes:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (Department for Education);
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (Department for Education);
- Behaviour in Schools: advice for headteachers and school staff;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children;
- Equality Act 2010.

17. Review and Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, school experience or safeguarding learning indicates that changes are required. The school will consult relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

Updated: September 2026

Signed: _____ Chair of Governors

Date approved by Governing Body: _____

Appendix 1 - Child-Friendly Definition

S T O P - Several Times On Purpose

Bullying is when someone deliberately hurts, frightens, upsets or excludes another person, usually more than once, and there is an imbalance of power that makes it difficult for the person being targeted to stop it.

Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional/relational or online. It can also target someone because of who they are or because of a difference or characteristic.

Sometimes something serious happens only once. It might not meet the definition of bullying, but you should still tell an adult. The adults at St. Mary's will listen and help.

Appendix 2 - Pupil-Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy

At St. Mary's, we believe every child is a gift from God. We want everyone to feel safe, happy, respected and included.

What is bullying?

Bullying is when someone deliberately hurts, frightens, upsets or leaves someone out, usually again and again. It can happen face-to-face or online. Sometimes a person or group has more power, making it hard for the other child to make it stop.

What if it only happens once?

A one-off unkind or harmful incident may not be bullying, but it can still be serious. Always tell an adult if something has made you feel unsafe, frightened, upset or worried.

What should I do?

- Tell a trusted adult in school or at home.
- Use your class worry box or another reporting route if talking feels difficult.
- If you see bullying, do not join in or encourage it. Tell an adult.
- Keep telling an adult if the problem continues.

What will adults do?

Adults will listen, take you seriously, help to keep you safe, find out what has happened and decide what support and action are needed. If they are worried that a child may be unsafe, they will speak to the school's safeguarding team.

How do we prevent bullying?

We live our mission: We love God, we love learning and we love each other. We learn about kindness, respect, equality, safe relationships and online safety, and we speak up when something is wrong.