When you love to learn, you learn to love



Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction and purpose

At St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child and adult has the right to feel safe, valued, respected and able to flourish. Bullying has no place in our school. We are committed to creating an environment in which everyone is treated with dignity, differences are celebrated and positive relationships are developed through kindness, compassion and mutual respect.

Our school vision, *Growing together in faith and learning*, reflects our belief that children achieve their best when they feel secure, included and supported. Our motto, *When you love to learn, you learn to love*, reminds us that learning extends beyond academic achievement. It includes developing an understanding of ourselves and others, showing consideration for those around us and recognising the contribution each person makes to our school community.

This policy sets out how we work to prevent bullying, how concerns can be raised and how the school responds when bullying is suspected or identified. It applies to all pupils and adults within the school community and should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, Equality Information and Objectives and other relevant policies.

2. Aims and objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

- Establish a shared understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take.
- Make clear that bullying is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.
- Ensure that pupils know how and to whom they can report concerns.
- Ensure that staff respond consistently, sensitively and effectively to allegations and incidents.
- Provide appropriate support for pupils who experience bullying and those whose behaviour has caused harm.
- Promote positive relationships, inclusion, empathy and respect for difference.
- Work in partnership with parents and carers to prevent and address bullying.
- Monitor incidents and use what we learn to strengthen the school's approach.

We want pupils to feel confident that adults will listen to them, take their concerns seriously and act to help them. No child should feel that they have to manage bullying alone.

3. Legislation and guidance

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School recognises its responsibility to provide a safe, inclusive and supportive environment in which all pupils can learn and flourish. This policy has been developed with regard to the school's legal duties and relevant Department for Education guidance.

In particular, it takes account of the Equality Act 2010, the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Education Act 2002 and the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. It is informed by the Department for Education's *Keeping Children Safe in Education* (2026), *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* and relevant guidance relating to behaviour, online safety, child-on-child abuse and the bullying and harassment of school staff.

The school will have due regard to its duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, prevent discrimination and promote equality of opportunity. The policy will be reviewed in light of any relevant changes to legislation or statutory guidance

4. Understanding bullying

There is no single legal definition of bullying. For the purposes of this policy, bullying is understood as behaviour that is intended to hurt, intimidate or humiliate another person and which is repeated over time, or involves an imbalance of power that makes it difficult for the person experiencing it to defend themselves or stop it.

Bullying can take place face to face or online. It may involve one person or a group of people and can be physical, verbal, emotional or psychological. It can be directed towards an individual because of a perceived difference or characteristic, or because someone is seen as vulnerable or less able to challenge the behaviour.

Bullying is not the same as every disagreement, friendship difficulty or isolated act of unkindness. Children are learning to manage relationships, resolve disagreements and understand the impact of their actions. These situations still need to be addressed appropriately, but they may not meet the definition of bullying.

Equally, the school will never use the definition of bullying as a reason to dismiss a concern. A single serious incident, including physical assault, threats, sexual harassment, discriminatory abuse or other harmful behaviour, will be dealt with immediately and may require a safeguarding response even where it does not constitute bullying.

A child does not need to prove that bullying has taken place before their concern is listened to. Staff will consider what has been reported, the circumstances, the impact on the child and any previous incidents or patterns of behaviour.

5. Forms and types of bullying

Bullying can take different forms and may involve more than one type of behaviour. It can be overt and easily recognised, or subtle and difficult to identify. Examples include:

Physical bullying - deliberately hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, spitting, damaging or taking belongings, or using physical intimidation.

Verbal bullying - name-calling, insults, threats, teasing, mocking, making hurtful comments or repeatedly using language intended to upset or humiliate another person.

Emotional and psychological bullying - deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, intimidating, humiliating or encouraging others to isolate an individual.

Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying - targeting someone because of a characteristic, identity, background or perceived difference. This may relate to race, ethnicity, nationality, skin colour, culture, religion or belief, disability, special educational needs, medical needs, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, appearance, speech or family circumstances. The school recognises that some of these matters relate to characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, while others may also be used as a reason to target or victimise a child. All such behaviour is unacceptable.

Cyberbullying - using digital technology to intimidate, threaten, humiliate, exclude or cause distress. This may include hurtful messages, abusive comments, sharing images without permission, creating harmful content, impersonating someone online or encouraging others to target an individual.

Sexual bullying and harassment - unwanted sexual comments, gestures, jokes, remarks or attention, as well as behaviour that demeans or humiliates someone in a sexualised way. Such behaviour may also constitute child-on-child abuse and must be considered through the school's safeguarding procedures.

Bullying may take place within school, on the journey to and from school, in the local community or through online spaces outside school. Where it affects a pupil's safety, wellbeing or ability to learn, the school will consider what action it can reasonably and lawfully take.

6. Bullying and child-on-child abuse

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School recognises that children can cause harm to other children and that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding concern. Bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, is one form of child-on-child abuse. However, child-on-child abuse is broader than bullying and may involve a single incident or a pattern of behaviour.

All staff must remain alert to the possibility that a child may be experiencing harm from another child. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying.
- Abuse within intimate personal relationships between peers.
- Physical abuse, including hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling or otherwise causing physical harm.
- Sexual violence, including rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.
- Sexual harassment, including sexual comments, remarks, jokes, unwanted sexual attention and online sexual harassment. This may occur as an isolated incident or as part of a wider pattern of behaviour.
- Causing someone to engage in sexual activity without their consent, including forcing them to strip, touch themselves sexually or engage in sexual activity with another person.
- The creation, sharing or distribution of consensual or non-consensual self-generated intimate images or videos, including images created or manipulated using artificial intelligence (AI), such as deepfakes.
- Upskirting, which involves taking an image beneath a person's clothing without their knowledge or consent.
- Initiation or hazing activities involving harassment, abuse, humiliation or violence as a condition of joining or remaining in a group. These may also involve online activity.

Such behaviour must never be dismissed or minimised as “banter”, “just having a laugh”, “part of growing up” or “boys being boys”. Language of this kind can normalise

harmful behaviour, create an unsafe environment and discourage children from speaking out. All concerns must be taken seriously and responded to in a way that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of the children involved.

Staff must understand that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the child who has experienced the harm and the child alleged to have caused it. A child displaying harmful behaviour may also have safeguarding needs which require consideration. This does not excuse or minimise the impact of their behaviour, and the safety of the child who has experienced harm must remain central to the school's response.

Any concern that may involve child-on-child abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay and recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The DSL will consider the nature and seriousness of the concern, the immediate safety of those involved, whether further safeguarding action or external referral is required, and the appropriate support for each child.

Where an incident involves sexual violence, sexual harassment, coercion, intimate images or other serious harmful behaviour, it must be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and relevant statutory guidance. It must not be treated solely as a bullying incident or dealt with through informal restorative approaches.

7. Our Catholic ethos and expectations

Our Catholic faith underpins the way we treat one another. We believe that every person is made in the image and likeness of God and therefore has inherent dignity and worth. We expect everyone in our community to recognise this dignity through their words, actions and relationships.

Jesus teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves (Mark 12:31). In Matthew's Gospel, we are reminded:

"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me"

Matthew 25:40

These teachings guide our expectation that we show kindness, stand alongside those who may be vulnerable and take responsibility when our actions cause hurt.

Our LIGHT values provide a shared language for the behaviour and relationships we seek to develop:

- Love - treating others with kindness, compassion and care.
- Integrity - being honest, taking responsibility and doing what is right, even when it is difficult.
- Growth - learning from our mistakes and developing positive relationships.
- Hope - believing that people can change and that situations can improve.
- Togetherness - ensuring that everyone feels included, valued and part of our school family.

These values are reflected in our daily expectations and in the way we respond when relationships break down. They do not mean that harmful behaviour is overlooked or excused. Rather, they guide us to respond with fairness, compassion and a clear expectation that everyone is responsible for their actions.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Preventing and responding to bullying is a shared responsibility. Every member of the school community has a part to play in ensuring that St John Fisher is a safe and welcoming place.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively, that concerns are addressed appropriately and that the school fulfils its responsibilities to safeguard pupils and promote positive behaviour.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) provides safeguarding oversight where concerns may involve child-on-child abuse, discrimination, harassment, violence or other safeguarding matters. The DSL ensures that concerns are considered in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures and that referrals are made where necessary.

Senior leaders support staff in responding consistently to incidents, monitor patterns and ensure that appropriate action and follow-up take place.

All staff, including teachers, teaching assistants, lunchtime staff, office staff, premises staff, volunteers and other adults working in school, are expected to model respectful behaviour, promote positive relationships, remain alert to signs of bullying and act promptly when concerns are raised. Staff must never ignore or dismiss behaviour that may be harmful.

Governors provide strategic oversight and hold the school to account for the effectiveness of its approach to behaviour, safeguarding, equality and pupil wellbeing. They will receive appropriate information about patterns and themes while maintaining confidentiality.

Pupils are expected to treat others with respect, follow the school's behaviour expectations, avoid participating in bullying and seek help if they experience or witness behaviour that causes concern. Pupils should understand that reporting bullying is not telling tales; it is helping to keep themselves and others safe.

Parents and carers are encouraged to work in partnership with the school, raise concerns promptly and support children in developing respectful and positive relationships.

9. Preventing bullying and promoting positive relationships

The school's approach places considerable emphasis on prevention. We want pupils to understand what respectful relationships look like, recognise when behaviour is harmful and feel confident to seek help.

Positive relationships are developed through the school's curriculum, Catholic Life, collective worship, assemblies and everyday interactions. Pupils are encouraged to consider how their words and actions affect others, to appreciate difference and to show kindness even when they disagree.

Our RSHE curriculum, delivered through Ten:Ten's *Life to the Full*, supports pupils in understanding relationships, respect, personal boundaries, dignity and how to seek help. Online safety education through the Computing curriculum and wider school provision helps pupils understand how to behave responsibly and safely when using digital technology.

The school also uses opportunities such as Anti-Bullying Week, Safer Internet Day, class discussions and assemblies to reinforce expectations and encourage pupils to speak openly about bullying and unkind behaviour.

Staff maintain appropriate supervision throughout the school day, including in classrooms, corridors, playgrounds, dining areas and during transitions. Where concerns or patterns emerge, supervision and support arrangements may be reviewed to help prevent further incidents.

Particular attention is given to pupils who may be more vulnerable to bullying, including children with special educational needs or disabilities, pupils with communication difficulties, children who may find friendships or social situations challenging and those who may be isolated or experiencing difficulties outside school. Support is considered in response to individual needs rather than assumptions about particular groups.

10. Reporting concerns

Pupils are encouraged to tell an adult if they are being bullied, if they have witnessed bullying or if they are worried about the way another child is being treated. They can speak to their class teacher, teaching assistant, another trusted member of staff, a senior leader or the Headteacher.

We recognise that some children may find it difficult to speak about what has happened. They may feel embarrassed, worried about making things worse, concerned that they will not be believed or unsure whether the behaviour is serious enough to report. Staff will provide opportunities for children to talk in a way that feels safe and appropriate to them.

Parents and carers who are concerned that their child may be experiencing bullying should contact the class teacher in the first instance. Where the concern is serious, ongoing or has not been resolved, parents and carers should contact the Headteacher. All staff must report concerns promptly. Where a concern may involve child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding matter, it must be referred to the DSL without delay and recorded on CPOMS in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Children should be reassured that they will be listened to and that the school will take appropriate action. Staff should not promise absolute confidentiality, as information may need to be shared with those responsible for keeping children safe.

The school will not tolerate retaliation against a child for reporting a concern or supporting another pupil to seek help.

11. Responding to and investigating bullying concerns

Every report of bullying will be taken seriously and considered carefully. The school's response will be proportionate to the nature of the concern, the age and understanding of the children involved, the impact on those affected and any previous history or pattern of behaviour.

The immediate priority is to ensure that pupils are safe and that any further harm is prevented. Staff will listen to the child raising the concern, provide reassurance and establish what has happened. Where necessary, immediate steps will be taken to separate pupils, increase supervision or put other safety measures in place.

The school will seek to establish the facts by speaking to the children involved separately and, where appropriate, to witnesses. Children will be given the opportunity to explain events in their own words. Staff will consider whether there have been previous incidents, whether there is a pattern of behaviour, whether there is an imbalance of power and how the behaviour has affected the child.

The school will avoid making assumptions or reaching conclusions before the available information has been considered. Where accounts differ, staff will continue to explore the concern and take appropriate steps to keep pupils safe while doing so.

Where an allegation involves a safeguarding concern, the DSL will be informed and the matter will be managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Some incidents may require advice or involvement from external agencies.

Parents and carers will normally be informed when a concern is being investigated, where appropriate and in the best interests of the children involved. The school will communicate the actions being taken in relation to their own child but will respect the confidentiality and privacy of other pupils.

Following an investigation, the school will decide whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying, represents another form of unacceptable behaviour or requires a safeguarding response. Regardless of the classification, the school will take appropriate action to address the behaviour and support those affected.

The school will check that agreed actions have been effective and that the behaviour has not continued or moved to another setting, including online.

12. Recording and monitoring individual incidents

Concerns and incidents will be recorded in accordance with the school's recording procedures. Where appropriate, records will be made on CPOMS, particularly where there are safeguarding implications, repeated concerns or a need to monitor patterns of behaviour.

Records should be factual, clear and timely. They should distinguish between what has been reported, what has been witnessed and what has been established through the school's enquiries. They should include relevant details such as the date, location, pupils involved, nature of the concern, actions taken, parental communication and any agreed follow-up.

Records enable the school to identify patterns, consider whether behaviour is repeated or escalating and ensure that concerns are not viewed in isolation. They also support appropriate communication between staff who need to be aware of the situation.

Information will be handled sensitively and shared only with those who need it to fulfil their responsibilities.

13. Supporting pupils who experience bullying

We recognise that experiencing bullying can have a significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, confidence, relationships, attendance and ability to learn. The support offered will depend on the individual child and the circumstances.

The school will provide opportunities for the child to talk about what has happened and to explain what would help them feel safe. This may include regular check-ins with a trusted adult, pastoral support, additional supervision, support to rebuild friendships or help to develop confidence and strategies for managing difficult situations.

Where appropriate, the school may involve the SENDCo or seek advice from external professionals to ensure that the child's needs are understood and supported.

The child will be kept informed, in an age-appropriate way, about the steps being taken. Staff will check whether the behaviour has stopped and whether the child feels safe and supported over time.

A child who has experienced bullying should not be expected to change their friendships, routines or activities simply to accommodate the behaviour of another pupil. Any changes to arrangements must be carefully considered and should not unfairly disadvantage the child who has been harmed.

14. Supporting pupils whose behaviour has caused harm

The school recognises that children who bully or behave harmfully may also need support to understand their actions, recognise the impact on others and develop more positive ways of managing relationships.

This does not remove their responsibility for their behaviour or lessen the impact on the child who has experienced harm. The school will maintain clear expectations and take appropriate action while also considering whether there are underlying needs or circumstances that require attention.

Support may include structured conversations with staff, work on empathy and respectful relationships, pastoral support, involvement of parents and carers, or advice from the SENDCo and external professionals where appropriate.

The school will monitor the pupil's behaviour and review whether the support and actions put in place are effective. The priority remains ensuring that the harmful behaviour stops and that all pupils feel safe.

15. Consequences and restorative approaches

Bullying and other harmful behaviour will be addressed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. The response will be proportionate and take account of the seriousness of the behaviour, its impact, the age and understanding of the pupils involved and any relevant history.

The school's behaviour approach follows the sequence:

Reminder → Choice → Reflection → Consequence → Follow-up

Where behaviour is serious, discriminatory, threatening, violent or part of a repeated pattern, a more significant response may be required. This may include appropriate sanctions under the Behaviour Policy and, in the most serious circumstances,

suspension or permanent exclusion in accordance with statutory guidance and the school's legal responsibilities.

Restorative approaches may be used where they are appropriate and safe. These can help children understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility and consider how relationships might be repaired. However, restorative work will not be used as a substitute for safeguarding action or appropriate consequences.

A child who has experienced bullying will never be required to meet with, forgive or reconcile with the child who has harmed them. Any restorative meeting must be carefully considered, voluntary and managed by an appropriate member of staff. An apology alone does not demonstrate that the behaviour has changed; the school will look for sustained improvement.

16. Online bullying

Online bullying can take place through messaging services, social media, online games, group chats, websites and other digital platforms. It may involve abusive or threatening messages, exclusion from online groups, sharing embarrassing or private information, impersonation, harmful images or encouraging others to target a child.

The school teaches pupils about responsible online behaviour and the importance of protecting themselves and others. Pupils are encouraged to tell a trusted adult if something online makes them feel worried, upset, threatened or unsafe.

Where online bullying is reported, the school will consider the nature of the content, who is involved, the impact on the pupil and whether the behaviour is connected to the school community. Pupils and parents may be advised to preserve relevant evidence, such as screenshots or messages, rather than deleting it immediately. They may also be advised to block or report accounts and seek support from the relevant platform.

Where online behaviour involves threats, sexual harassment, intimate images, coercion or other potentially criminal activity, the matter will be referred to the DSL and managed through safeguarding procedures. The school will follow relevant guidance when considering any search of a pupil or confiscation of a device.

The school recognises that online incidents may happen outside school hours and beyond the school premises. Where they affect the safety or wellbeing of pupils or the

orderly running of the school, the school will consider what action is appropriate and within its powers.

17. Bullying outside school

The school has a responsibility to promote the safety and wellbeing of its pupils. Although its authority is not unlimited beyond the school premises, the school will consider reports of bullying that take place on the journey to and from school, in the local community or during activities outside school where these affect pupils or the school community.

Where appropriate, the school may work with parents and carers, other schools, transport providers, local services or the police to address concerns. Any response will be proportionate and consistent with the school's legal responsibilities.

18. Bullying and harassment of adults

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School expects all members of the school community to treat one another with dignity and respect. Bullying, harassment, intimidation, threatening behaviour or abusive language towards adults will not be tolerated.

This includes behaviour directed towards staff, governors, volunteers, parents, carers and visitors, whether it takes place in person, by telephone, in writing or online.

Staff who experience or witness bullying or harassment should report the matter to the Headteacher or an appropriate senior leader. Where the concern involves the Headteacher, it should be raised with the Chair of Governors or the appropriate authority.

The school will consider concerns carefully and take appropriate action. This may include recording incidents, setting clear expectations for future communication, arranging alternative communication methods or restricting access to the school site where this is necessary and lawful. Serious threats or potentially criminal behaviour may be referred to the police.

Parents and carers are entitled to raise concerns and make complaints. The school will listen and respond through the appropriate channels, including the Complaints Policy, while expecting all communication to remain respectful.

The school will have regard to relevant Department for Education guidance on preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff.

19. Working in partnership with parents and carers

Parents and carers play an important role in helping children develop positive relationships and understand the impact of their behaviour. We encourage parents to speak to their child about friendships, kindness, respect and how to seek help when something is wrong.

Where parents or carers are concerned that their child is being bullied, they should contact the school promptly so that the matter can be explored and addressed. It is helpful if they share relevant information, including any previous incidents or evidence of online behaviour.

The school will listen to concerns, explain how it intends to respond and keep parents informed about actions relating to their own child. However, confidentiality means that the school cannot share personal information or details of sanctions relating to another pupil.

Parents and carers are asked not to approach or confront another child or their family directly about an incident. This can make situations more difficult to resolve and may cause further distress. Concerns should be raised with the school so that they can be addressed appropriately.

We aim to work constructively with families, recognising that effective communication and a shared commitment to children's wellbeing are essential in preventing and responding to bullying.

20. Monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher and senior leaders will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of this policy. This will include reviewing recorded incidents, considering repeated concerns and identifying any patterns relating to location, time, groups of pupils or types of behaviour.

Pupil voice will help the school understand whether children feel safe, know how to report concerns and believe that adults respond effectively. Feedback from parents and staff will also be considered.

Information gathered through monitoring will be used to inform staff practice, supervision arrangements, curriculum provision and any further action needed to strengthen the school's approach.

Governors will receive appropriate information to support their oversight of behaviour, safeguarding, equality and pupil wellbeing. Individual cases will remain confidential.
The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school practice make this necessary.

21. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and presented to the Governing Body in accordance with the school's policy review arrangements.

22. Useful information and sources of support

The following organisations provide information and support for children, parents and schools:

- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- **Childline:** https://www.childline.org.uk
- **NSPCC:** https://www.nspcc.org.uk
- **Kidscape:** https://www.kidscape.org.uk
- **Childnet:** https://www.childnet.com
- **UK Safer Internet Centre:** https://saferinternet.org.uk
- **YoungMinds:** https://www.youngminds.org.uk
- **Internet Watch Foundation:** https://www.iwf.org.uk
- **Show Racism the Red Card:** https://www.theredcard.org
- **Educate Against Hate:** https://educateagainsthate.com

Parents and carers who are concerned about a child's immediate safety should contact the school or the appropriate safeguarding service. In an emergency, they should contact the police or emergency services.