



**SACRED HEART**  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY  
SCHOOL & NURSERY

## Anti-bullying policy

**This is our school.**

**Together we worship; Together we learn; Together we belong**

**With the love of God, our dreams and ambitions come true**



**September 2023**

**Policy Date: September 2023**  
**Policy Status: Statutory Policy**  
**Awaiting approval by Governing**  
**Body October 2023**  
**Review Cycle: 12 months**



*At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School & Nursery we are proud to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive learning environment where every member of our community is valued and respected.*

## **Mission Statement**

**'Together we worship, Together we learn,  
Together we belong – with the love of God...  
our dreams and ambitions come true.'**

Our broad, balanced, creative curriculum and enrichment activities provide opportunities for everyone to achieve and succeed. Together we take pride in making a positive contribution to our school and the wider community.

This policy should be referred to in conjunction with the SEND policy, SEND report and supporting children with medical conditions policy.

## **SAFEGUARDING STATEMENT**

"Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment".



The purpose of this document is to set out a definition for bullying and to explain the procedure to be followed for dealing with bullying.

At Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our pupils so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe that everyone has the right to feel safe in school; everyone has the right to feel happy in school; everyone has a duty to help all members of our community. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at Sacred Heart.

If bullying does occur, all victims will be treated in a supportive manner and listened to in an atmosphere of positive concern. Pupils should be able to tell someone about bullying and know that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

We want to create an environment, which encourages everyone to reach their potential by nurturing self-esteem and respect for others.

We believe that each individual should be valued and treated as an integral member of our school community. Positive and caring attitudes are to be fostered in all aspects of school life, including behavior choices, the management of discipline, self-value and respect for others.

We at Sacred Heart believe that each and every person should be encouraged to respect the individual uniqueness and rights of others so that everyone can be comfortable within their school environment. We propose to do this by employing a positive attitude to pupil behaviour management and developing consistency of approach to the management of behaviour by all staff and pupils.

All adults, in all roles, at Sacred Heart are expected to be role models for others and should encourage all adults to be aware of this responsibility. Staff are appointed and volunteers and visitors are carefully and sensitively selected to ensure that all uphold the highest levels of respect and care for others. We all work towards the same aims, which are strongly underpinned by our Mission Statement and the aim to build our Catholic school community on the teachings of the Gospel.

### Links to other policies:

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Policy Documents: Teaching and Learning, Equality Policy, Behaviour, Attendance and the SEND policy.

### Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- 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
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education 2021'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

### This policy aims:

- To raise awareness of bullying by ensuring that all governors, teaching and support staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding and definition of bullying
- To bring about conditions in which bullying is less likely to happen in the future by ensuring that all governors, teaching and support staff, parents and pupils know what the school policy is on bullying, and how to report it.
- To ensure a whole school approach to bullying by ensuring that all governors, teaching and support staff, pupils and parents know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

- To ensure that all staff and Governors are aware of the legislation surrounding bullying and the use of derogatory language
- To ensure that all members of the community are aware of their responsibilities in the elimination of negative language and the promotion of safe language
- To ensure that all staff and Governors are fully informed of the role of schools in educating children and young people about unacceptable bullying behaviour.
- To ensure that the Policy and Procedures of this Policy and subsequent drafts comply with the requirements of the Law.

## **Bullying – a definition**

It is important that all members of the school community including parents and carers, Governors, all staff and pupils have a consistent understanding of what constitutes bullying. Bullying is an action or behaviour, often repeated, that is taken by one or more children with the deliberate intention of hurting the other child, either physically, or emotionally. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional or sexual. Bullying is unwanted behavior which is damaging to the victim.

### **Bullying may be targeted in the following areas:**

- Emotional
- Physical
- Racist
- Sexual
- Homophobic
- Verbal
- Cyber bullying
- Disability

### Behaviours may include:

- being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, name calling, hurtful remarks, intimidation, leaving people out, making people feel small
- pushing, kicking, hitting, or any kind of violence, racial taunts, graffiti, gestures, hurtful remarks
- unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments based on someone's gender
- disliking or fear of someone who is lesbian, gay or bisexual (LGB). This may be passive resentment of LGB men and women, or active victimisation
- name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing e.g. through the internet / social media / through mobile phones / texting etc. being ignored, excluded, namecalling

Not all aggressive behaviour is bullying. It is important to be clear about the distinction between bullying and isolated acts of aggression or hostility.

Gentle teasing can be a sign of affection. If, however, the recipient has made it clear that they do not like it and requests for it to stop are ignored, then it should be viewed as bullying.

Play fighting with a level of rough and tumble is a normal part of everyday play. If 'horseplay' is consensual, even if it ends in injury, it is not bullying. If there was a lack of consent at the beginning it may be a problem.

If two pupils of equal strength and power have an occasional fight or argument, this does not constitute bullying.

Behaviour, which appears to be bullying, may be exhibited by some children, especially young children, without the intention or awareness that it causes distress. Some individuals may feel bullied, even when there is no intention from others to cause them distress. Such perceptions of bullying will nonetheless be taken seriously as a reflection of the individual's vulnerability.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.

Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- o Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- o Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
- o Pupils with SEND

### Signs of bullying

The child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Changes their usual routine/behavior at home or school
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins truanting
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- Threatens to run away
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- Has possessions go "missing"
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable

- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

### Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy. Staff will take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims, will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours. Staff will also be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing- or initiation-type violence.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS), where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

### Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim’s phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else’s name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging



- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms. The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

All members of staff will receive training on an annual basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively. Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of bullying' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- Possible extensive scale and scope – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
- The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
- The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realizing
- The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. Mobile phones are not permitted in school and the office will keep any mobile phones that are brought on school premises during the course of the day.

### Addressing bullying through our school ethos

- Through assemblies and our Religious Education Programme, we consistently deal with issues of friends and relationships and seek to promote a happy school built on Gospel values.
- Assemblies, Gospel Assemblies and daily Collective Worship provide opportunities for reflection and sharing of moral and social aspects of life.
- All policies are formed with the School Mission Statement at the centre.
- Everyone has ownership of policies and procedures.
- The ethos of our school is visible in the everyday relationships and life of the school.
- Displays around the school communicate the ethos and policies of the school for all to see.
- Rewards are given to celebrate all aspects of school life including Gospel Awards.
- The way we discuss incidents is always within a culture of respect and caring for each other.
- Restorative justice techniques are used to help to resolve problems.
- The structures for the discipline procedure are followed appropriately and consistently.
- Staff in all roles are welcoming, friendly, open and honest.
- Staff training is seen as valuable and staff use the outcomes to improve practice.
- A positive environment is created by staff, both inside and out of school, even on trips.
- Staff are aware of family situations and show empathy towards others.
- Everyone understands their responsibility in communicating the mission and vision of our school.

### The Curriculum

- Personal, Social and Health Education covers peer pressure, choices and bullying explicitly.
- Strategies such as '**circle time**' are used with whole classes as a means to explore difficult issues.
- Anti-Bullying week, held in November each year, will build upon the learning in the classroom around effective friendships and relationships.
- Activities including reading and writing stories and poems, drawing pictures about bullying or roleplay.
- Multi-cultural work e.g. work on Hinduism is planned to support learning opportunities through RE and PSHE work undertaken using 'No Outsiders in our

School' activities.

- School rules are formed and discussed and translated into classroom rules which form a framework for expected social behaviours.
- Social stories are used to support pupils in the management of their social and emotional development.

## Procedures

Minor incidents will be reported to the victim's class teacher, who will investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator, and inform a member of SLT of the incident and outcome using CPOMS to keep a record.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil to receive first aid or decide on further medical attention if needed
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- The headteacher will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- All pupils involved are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils

Due to the potential for some specific forms of 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 be implemented.

## Sanctions

If the headteacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The headteacher will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. detentions or service based activities, and future sanctions if the bullying continues.

If possible, the headteacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim, and/or witnesses if appropriate, or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will

be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents/carers are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken. All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future. The school will avoid unnecessarily criminalising pupils for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as young people with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives.

The school's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future. SLT informally monitor the pupils involved over the next half-term. The school will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to school can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour, and will not exclude pupils unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will act in line with the Exclusion Policy.

### Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance from the pastoral team
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents/carer)
- The headteacher will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them sharing classes or spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary.
- Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.
- Staff, particularly the DSL, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.
- The school will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. The school will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

## Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records including via CPOMS are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The headteacher will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.