POLICY

POLICY TYPE

MAT Policy to adopted in full across all schools	
LGC Policy to be reviewed and approved locally	✓

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"Share the Love of God, every day in everything we learn, do and say"

ST PHILOMENA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Mission and Rationale

With Christ at the centre, we strive for excellence, act with respect and serve our community. These principles are central to the life of St Philomena's and shape the way we expect every member of our community to treat others.

Our Catholic mission recognises the dignity and unique worth of every person, created in the image and likeness of God. Bullying is fundamentally contrary to this belief and undermines the safety, dignity, wellbeing and sense of belonging to which every pupil is entitled. Informed by Catholic Social Teaching, particularly human dignity and the common good, we seek to foster a community in which everyone is valued, respected and able to flourish.

We take a clear, child-centred and proportionate approach to preventing and addressing bullying. Concerns will be listened to and responded to appropriately, with regard to the circumstances of each individual case. Our approach seeks to protect those experiencing harm, address bullying behaviour, restore relationships where appropriate and strengthen the conditions in which pupils can learn and participate successfully.

Respect is not simply an expectation at St Philomena's; it is a lived expression of our mission.

1. **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

• prevent bullying wherever reasonably possible;
• promote a culture of dignity, respect, kindness and belonging;
• ensure pupils know how and where to seek help;
• ensure concerns about bullying are taken seriously and responded to appropriately;
• provide appropriate support to pupils affected by bullying;
• address bullying behaviour through proportionate and appropriate action;
• work in partnership with parents and carers where concerns arise;
• monitor patterns and use information to strengthen prevention and practice;
• ensure that safeguarding concerns are identified and addressed appropriately.

Bullying is never acceptable.

The school may take action in relation to behaviour occurring outside school, including online behaviour, where it affects the safety, wellbeing, behaviour or orderly education of pupils or staff, in accordance with the school's legal responsibilities and relevant policies.

2. **Scope**

This policy applies to all members of the school community and covers bullying:

• between pupils;
• by groups of pupils;
• occurring in school or during school-related activities;
• occurring on the journey to or from school where relevant;
• occurring online or through digital technology;
• occurring outside school where it affects the safety, wellbeing or education of members of the school community.

Where concerns relate to bullying, harassment or abusive behaviour involving adults, the school will respond under the relevant behaviour, safeguarding, complaints or employment procedures.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and other relevant policies.

3. **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is behaviour that is intended to hurt, harm, intimidate or humiliate another person. It is often repeated or persistent and may involve an imbalance of power, although a single serious incident may require a response under this policy or another school procedure.

Bullying may be:

- physical;
- verbal;
- relational or social;
- emotional or psychological;
- discriminatory or prejudice-related;
- sexualised;
- online or cyber-related;
- direct or indirect;
- carried out by an individual or a group.

Not every disagreement, friendship difficulty, unkind comment or incident of poor behaviour constitutes bullying. Such incidents will nevertheless be taken seriously and addressed through the Behaviour Policy or other appropriate procedures.

The school will consider the nature, impact, context and circumstances of reported behaviour rather than relying solely on whether a particular incident meets every feature commonly associated with bullying.

A pupil does not need to prove that behaviour meets a formal definition of bullying before the school will provide appropriate support or take action.

4. **Forms of Bullying**

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

Physical

Hitting, kicking, pushing, physical intimidation, physical aggression, deliberately causing injury, or taking, damaging or interfering with another person's belongings.

Verbal

Name-calling, insults, threats, mocking, humiliating comments, repeated teasing, offensive or derogatory language.

Relational or Social

Deliberately excluding someone, manipulating friendships, spreading rumours, encouraging others to reject someone, repeatedly undermining relationships or deliberately damaging a pupil's sense of belonging.

Prejudice-related

Bullying motivated by or directed towards a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation or gender reassignment, as well as bullying relating to other characteristics, circumstances or perceived differences.

This may include prejudice or bullying relating to:

- race, ethnicity or culture;
- religion or belief;
- disability or SEND;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;

• gender reassignment;
• appearance;
• health or medical needs;
• family or home circumstances;
• care experience or caring responsibilities;
• another characteristic or perceived difference.

Sexual Harassment or Sexualised Bullying

Unwanted sexual comments, sexualised name-calling, gestures, sharing sexualised material, inappropriate touching or other behaviour of a sexual nature.

Such concerns will be considered in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant safeguarding procedures.

Cyber-bullying and Online Bullying

Bullying using digital technology, including messaging platforms, social media, online gaming, group chats, images, audio, video or written content.

This may include:

• sending or sharing harmful or humiliating messages;
• excluding individuals from online groups;
• spreading rumours or personal information;
• sharing images or recordings without consent;
• creating or sharing offensive or degrading content;
• impersonation;
• repeated unwanted contact;
• harmful content that has been digitally altered, manipulated or generated using artificial intelligence.

5. **SEND and Vulnerability**

We recognise that some pupils, including pupils with SEND or additional needs, may be particularly vulnerable to bullying or may experience difficulty communicating or reporting concerns.

Staff will consider individual communication, sensory, cognitive and emotional needs when responding to concerns.

Reasonable adjustments will be made where appropriate to enable pupils to:

• report concerns;
• understand what is happening;
• participate in discussions;
• communicate their views and wishes;
• access support.

The school's graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do and Review will inform additional support where bullying is affecting a pupil's access to learning, wellbeing or participation.

Staff will avoid making assumptions about how a pupil should communicate or respond and will consider the pupil's individual circumstances.

6. **Preventing Bullying**

Prevention is a whole-school responsibility.

We will promote positive relationships and respectful behaviour through:

• our Catholic mission and values;
• high expectations for behaviour and conduct;
• Relationships and Health Education (RHE) and the wider curriculum;

• safeguarding and online-safety education;
• opportunities for pupil voice and participation;
• assemblies, prayer and liturgy and the wider Catholic life of the school;
• teaching about difference, dignity, equality and respect;
• appropriate supervision and attention to less visible areas of school life;
• staff vigilance and professional curiosity;
• partnership with parents and carers;
• appropriate use of external expertise and resources where beneficial;
• staff training and professional development;
• monitoring patterns of behaviour and concerns.

Pupils will be encouraged to:

• recognise bullying and harmful behaviour;
• treat others with dignity and respect;
• challenge unkind behaviour safely where appropriate;
• seek adult help when concerns arise;
• support others without putting themselves at risk.

Pupils will never be expected to manage bullying situations themselves or intervene where doing so could place them at risk.

7. **Reporting a Concern**

Pupils are encouraged to tell a trusted adult if they experience or witness bullying.

Concerns may be raised with:

• a class teacher;
• another trusted member of staff;
• a member of the senior leadership team; or
• another adult identified by the school as a safe point of contact.

Pupils may use established school mechanisms for sharing worries, including the school's listening and pupil-voice arrangements.

Parents and carers should contact the school if they are concerned that their child is experiencing bullying or displaying behaviour that may constitute bullying.

Reports will be treated sensitively and considered according to the circumstances.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information needs to be shared to safeguard a child, protect another person or fulfil the school's legal responsibilities.

A pupil will not be disadvantaged for reporting a concern in good faith.

8. **Principles of Response**

The school's response to bullying concerns will be:

• child-centred – giving appropriate consideration to the needs, wishes, safety and best interests of the child;
• proportionate – responding according to the seriousness, impact and circumstances of the behaviour;
• timely – ensuring concerns are addressed without unnecessary delay;
• evidence-informed – considering the information reasonably available;
• safeguarding-led where necessary – recognising when behaviour may indicate a risk of harm;
• inclusive – taking account of SEND, communication needs and individual circumstances;
• respectful – maintaining the dignity of all those involved;
• focused on prevention – seeking to stop harmful behaviour and reduce the risk of recurrence;
• supportive – providing appropriate support to pupils affected by bullying and to pupils whose

behaviour has caused harm.

The school will consider the information available on the balance of probabilities when determining whether behaviour has occurred and what response is appropriate. Pupils will not be expected to provide evidence beyond what it is reasonable for them to provide.

9. **Responding to Concerns**

When a concern is raised, the school will consider the information available and determine the most appropriate response.

9.1 **Listening and Recording**

The concern will be listened to carefully, recorded appropriately and relevant information gathered.

The school will seek to ensure that pupils are given an opportunity to express their views and that communication needs are accommodated.

9.2 **Assessment**

Staff will consider:

- the nature and seriousness of the reported behaviour;
- the impact on the pupil;
- the frequency and duration of the behaviour;
- the context in which it occurred;
- whether there appears to be an imbalance of power;
- whether the behaviour is discriminatory or prejudice-related;
- whether there are SEND or vulnerability considerations;
- whether there are safeguarding concerns;
- whether the behaviour has occurred online or outside school;
- whether other pupils may also be affected.

9.3 **Investigation**

Where appropriate, staff will speak separately with those involved and seek relevant information.

Investigations will be proportionate and will avoid unnecessary repetition of a pupil's account.

The school will not require a pupil to confront or meet with another pupil as part of an investigation.

9.4 **Action**

Proportionate action will be taken in accordance with the circumstances and relevant school policies. The school will not use a single automatic sanction for all bullying incidents. Consequences will be proportionate and will take account of the individual circumstances of the case.

Actions may include:

- behaviour consequences;
- pastoral intervention;
- safeguarding action;
- contact with parents or carers;
- education or support relating to appropriate behaviour;
- restorative approaches where appropriate and safe;
- referral to external services where necessary.

9.5 **Support**

Appropriate support will be offered to pupils affected by bullying and to pupils whose behaviour has caused harm.

A pupil does not need to wait for an investigation to conclude before appropriate pastoral or safeguarding support is provided.

9.6 **Communication**

Parents and carers will be involved where appropriate and in accordance with safeguarding, confidentiality and professional requirements.

The school will respect the confidentiality of information relating to other pupils and will not normally disclose personal information about another child or family.

9.7 **Review**

The school will review whether the actions taken have been effective and determine whether further action or support is required.

Where necessary, the school will agree a further review with the pupil, parents or carers and relevant staff.

There may be occasions when an incident is addressed through the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, or another relevant procedure rather than through the full anti-bullying process.

Where appropriate and safe, restorative approaches may be considered. Such approaches will not be used where they would place a pupil at further risk, undermine safeguarding or create an inappropriate expectation that pupils must reconcile.

10. **Safeguarding and Child-on-Child Abuse**

Bullying may be a safeguarding concern where behaviour causes, or indicates, a risk of harm to a child.

Bullying may also form part of wider child-on-child abuse, including:

- physical abuse;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- intimidation;
- exploitation;
- other harmful behaviour between pupils.

Such behaviour can occur in person, online or outside school.

Where behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse or presents a safeguarding concern, the school will follow its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and involve the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

Such concerns will not be treated solely as behavioural matters.

The school will maintain a child-centred approach, consider the individual circumstances and best interests of the child, and share information appropriately where this is necessary to safeguard a pupil.

11. **Support for Pupils**

The school will consider the individual needs and circumstances of pupils affected by bullying.

Support may include:

- a trusted adult or identified point of contact;
- opportunities to talk and be listened to;
- support to develop confidence, resilience and strategies for seeking help;
- appropriate adjustments to the school environment or routines;
- additional pastoral or targeted support;
- involvement of parents and carers;
- support with safe use of technology;

• referral to appropriate external services where this is considered necessary.

Support will be proportionate to the circumstances and reviewed according to need.

Pupils whose behaviour constitutes bullying will be supported to:

• understand the impact of their actions;
• take responsibility for their behaviour;
• develop appropriate social and emotional skills;
• make positive changes;
• repair harm where appropriate and safe.

Support for a pupil who has caused harm does not reduce the school's responsibility to protect and support the pupil who has experienced harm.

12. **Online Bullying**

The school recognises that online bullying can occur at any time and may have a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing, safety and education.

The school will educate pupils about safe, responsible and respectful use of technology through the curriculum and online-safety provision.

Where online behaviour outside school affects the wellbeing, safety or orderly education of pupils, the school may respond in accordance with its Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and other relevant policies.

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

• promote age-appropriate and responsible use of technology;
• monitor children's use of technology and social media in an age-appropriate manner;
• discuss online behaviour and respectful communication;
• preserve relevant evidence where serious concerns arise;
• report concerns to the school and, where appropriate, the relevant online platform or other agency.

The school will provide appropriate advice and support where pupils experience online bullying.

13. Bullying, Harassment and Abuse Affecting Adults

The school expects all members of the community to communicate respectfully.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, threatening or abusive behaviour towards staff or other adults will not be tolerated.

Where concerns involve a pupil, parent or carer, or another adult, the school will respond in accordance with the relevant behaviour, safeguarding, complaints or employment procedures.

The school may take proportionate action to protect staff, pupils and the wider community.

Where behaviour involving adults raises safeguarding concerns, the school's safeguarding procedures will apply.

14. **Roles and Responsibilities**

All Members of the School Community

Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a culture in which bullying is recognised, reported and addressed.

Staff

Staff will:

• model respectful and professional relationships;
• remain alert to signs that a pupil may be experiencing bullying;

• take concerns seriously;
• listen carefully to pupils;
• record and report concerns in accordance with school procedures;
• respond proportionately and consistently;
• consider safeguarding and SEND needs;
• contribute to prevention and review;
• seek advice from the DSL or senior leaders where appropriate.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

• treat others with dignity and respect;
• avoid behaviour that harms or humiliates others;
• seek adult help when they experience or witness bullying;
• contribute positively to the school community;
• use technology responsibly and respectfully.

Pupils will not be expected to manage bullying situations themselves or put themselves at risk by intervening.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

• speak to the school promptly if they have concerns;
• provide relevant information to assist the school in understanding the situation;
• encourage respectful behaviour and appropriate use of technology;
• work constructively with the school to support their child;
• avoid attempting to resolve disputes directly with other pupils or families where this may increase conflict or risk.

Governors

Governors will maintain appropriate oversight of the school's approach to behaviour, safeguarding and bullying and will consider relevant information about patterns, implementation and effectiveness.

15. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The school will monitor bullying concerns and relevant behaviour and safeguarding information to identify patterns, trends or areas requiring further action.

This may include consideration of:

• reported bullying incidents;
• prejudice-related incidents;
• pupil voice;
• attendance and participation;
• behaviour information;
• safeguarding information;
• parent and carer feedback;
• staff observations and feedback;
• information relating to SEND and vulnerable pupils where appropriate.

Information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of preventative and responsive approaches and to inform school improvement.

The Headteacher and senior leaders will determine whether further action, training, curriculum development, supervision or environmental changes are required.

Governors will receive appropriate information to enable them to fulfil their oversight responsibilities.

16. **Equality and Inclusion**

The school is committed to ensuring that its approach to bullying is fair, inclusive and consistent with its duties under equality legislation.

The school will consider whether bullying is connected to a protected characteristic or other vulnerability and will respond appropriately.

No pupil should experience disadvantage because they have reported bullying or sought help.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where appropriate to ensure that pupils with SEND or other additional needs can access reporting mechanisms, investigations, support and relevant school processes.

17. L**inks with Other Policies**

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Behaviour Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Equality Policy;
- SEND Information Report and SEND Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;

18. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly and sooner where changes in legislation, statutory guidance, school practice or emerging patterns indicate that an earlier review is appropriate.

The effectiveness of the policy will be considered through:

- monitoring of reported concerns;
- pupil voice;
- staff feedback;
- parent and carer feedback;
- safeguarding and behaviour information;
- review of patterns and trends;
- evaluation of preventative and responsive practice.