



ST. MARK'S CE SCHOOL

ONE SCHOOL - SERVING ALL - THROUGH EXCELLENCE

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Statement and Guidelines

Policy Date: Spring 2026

Review Date: Spring 2027

1. Policy Statement

At St Mark's CE School, we are committed to providing a supportive, caring and safe environment where all pupils can learn and thrive without fear of bullying. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We are committed to responding promptly and effectively to all reported incidents of bullying and to working proactively to prevent bullying within our school community. As a school we recognise that bullying takes various forms and is often motivated against particular groups, for example due to groups associated with protected characteristics or because a pupil is adopted, in care or themselves are a young carer. Or just purely because another child is different to themselves.

We promote a culture of kindness, respect and inclusion through our core Christian values. All pupils should feel confident to report bullying and be assured that concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately.

This policy should be read and applied alongside other relevant school policies, including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Teaching, Learning and Curriculum Policies
- SEND Policy

All adults working with children have a duty of care to safeguard their wellbeing. Headteachers have statutory powers to discipline pupils for poor behaviour that occurs outside of the school premises (Section 89, Education and Inspections Act 2006). This includes bullying incidents that occur off-site, such as on school transport, in public places or online. Any reported incidents of off-site bullying will be investigated and addressed by the school.

2. Aims of the Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide a consistent and clear approach to preventing and managing bullying
- Define what constitutes bullying
- Clarify expectations for how pupils treat one another
- Explain how pupils, parents/carers and staff can report bullying
- Outline the roles and responsibilities of the school community in addressing bullying

3. What is Bullying?

Bullying is repeated or persistent behaviour that is intended to hurt, intimidate or distress another person. It often involves an imbalance of power, where the person being bullied feels unable to defend themselves. The bullying can link to one of the Protected Characteristics, but not a necessity to categorise the situation as bullying.

Bullying may take many forms, including:

- **Emotional:** Excluding others, being deliberately unfriendly, tormenting, threatening or intimidating behaviour
- **Physical:** Hitting, kicking, pushing, punching or any form of violence
- **Racist:** Racial taunts, gestures, graffiti or insults
- **Sexual:** Unwanted sexual comments, gestures, touching, jokes, images or the sharing of inappropriate material
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours
- **Homophobic:** Bullying related to sexuality or perceived sexuality
- **Cyber:** Bullying through digital platforms such as emails, messaging apps, social media, online games or mobile phones, including sharing images or videos

When using devices outside school, parents/carers have the responsibility for their children's use.

Pupils are encouraged to remember the following when using the internet:

- Respect others
- Think before sending messages
- Keep passwords private
- Block and report users who are bullying
- Do not retaliate
- Save evidence
- Tell a trusted adult

To support with understanding of what is a bully incident the acronym STOP - 'Several Times On Purpose' will be used

4. Signs of Bullying

A child may show signs or behaviours that indicate they are being bullied. These may include:

- Reluctance or fear of coming to school
- Changes in routines, appetite or sleep
- Becoming anxious, withdrawn or upset
- Decline in schoolwork or engagement
- Missing, damaged or lost belongings
- Unexplained cuts or bruises
- Signs of self-harm
- Requests for money

These signs may also indicate other concerns, but bullying should always be considered and investigated where appropriate.

5. Difference between Bullying and Unkind Behaviour

Bullying should not be confused with unkind behaviour.

Unkind behaviour:

- May be impulsive or accidental
- Typically occurs once or over a short period

- Usually happens between peers of equal power
- Examples include a one-off rude comment, an argument between friends, or a moment of unkindness said in anger

While unkind behaviour is not acceptable and will be addressed, it does not meet the definition of bullying unless it is repeated and intended to cause harm.

6. Reporting & Response Procedures

If there are concerns about bullying, the following procedures will be followed:

1. Incidents should be reported to a member of staff as soon as possible. Where possible, incidents reported during the school day will be investigated the same day where possible. Any follow-up actions will be considered in line with the school's Behaviour Policy, taking into account the nature of the incident and the needs of those involved.
2. A record of the incident will be kept and parents/carers will be informed at the earliest appropriate opportunity.
3. All incidents will be investigated thoroughly and sensitively, on a case-by-case basis and appropriate support will be provided to the victim.
4. Pupils involved will be supported and helped to change their behaviour.
5. In serious or ongoing cases, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting to work collaboratively with the school.
6. Following any incident, the situation will be monitored to ensure that bullying does not continue.
7. For bullying concerns related to an adult, the Head of School Primary or Secondary should be informed for further action

The school is committed to working in partnership with parents/carers in a respectful and supportive manner to ensure all pupils feel safe and happy. All staff should receive annual refresher training on recognising and responding to bullying to maintain vigilance and consistency in implementing this policy. The school will provide parents and carers with guidance on recognising signs of bullying at home and how to support their child, including contact points and resources."

7. Prevention

St Mark's CE School takes a proactive approach to preventing bullying through:

- Strong leadership that promotes an open, inclusive and anti-bullying culture
- The school will systematically collect and analyse bullying incident data termly to identify patterns and inform targeted prevention strategies
- Curriculum opportunities, including tutor periods and Personal Development lessons, to explore diversity, relationships and respect
- Student leaders will be trained and empowered to promote anti-bullying messages, support peers, and contribute to policy review and development.
- Whole-school assemblies and awareness events, including Anti-Bullying Week
- Pupil voice activities such as surveys
- Displays, posters and social media campaigns
- Increased supervision in identified areas of concern
- Ongoing staff training and professional development aligned with this policy

Prevention and response strategies will be adapted appropriately to the developmental stages of primary and secondary pupils, recognising differing needs and contexts within the all-through school

8. Responses and Support

Support for the victim will be planned with the pupil and parents and may include:

- immediate reassurance and being listened to by a trusted adult
- a named key adult for daily check-ins
- a written safety and support plan agreed with the pupil
- supervision arrangements at vulnerable times (breaks, lunch, transitions)
- seating or timetable adjustments where necessary
- support from pastoral staff, counsellor or wellbeing services
- opportunities to rebuild confidence and friendships (buddy or peer support)
- monitoring meetings with parents
- referral to external agencies where appropriate
- ongoing review to ensure the bullying has stopped and the pupil feels safe

Sanctions for bullying will be applied in line with the Behaviour Policy and may include restorative justice practises, fixed-term exclusions, or permanent exclusions in severe cases, ensuring proportionality and fairness. Support for the pupil displaying bullying behaviour may include:

- restorative work
- behaviour targets
- mentoring
- SEND assessment where appropriate

9. Further Support and Contact Information

If you have any concerns about your child, please contact the school:

Tel: 02380 772968

Additional support is available from:

- **Childline:** 0800 1111 | www.childline.org.uk
- **Kidscape:** 020 7730 3300
- Specifically for cyber Bullying - **Childline** <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/types-bullying/bullying-cyberbullying/>

10. Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors to ensure effectiveness and alignment with current legislation and school priorities.