SS John & Monica Catholic Primary School

Anti-bullying Policy

2025-26

Our Mission

'At SS John and Monica's we learn through the example of Jesus to love, respect, understand and value each other'

Contents

1) Policy objectives 3
2) Links with other school policies and practices 3
3) Links to legislation 3
4) Responsibilities 3
5) Definition of bullying 3
Bullying is not 4
6) Forms of bullying 4
7) School ethos 5
Our Community 5
8) Responding to bullying 5
General response 5
Cyberbullying 6
Supporting Pupils 7
Supporting Adults 7
Adults Who Have Perpetrated Bullying 8
9) Preventing bullying 8
Environment 8
Policy and Support 8
Education and Training 9
10) Involvement of pupils 9
11) Involvement and liaison with parents and carers 9
12) Monitoring and review: putting policy into practice 10
13) Useful links and supporting organisations 10

1) Policy objectives

This policy outlines what SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School will do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying during the 2025–26 academic year.

At SS John and Monica's, we are committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where the bullying of adults, children or young people is not tolerated in any form. This reflects our mission to Love, Respect, Understand and Value Each Other.

Pupil Voice: "*We want everyone in school to know that bullying is not accepted here and that it is everyone's job to stand up against it.*"

2) Links with other school policies and practices

This policy links with several school policies and practices, including: Behaviour and Relationship Policy, Safeguarding Policy, Complaints Policy, Child Protection Policy, Confidentiality Policy, Online Safety and AUP, PSHE and Computing, Child-on-Child Abuse Statement, Attendance Policy, SEND Policy.

3) Links to legislation

This policy reflects statutory requirements and guidance, including:
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 & 2011
- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty
- Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Online Safety Act 2023 (in force Oct 2023)
- DfE Behaviour in Schools guidance (2024)
- EHRC Guidance on supporting transgender pupils (2025)

4) Responsibilities

Responsibilities include:
- Headteacher: communicate policy, ensure fairness in sanctions, and appoint a senior lead.
- Governors: monitor and review.
- All staff: support, uphold, and implement the policy.
- Parents/carers: support children and work in partnership.
- Pupils: abide by the policy.

Annual staff training will include Equality Act duties, Online Safety Act updates, and Disability Action Plan resources.

5) Definition of bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual physically or emotionally. It includes prejudice-based bullying and cyberbullying. Under the Online Safety Act 2023, schools have strengthened responsibilities for online harms.

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying is recognised by the school as being a form of child on child abuse including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development

Pupil Voice: "Bullying is when someone keeps being unkind or hurting someone on purpose – not just once."

Bullying is not

It is important to understand that **not all unkind behaviour is bullying**. Bullying is deliberate, repeated, and intended to cause harm.

- Occasional fallings-out between friends, disagreements, name calling, or when a 'joke' goes too far are **not the same as bullying**.
- Children sometimes say or do things because they are upset or frustrated. These situations, while hurtful, are usually part of normal friendship ups and downs.
- Learning to manage these occasional conflicts is an **important part of growing up**, helping children to develop resilience, empathy, and the social skills needed to repair relationships.

Pupil Voice*: "Sometimes friends argue or say things they don't mean. That's not bullying – it's how we learn to make up and be friends again."*

6) Forms of bullying

Bullying can happen to **anyone**. This policy recognises and addresses all forms of bullying, including but not limited to:

- **Bullying related to physical appearance** (e.g., size, weight, clothing, features).
- **Bullying of young carers, children in care, or those experiencing particular home circumstances.**
- **Bullying related to health conditions** (physical or mental).
- **Physical bullying** (hitting, kicking, taking belongings).
- **Emotional/psychological bullying** (exclusion, intimidation, spreading rumours).
- **Sexual bullying** (including harmful sexual behaviour, harassment, or inappropriate comments).
- **Bullying via technology** (cyberbullying: social media, messaging, gaming, image sharing).

Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying
Bullying linked to **protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010**, including:

- Race, religion, faith or belief (including those without faith).
- Ethnicity, nationality, or culture.
- Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND).
- Sexual orientation (homophobic or biphobic bullying).
- Gender-based bullying, including transphobic bullying.
- Pregnancy and maternity (including bullying of teenage parents).

Pupil Voice: *"Bullying can be about lots of different things – how you look, what you believe, or even who your family is. But whatever the reason, it's never okay."*

7) School ethos

Our ethos: to create a safe, respectful environment, addressing bullying promptly and fairly. We recognise some pupils (e.g., SEND, disabled, or with protected characteristics) may be more vulnerable. We will work with families and external agencies to provide effective support. We recognise that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying our school can help to create a safe and disciplined environment, where pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential and live our school mission to Love, Respect, Understand and Value each other.

Pupil Voice: *We are a school family and it is important that we all feel safe and happy in school. We must stop bullying so that we are free to learn and live out our school mission.*

Our Community

At SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School, our community works together to prevent and tackle bullying. We commit to:

- **Regularly monitoring and reviewing** our anti-bullying policy and practice.
- **Supporting staff** to promote positive relationships that help prevent bullying.
- Recognising that some members of our community may be **more vulnerable** to bullying and its impact, such as children with SEND, and ensuring effective strategies and tailored support are in place.
- **Intervening promptly and appropriately** to identify and tackle bullying behaviour.
- Ensuring pupils know that bullying concerns will be dealt with **sensitively, fairly, and effectively**, and that everyone has the right to feel safe and able to learn.
- Expecting all members of the community to **work together to uphold** the anti-bullying policy.
- Acknowledging the impact bullying can have on the **wider family**, and working in partnership with parents/carers at all stages of reported concerns.
- Responding promptly to grievances regarding the school's handling of bullying, in line with the **Complaints Policy**.
- **Learning from best practice** in other schools and organisations to strengthen our approach.
- Drawing on support from the **Local Authority and other relevant agencies** when appropriate.

Pupil Voice: *"We know that adults in school will listen to us, take us seriously, and help to make things better."*

8) Responding to bullying

The school is committed to responding **promptly, fairly and effectively** to all incidents of bullying.

General response

When dealing with reported or suspected bullying, the school will:

- Act **immediately** when bullying is suspected or reported, ensuring the concern is addressed by the staff member approached or who witnessed it.

- Provide **appropriate support** for the person being bullied, ensuring they are safe from immediate harm and involved in decision-making where appropriate.
- Arrange for the **Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, or a Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)** to interview all parties involved.
- Ensure the **Headteacher** is informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Inform and involve relevant staff as appropriate.
- Ensure **parents/carers are kept informed** about concerns, actions, and outcomes, in line with safeguarding and confidentiality policies.
- Apply **sanctions** in line with the Behaviour and Relationship Policy and provide support for all parties.
- Consult with other agencies if necessary, including:
    - the **police**, if a criminal offence has been committed;
    - **Early Help** or **Children's Social Care**, if a child is at risk of significant harm.
- Where bullying occurs **off-site or outside of school hours** (including online), ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If needed, the DSL will collaborate with other schools or agencies.
- Ensure a **clear and detailed record** of incidents, actions, and decisions is kept in line with school safeguarding procedures.

Pupil Voice: *"When we tell an adult, we want to know they will take us seriously and do something about it."*

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, the school will:

- Act **as soon as an incident is reported or identified**.
- Provide **support for the person targeted** and work with the person who has bullied to change their behaviour.
- Encourage the person being bullied to **keep evidence** (e.g. screenshots, saved messages).
- Take all available steps to **identify the person responsible**, including:
    - reviewing use of school systems;
    - interviewing possible witnesses;
    - contacting the service provider and, where necessary, the police.
- Work with individuals and service providers to **remove offensive or harmful content** and prevent the incident spreading.
- Support pupils and parents to **report harmful content** to providers if perpetrators are unidentified or refuse to cooperate.
- **Confiscate and search electronic devices** (e.g. phones) where appropriate, in line with the law, DfE *Searching, Screening and Confiscation at School* guidance (2022), and the school's own policy.
- Request deletion of locally held or online content that breaches behavioural expectations.
- Apply **sanctions** in line with the Behaviour Policy. These may include warnings, removal of privileges (including online access), and fixed-term or permanent exclusion in serious cases.
- Where a **criminal offence** may have been committed (e.g. harassment, hate crime, malicious communications), inform the police.
- Provide **education and guidance** for staff, pupils, and parents, including:
    - advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;
    - practical advice on blocking or removing contacts;
    - discussions with pupils and parents/carers about behaviour change;
    - promoting safe and responsible use of technology, in line with the **Online Safety Act 2023**.
- Where necessary, involve external agencies such as Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, the police, or the **Children and Young People's Mental Health Service (CYPMHS)**.

- Encourage pupils to think carefully about what **personal information they share online** and the risks of their digital footprint.

Pupil Voice:*"Online bullying can feel like it follows you everywhere. It helps when adults show us how to block it, report it, and remind us that we are not alone."*

Supporting Pupils

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by:

- **Reassurance and continuous pastoral support**, ensuring they feel safe, valued, and listened to.
- Offering an **immediate opportunity** to discuss the incident with their class teacher, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or another trusted member of staff.
- Being encouraged to **keep a record** of incidents as evidence, and supported to explore ways to respond and build resilience.
- Working actively to **restore self-esteem and confidence** through positive reinforcement, peer support, and inclusion.
- Providing **ongoing tailored support**, which may include:
    - regular check-ins with staff,
    - access to formal counselling,
    - engagement with parents/carers.
- Where necessary, working with the **wider community and specialist organisations** (such as Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or CYPMHS) to provide additional guidance and support.
- Recognising that pupils with **SEND or disabilities** may require adapted support to address their specific needs.

Pupil Voice: "When someone is bullied, they need to know they are not alone and that adults will help them feel safe again."

Supporting Adults

Our school takes bullying of **adults** (staff, parents, carers, or other community members) just as seriously as bullying among pupils.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Being offered an **immediate opportunity** to raise concerns with the DSL, a senior leader, or the Headteacher.
- Being encouraged to **keep a record** of incidents as evidence and supported to consider positive ways of responding.
- Ensuring that, even if bullying occurs **off-site or online**, the school will investigate and act appropriately in line with its Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
- Supporting the reporting of harmful or offensive online content/accounts to the service provider and, if needed, law enforcement.
- Providing reassurance, access to appropriate support, and signposting to specialist organisations if required.
- Where appropriate, working with the wider community or local/national organisations for additional advice and guidance.

Adults Who Have Perpetrated Bullying

Adults who engage in bullying will be addressed and supported to change through:

- Discussing the incident with a senior member of staff or the Headteacher to establish the facts.
- Determining whether a legitimate grievance has been raised and, if so, directing them to the official Complaints Procedure.
- Where online activity is involved, requesting that harmful content be removed.
- Taking disciplinary, civil, or legal action as appropriate.
- Offering opportunities to address the underlying causes of their behaviour and promote more positive interactions.

Note for leaders: Specific guidance is available regarding handling complaints made on social networking sites via Birmingham City Council.

9) Preventing bullying

Environment

The whole school community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes mutual respect, care, and consideration for others.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including both pupils and adults.
- Be aware that children with SEND or disabilities may be disproportionately impacted by bullying, and provide tailored pastoral support where needed.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could lead to bullying, including family circumstances (e.g., looked-after children, young carers), religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality, or physical appearance.
- Challenge practices and language (including so-called "banter") which do not reflect the school's values of tolerance, respect, and inclusion. This includes tackling harmful sexualised behaviour.
- Encourage pupils to use technology positively and responsibly, in line with the Online Safety Act 2023.
- Work with staff, parents, the wider community, and external agencies to prevent and address all forms of prejudice-based bullying.
- Provide safe spaces for vulnerable pupils.
- Celebrate pupils' successes and achievements to build a positive ethos where bullying is less likely to occur.

Pupil Voice: *"We are all different, but that makes our school stronger. Everyone should feel proud of who they are."*

Policy and Support

The whole school community will:

- Provide a **range of accessible reporting routes** for pupils, staff, and parents/carers.
- Regularly **review and update practice** to reflect changes in technology and guidance, ensuring advice on safe online behaviour is up to date.

- Take appropriate, proportionate action for any bullying brought to the school's attention, even if it occurs **outside school premises** (e.g., on transport, online).
- Apply sanctions that reflect the **seriousness of incidents**, showing clearly that bullying is unacceptable.
- Use a variety of approaches, including **restorative practices**, to resolve conflict and repair relationships.

Education and Training

The school community will:

- Provide **annual training for all staff** (teaching, support, admin, lunchtime supervisors, site staff) to identify and respond to bullying, including reporting and recording.
- Embed anti-bullying themes into the **curriculum and wider school activities**, such as displays, assemblies, peer mentoring, and school council projects.
- Collaborate with other schools and educational settings, particularly at **transition points**, to ensure continuity of support.
- Keep anti-bullying work **high profile throughout the year**, highlighted in initiatives such as Anti-Bullying Week.
- Provide regular opportunities to develop pupils' **social and emotional skills**, resilience, and self-esteem.

10) Involvement of pupils

We will:

- Involve pupils in **policy development and decision-making**, ensuring they understand the school's approach and their own responsibilities.
- Regularly seek pupils' views on the **extent and nature of bullying** in school.
- Ensure pupils know how to **express worries and anxieties**.
- Ensure pupils are aware of the **sanctions** that may apply when bullying occurs.
- Involve pupils in **campaigns and curriculum activities** to promote kindness and respect.
- Use **pupil voice** to lead peer support and education.
- Share details of both **internal support** and **external helplines/websites**.
- Provide support not only for pupils who are bullied, but also for those who bully, addressing the underlying causes of their behaviour.

Pupil Voice: *"When pupils help lead the way, everyone listens. We can make a difference in stopping bullying."*

11) Involvement and liaison with parents and carers

We will:

- Involve parents and carers, ensuring they know that bullying is not tolerated at our school.
- Provide clear information about our policy, procedures, and named contacts in multiple formats, including via the school website.
- Make sure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried, and where to access independent advice.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and the local community to tackle issues that arise beyond the school gates.

- Encourage parents/carers to model positive behaviour for pupils, both offline and online.
- Ensure parents/carers are aware of our Complaints Procedure and how to use it effectively if they have concerns.

Pupil Voice: *"When our parents and teachers work together, it helps us feel safe and supported."*

12) Monitoring and review: putting policy into practice

- The school will **regularly monitor and evaluate** how well the policy is applied.
- Any issues identified will feed into the **school's action planning**.
- The **Headteacher** will be kept informed of bullying concerns as appropriate.
- The **Named Governor for Bullying** will report regularly to the Governing Body on incidents, trends, actions, and outcomes.
- Monitoring will include **analysis of patterns** (e.g., prejudice-based incidents, cyberbullying trends) to strengthen prevention.

13) Useful links and supporting organisations

A full list of organisations offering advice and support on bullying, online safety, SEND, race and faith, LGBT+ issues, and sexual harassment is available, including:

- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childline: www.childline.org.uk
- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Young Minds: www.youngminds.org.uk
- Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com
- Kick It Out: www.kickitout.org
- Educate Against Hate: www.educateagainsthate.com
- Proud Trust: www.theproudtrust.org
- Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: www.endviolenceagainstwomen.org.uk

Senior Leadership Team: September 2025

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