



Behaviour Policy

Updated: March 2026

Review by: Autumn 2027



Statement of Intent

St Mary's Catholic High School believes that, in order to facilitate teaching and learning, acceptable behaviour must be demonstrated in all aspects of school life. The school is committed to:

- Promoting desired behaviour.
- Promoting self-esteem, self-discipline, proper regard for authority, and positive relationships based on mutual respect.
- Ensuring equality and fair treatment for all.
- Praising and rewarding good behaviour.
- Challenging and disciplining misbehaviour.
- Providing a safe environment free from disruption, violence, discrimination, bullying and any form of harassment.
- Encouraging positive relationships with parents.
- Developing positive relationships with pupils to enable early intervention.
- A shared approach which involves pupils in the implementation of the school's policy and associated procedures.
- Promoting a culture of praise and encouragement in which all pupils can achieve.

The school acknowledges that behaviour can sometimes be the result of educational needs, mental health issues, or other needs or vulnerabilities, and will address these needs via an individualised graduated response.

To help reduce the likelihood of behavioural issues related to social, emotional or mental health (SEMH), the school aims to create a safe and calm environment in which positive mental health and wellbeing are promoted and pupils are taught to be resilient. The school aims to promote resilience as part of a whole-school approach using the following methods:

- **Culture, ethos and environment** – the health and wellbeing of pupils and staff is promoted through the informal curriculum, including leadership practice, policies, values and attitudes, alongside the social and physical environment
- **Teaching** – the curriculum is used to develop pupils' knowledge about health and wellbeing
- **Community engagement** – the school proactively engages with parents, outside agencies and the wider community to promote consistent support for pupils' health and wellbeing.

Where vulnerable pupils or groups are identified, provision will be made to support and promote their positive mental health. The school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy outlines the specific procedures that will be used to assess these pupils for any SEMH-related difficulties that could affect their behaviour.

Legal framework

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

- Education Act 1996
- Education Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Health Act 2006
- Voyeurism (Offences) Act 2019
- The School Information (England) Regulations 2008
- DfE (2016) 'Behaviour and discipline in schools'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2021) 'Mental health and behaviour in schools'
- DfE (2015) 'Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years'
- DfE (2013) 'Use of reasonable force'
- DfE (2022) 'Searching, screening and confiscation'

- DfE (2024) ‘Suspension and permanent exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England - “A pupil may be suspended for one or more fixed periods 17 (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year). A suspension does not have to be for a continuous period.”

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Pupil Learning Charter
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Suspension Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Smoke-Free Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, age, disability, gender reassignment, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- Promoting a whole-school culture where calm, dignity and structure encompass every space and activity.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy, as outlined in the school’s Complaints Procedures Policy.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The monitoring and implementation of this policy and of the behaviour procedures at the school. This includes the policy’s effectiveness in addressing any SEMH-related drivers of poor behaviour.
- Establishing the standard of behaviour expected by pupils at the school.
- Determining the school rules and any disciplinary sanctions for breaking the rules.
- The day-to-day implementation of this policy.
- Publishing this policy and making it available to staff, parents and pupils at least once a year.

- Reporting to the governing body on the implementation of this policy, including its effectiveness in addressing any SEMH-related issues that could be driving disruptive behaviour.

The mental health lead is responsible for:

- Overseeing the whole-school approach to mental health, including how this is reflected in this policy, how staff are supported with managing pupils with SEMH-related behavioural difficulties, and how the school engages pupils and parents with regards to the behaviour of pupils with SEMH difficulties.
- Supporting behaviour management in line with the Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

The SENCO is responsible for:

- Collaborating with the governing body, headteacher and the mental health lead, as part of the SLT, to determine the strategic development of behaviour and SEMH policies and provisions in the school.
- Undertaking day-to-day responsibilities for the successful operation of the behaviour and SEMH policies to support pupils with SEND, in line with the school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy and to make reasonable adjustments where necessary.
- Supporting teachers in the further assessment of a pupil's strengths and areas for improvement and advising on the effective implementation of support.

Teaching staff are responsible for:

- Planning and reviewing support for pupils with behavioural difficulties in collaboration with parents, the SENCO and, where appropriate, the pupils themselves.
- Aiming to teach all pupils the full curriculum, whatever their prior attainment.
- Planning lessons to address potential areas of difficulty to ensure that there are no barriers to every pupil achieving their full potential, and that every pupil with behavioural difficulties will be able to study the full national curriculum.
- Being responsible and accountable for the progress and development of the pupils in their class.

All members of staff, including teaching and support staff, and volunteers are responsible for:

- Adhering to this policy.
- Supporting pupils in adhering to this policy.

- Promoting a supportive and high-quality learning environment.
- Modelling high levels of behaviour.
- Being aware of the signs of behavioural difficulties.
- Setting high expectations for every pupil.
- Being aware of the needs, outcomes sought, and support provided to any pupils with specific behavioural needs.
- Keeping the relevant figures of authority up-to-date with any changes in behaviour. The relevant figures of authority include:
 - SENCO.
 - Headteacher.
 - Subject leader.
- As authorised by the headteacher, disciplining pupils who display poor levels of behaviour. This responsibility includes the power to discipline pupils even when they are not in school or in the charge of a member of staff.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Their own behaviour both inside school and out in the wider community.
- Reporting any unacceptable behaviour to a member of staff.

Parents are responsible for:

- Supporting their child in adhering to the school rules.
- Informing the school of any changes in circumstances which may affect their child's behaviour.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the school defines “serious unacceptable behaviour” as any behaviour which may cause harm to oneself or others, damage the reputation of the school within the wider community, and/or any illegal behaviour. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- **Discrimination** – not giving equal respect to an individual on the basis of age, disability, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation
- **Harassment** – behaviour towards others which is unwanted, offensive and affects the dignity of the individual or group of individuals
- **Vexatious behaviour** – deliberately acting in a manner so as to cause annoyance or irritation
- **Bullying** – Bullying is recognised as a form of harassment. It involves personal abuse or persistent actions that humiliate, intimidate, frighten, or demean the individual being targeted. Such behaviour is unacceptable and will be addressed in line with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, which

promotes respect, safety, and the right of every pupil to learn in a supportive environment.

- **Cyberbullying** – the use of electronic communication to bully a person, typically by sending messages of an intimidating or threatening nature
- Possession of legal or illegal drugs, alcohol or tobacco
- *Possession of banned items/contraband – This refers to any items prohibited under school rules or deemed unsafe, inappropriate, or disruptive to the learning environment.*
- Truancy and running away from school
- Refusing to comply with disciplinary sanctions
- Theft
- Verbal abuse, including swearing, racist remarks and threatening language
- Fighting and aggression
- Persistent disobedience or destructive behaviour
- Extreme behaviour, such as violence and serious vandalism
- Any behaviour that threatens safety or presents a serious danger
- Any behaviour that seriously inhibits the learning of pupils
- Any behaviour that requires the immediate attention of a staff member

For the purposes of this policy, the school defines “low-level unacceptable behaviour” as any behaviour which may disrupt the education of the perpetrator and/or other pupils, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Lateness
- Low-level disruption and talking in class
- Failure to complete classwork
- Rudeness
- Lack of correct equipment
- Refusing to complete homework, incomplete homework, or arriving at school without homework
- Disruption on public transport
- Use of mobile phones without permission
- Graffiti

Behaviour Escalation – “Low-level unacceptable behaviour” may be reclassified as “serious unacceptable behaviour” when the context and severity of the incident are taken into consideration.

Instances of unacceptable behaviour are taken seriously and dealt with immediately.

All unacceptable behaviours will be recorded by the staff member involved at the time. The pastoral lead will track all reported incidents to help identify pupils whose behaviour may indicate potential mental health problems.

After an initial incident of negative behaviour, the following sanctions are implemented:

- The classroom teacher, curriculum/pastoral lead investigates the incident and decides whether it constitutes unacceptable behaviour.
- If the pastoral lead deems the incident to be unacceptable behaviour, they will record the incident in the Behaviour Log, as well as on the pupil's Behaviour Contract if they have one. The behaviour will also be recorded on the pupil's permanent record.
- Where deemed necessary, the pupil will be moved to isolation – the pastoral lead will determine the length of the period the pupil will spend in isolation, as well as any detention time.
- Where deemed necessary, the pastoral lead will inform the pupil's parents and invite them to discuss the incident.

Following repeated incidents of unacceptable behaviour, the following sanctions are implemented:

- The headteacher will consider whether the pupil should be suspended for a fixed term, in line with the school's Suspension Policy, and will determine the length of the suspension.
- Although unacceptable behaviour does not necessarily mean a pupil has SEND, an assessment may be carried out at this stage to determine whether there are any undiagnosed learning or communication difficulties, or mental health issues that may be contributing to the pupil's behaviour.
- Where a pupil is identified as having SEMH-related difficulties, SEND support will be put in place from the school's national SEND budget.
- Where SEND is not identified, but the headteacher determines that support is still required for the pupil, an Individual Behaviour Plan will be created to outline the necessary provisions in place.

For discipline to be lawful, the school will ensure that:

- The decision to discipline a pupil is made by a paid member of school staff, or a member of staff authorised to do so by the headteacher.
- The decision to discipline a pupil is made on the school premises or whilst the pupil is under the charge of a member of staff, such as during an educational trip or visit.

- The decision to discipline a pupil is reasonable and will not discriminate on any grounds, as per the Equality Act 2010.

The school will ensure that all discipline is reasonable in all circumstances, and will consider the pupil's age, religious requirements, SEMH needs, any SEND, and any other relevant information.

Prevention strategies and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour

This section outlines the school's strategies for preventing unacceptable behaviour, minimising the severity of incidents, and using sanctions effectively and appropriately to improve pupils' behaviour in the future.

Positive teacher-pupil relationships

Positive teacher-pupil relationships are key to combatting unacceptable behaviour. The school focusses heavily on forming these relationships to allow teachers to understand their pupils and create a strong foundation from which behavioural change can take place.

De-escalation strategies

Where negative behaviour is present, staff members will implement de-escalation strategies to diffuse the situation. This includes:

- Appearing calm and using a modulated, low tone of voice
- Using simple, direct language.
- Avoiding being defensive, e.g. if comments or insults are directed at the staff member.
- Providing adequate personal space and not blocking a pupil's escape route.
- Showing open, accepting body language, e.g. not standing with their arms crossed.
- Reassuring the pupil and creating an outcome goal.
- Identifying any points of agreement to build a rapport.
- Offering the pupil a face-saving route out of confrontation, e.g. that if they stop the behaviour, then the consequences will be lessened.
- Rephrasing requests made up of negative words with positive phrases, e.g. "if you don't return to your seat, I won't help you with your work" becomes "if you return to your seat, I can help you with your work".

Physical intervention

In line with the school's Physical Intervention Policy, trained members of staff have the legal right to use reasonable force to prevent pupils from committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging school property, and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom.

In the event of a fight, any staff member may intervene if they feel able to safely do so, with the priority being the safety and wellbeing of all involved.

Physical restraint will only be used as a last resort and as a method of restraint. Staff members will use their professional judgement of the incident to decide whether physical intervention is necessary. The situations in which physical restraint may be appropriate are detailed in the Physical Intervention Policy. Wherever possible, staff will ensure that a second member of staff is present to witness the physical intervention used. After an instance of physical intervention, the pupil will be immediately taken to the headteacher and the pupil's parent will be contacted – parents may be asked to collect the pupil.

Any violent or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated by the school and may result in a fixed-term suspension in the first instance. It is at the discretion of the headteacher as to what behaviour constitutes for a suspension.

When using reasonable force in response to risks presented by incidents involving pupils with SEND or medical conditions, the school will recognise and consider the vulnerability of these groups.

Isolation rooms (Personal Guidance Unit- PGU / Internal Suspension – IS)

When a pupil is removed from a classroom, they will be placed in one of the school's isolation rooms. These rooms are used to separate pupils from their peers for a limited period, ensuring that learning can continue without disruption. The school will only move pupils to isolation rooms where absolutely necessary. During their time in isolation, pupils' health and safety will be safeguarded, and any additional requirements, such as SEND needs, will be met. The duration of isolation will be determined by the school and may extend beyond a single school day, though pupils will not remain in isolation longer than necessary. The supervising staff member will decide what the pupil may and may not do during their time in isolation. The headteacher will request that the pupil's class teachers provide appropriate work for them to complete. Pupils are permitted to eat during the allocated times of the school day and may use the toilet as required, in line with school policy.

All pupils who spend time in either of these rooms are required to hand in their phone for safeguarding purposes as per the school's mobile phone policy. They are then given it back when leaving the room after the set period of time.

If a pupil states that they do not have a phone and to ensure safe working procedures within the room, the child will be scanned using the wand.

Detentions

The school will make it clear to parents and pupils that they are able to use detention as a sanction, both during and outside of school hours.

All teachers at the school can impose detention on a pupil, unless the headteacher decides to withdraw this power from any teacher. The headteacher may decide to delegate the power to impose detention to volunteers, such as parents who assist during educational visits or trips.

The following indicate the times during which detention can be issued outside of school hours:

- Any school day where the pupil is not authorised to be absent
- During weekends, except for any weekend preceding or following a half-term
- Any non-teaching day, e.g. INSET days

Parental consent is not required for detentions and, therefore, the school is able to issue detention as a sanction without first notifying the parents of the pupil.

When issuing detentions, members of staff will ensure that they do so reasonably within the given circumstances, and that they consider any additional needs of the pupil. If the detention is during lunchtime, **a reasonable length of time** will be allocated to allow the pupil to eat, drink and use the toilet. When issuing detentions which are set to be outside of school hours, the member of staff doing so will consider:

- Whether the detention is likely to put the pupil at risk.
- Whether the pupil has identified caring responsibilities which would make the detention unreasonable.
- Whether the parents ought to be informed of the detention, e.g. it may not be necessary to do so if the detention is for short period after school and the pupil is able to return home safely.
- Whether suitable transport arrangements are in place between the parents and the pupil. It does not matter whether these transport arrangements are inconvenient to the parents.

Sexual abuse and discrimination

The school prohibits all forms of sexual abuse and discrimination, including sexual harassment, gender-based bullying and sexual violence. The school's procedures

for handling child on child sexual abuse and discrimination are detailed in the Child on Child Abuse Policy.

The school will respond promptly and appropriately to any sexual harassment complaints in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; appropriate steps will be taken to stop the harassment and prevent any reoccurrence. Discipline for incidents of sexual harassment will be determined based on the nature of the case, the ages of those involved and any previous related incidents.

Smoking and controlled substances

The school will follow the procedures outlined in its Smoke-Free Policy when managing behaviour in regard to smoking/vaping and nicotine products. Legal and illegal drugs, and alcohol will be dealt with under this policy.

In accordance with part 1 of the Health Act 2006, this school is a smoke-free environment. Parents, visitors, staff and pupils are instructed not to smoke or vape on school grounds. Pupils are not permitted to bring smoking or vaping materials or nicotine products to school.

The school will not tolerate the use, suspected use, or possession of illegal drugs, legal highs and other controlled substances, such as alcohol. School staff will use their professional judgement in coming to a decision as to whether they believe a child has used such substances. Where incidents with pupils related to these substances occur, the incidents will be dealt with accordingly. School sanctions will be issued. These range up to, and include, Permanent Exclusion.

Prohibited items, searching pupils and confiscation

Headteachers and staff authorised by them have a statutory power to search pupils or their possessions, without consent, where they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that the pupil may have a prohibited item. The prohibited items are:

- Knives or weapons.
- Alcohol.
- Illegal drugs.
- Stolen items.
- Tobacco, cigarette papers, e-cigarettes and vapes.
- Fireworks.
- Pornographic images.
- Any article that the member of staff reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used:
 - To commit an offence; or
 - To cause personal injury to any person, including the pupil themselves; or

– To damage the property of any person, including the pupil themselves. All members of staff can use their power to search without consent for any of the items listed above. Staff will follow the provisions outlined in the school's Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy when conducting searches and confiscating items. The use of the wand will be used when a child refuses to be searched.

The headteacher and other authorised members of staff are permitted to use reasonable force when conducting a search without consent for certain prohibited items, in line with the school's Physical Intervention Policy.

Effective classroom management

Well-managed classrooms are paramount to preventing disruptive and unacceptable behaviour. The school understands that effective classroom management allows staff to:

- Start the year with clear sets of rules and routines that are understood by all pupils.
- Establish agreed rewards and positive reinforcements.
- Establish sanctions for misbehaviour.
- Establish clear responses for handling behavioural problems.
- Encourage respect and development of positive relationships.
- Make effective use of the physical space available.
- Have well-planned lessons with a range of activities to keep pupils stimulated.

Subject to reasonable adjustments, e.g. those made for pupils whose SEND may affect their behaviour, pupils will be expected to follow the school Pupil Code of Conduct, which requires pupils to:

- Conduct themselves around the school premises in a safe, sensible and respectful manner.
- Arrive to lessons on time and fully prepared.
- Follow reasonable instructions given by staff.
- Behave in a reasonable and polite manner towards all staff and pupils.
- Show respect for the opinions and beliefs of others.
- Complete classwork as requested.
- Hand in homework at the time requested.
- Report unacceptable behaviour.
- Show respect for the school environment.

Classroom rules and routines

The school has an established set of clear, comprehensive and enforceable classroom rules which define what is acceptable behaviour and what the consequences are if rules are not adhered to. Attention is given to how rules are worded, such as the use of positive language rather than negative, e.g. “act respectfully towards your peers and teachers”, rather than “do not act disrespectfully towards your peers and teachers”.

The school also has an established set of classroom routines to help pupils work well, in the understanding that behavioural problems can arise due to the lack of a consistent routine. This includes teachers ensuring that before lessons begin, they have the full attention of all pupils, then explaining the task clearly so all pupils understand what they are supposed to be doing.

The headteacher ensures all teachers understand classroom rules and routines and how to enforce them, including any sanctions for not following the rules.

Teachers support pupils to understand and follow classroom rules and routines. Teachers inform pupils of classroom rules and routines at the beginning of the academic year and revisit these daily. Where appropriate, teachers explain the rationale behind the rules and routines to help pupils understand why they are needed, and will model rules and routines to ensure pupils understand them. Teachers also explain clearly to pupils what will happen if they breach any classroom rules to ensure pupils are aware of the sanctions that may be imposed.

To support pupils’ continued awareness and understanding of classroom rules and routines, teachers reinforce them in a range of ways, e.g. placing posters of the rules on classroom walls and providing regular verbal reminders of the routines. Teachers also ensure that classroom rules and routines remain consistent and are practised throughout the year to create a more productive and enjoyable environment.

At the beginning of the school year, once the classroom rules have been devised, pupils are provided with a Classroom Rules Agreement which they are required to read and sign. All rules outlined in the Classroom Rules Agreement are applicable to pupils’ behaviour elsewhere on the school premises and outside of the school – teachers will ensure that pupils understand this.

The classroom environment

The school understands that a well-structured classroom environment is paramount to preventing poor behaviour. This includes the teacher positioning

themselves effectively within the classroom, e.g. wherever possible, teachers avoid standing with their backs to pupils and ensure they have full view of the room at all times.

Teachers employ strategic seating arrangements to prevent poor behaviour and enable it to be noticed early, such as:

- Seating those who frequently model poor behaviour closest to, and facing, the teacher.
- Seating those who frequently model poor behaviour away from each other.
- Ensuring the teacher can see pupils' faces, that pupils can see one another, and that they can see the body.
- Ensuring the teacher can move around the room so that behaviour can be monitored effectively.

Praise and rewards

The school recognises that praise is key to making pupils feel valued and ensuring that their work and efforts are celebrated. When giving praise, teachers ensure:

- They define the behaviour that is being rewarded.
- The praise is given immediately following the desired behaviour.
- The way in which the praise is given is varied.
- Praise is related to effort, rather than only to work produced.
- Perseverance and independence are encouraged.
- Praise is only given when a pupil's efforts, work or behaviour need to be recognised, rather than continuously without reason.
- The praise given is always sincere and is not followed with immediate criticism.

Whilst it is important to receive praise from teachers, the school understands that peer praise is also effective for creating a positive, fun and supportive environment. Teachers encourage pupils to praise one another, and praise another pupil to the teacher, if they see them modelling good behaviour.

As with praise, the school understands that providing rewards after certain behaviour means that pupils are more likely to model the same behaviour again.

For rewards to be effective, the school recognises that they need to be:

- **Immediate** – immediately rewarded following good behaviour.
- **Consistent** – consistently rewarded to maintain the behaviour.

- **Achievable** – keeping rewards achievable to maintain attention and motivation.
- **Fair** – making sure all pupils are fairly rewarded.

The school has a number of options for rewards that can be given to pupils. These include 3 pupils per lesson are rewarded as a minimum for their efforts during that class with merits, pupils who achieve 100% attendance weekly receive merits, Celebration Assemblies, Activity-based rewards, Rewards trips twice a year (Christmas and Summer).

Behaviour off school premises

Pupils at the school must agree to represent the school in a positive manner. The guidance laid out in the Pupil Code of Conduct applies both inside school and out in the wider community, particularly if the pupil is dressed in school uniform. Staff can discipline pupils for misbehaviour outside of the school premises when the pupil is:

- Wearing school uniform.
- Travelling to or from school.
- Taking part in any school-related activity.
- In any way identifiable as being a pupil at the school.

Staff may also discipline pupils for misbehaviour off the school premises that, irrespective of the above:

- Could negatively affect the reputation of the school.
- Could pose a threat to another pupil, a member of staff at the school, or a member of the public.
- Could disrupt the orderly running of the school.

Any bullying witnessed outside of the school premises and reported to a member of staff, will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.

The school will impose the same sanctions for bullying incidents and non-criminal misbehaviour witnessed outside of the school premises as would be imposed for the same behaviour conducted on school premises. In all cases of unacceptable behaviour outside of the school premises, staff will only impose sanctions once the pupil has returned to the school premises or when under the supervision of a member of staff.

Complaints from members of the public about the behaviour of pupils from the school are taken very seriously and will be dealt with in accordance with the Complaints Procedures Policy.

