

St Mary's Church of England Primary School & Little Oaks Nursery



"Let your light shine"

Anti- Bullying Policy

Status	Statutory
Responsible Person	Headteacher
Responsible Governor	Chair of Governors
Ratified by Headteacher	November 2025
Date approved by the GB	November 2025
Review Period	Annually
Review Date	November 2026

Introduction

At St Mary's Primary School & Little Oaks Nursery our core values are that every child should feel safe, valued, supported and happy in school. We further aim to achieve this by providing opportunities to develop each child's self-confidence and pride.

As a consequence of our values, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly learning environment for all our pupils, to allow them to improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

We would expect pupils to act safely and feel safe in school, including that they understand the issues relating to all forms of bullying and that they feel confident to seek support from school staff should they feel they, or others, are unsafe.

We would also want parents/carers to feel confident that their children are safe and cared for in school and that incidents, when they do arise, are dealt with promptly and well.

As a school committed to respecting our golden values, we work to promote an ethos where children are safe, can express their opinions and realise their potential.

The school is aware of its legal obligations, including the Equalities Act 2010. We are aware of our role within the local community supporting parents/carers and working with other agencies outside the school where appropriate.

This policy is available:

- On the school's website: www.stmarysbridgwater.co.uk
- From the school office

Roles and responsibilities

The Head teacher – Has overall responsibility for the policy and its implementation and liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, LA and outside agencies and appointing an Anti-bullying coordinator who will have general responsibility for handling the implementation of this policy.

The Anti-bullying Lead in our school is: Mrs Caroline Layton, DDSL

The responsibilities are:

- Policy development and review involving pupils, staff, governors, parents/carers and relevant local agencies
- Implementing the policy and monitoring and assessing its effectiveness in practice
- Ensuring evaluation takes place and that this informs policy review
- Managing bullying incidents
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Coordinating strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

The nominated Governor with the responsibility for anti-bullying is: Mary Clothier

Definition of Bullying

The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace.

<https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/understanding-bullying/definition>

How does bullying differ from teasing/falling out between friends or other types of aggressive behaviour?

- There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate.
- There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves.
- It is usually persistent.
- Occasionally, an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent, but if fulfils all other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered, particularly in cases of hate crime related bullying and cyberbullying. If the victim might be in danger, then intervention is urgently required.

What does bullying look like?

Bullying behaviour can be physical, verbal or emotional and includes:

- physical assault
- taking or damaging belongings
- name calling
- taunting
- mocking
- making offensive comments
- cyber bullying - inappropriate text messaging or e-mailing; sending offensive or degrading images, impersonating and hacking into accounts online using internet enabled devices
- producing offensive graffiti
- gossiping and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours
- excluding people from groups.

Although bullying can occur between individuals, it can often take place in the presence (virtually or physically) of others who become the 'bystanders' or 'accessories'.

Why are children and young people bullied?

Specific types of bullying include:

Prejudice Related Bullying

Under the Equalities Act 2010 it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- age
- being or becoming a transsexual person
- being married or in a civil partnership
- being pregnant or having a child
- disability
- race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin including Gypsy Roma, Travellers
- religion, belief or lack of religion/belief
- sex / gender
- sexual orientation

These are called 'protected characteristics'.

As part of the requirement on schools to promote fundamental British values, schools must proactively challenge derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist in nature. We will record these types of bullying, even those which represents a one-off incident, and report them to the local authority for monitoring purposes.

Other vulnerable groups include

- bullying related to appearance or health
- bullying of young carers or looked after children or otherwise related to home circumstances

Although the above do not currently receive protection under the Equality Act 2010, bullying for these reasons is just as serious. There is no hierarchy of bullying – all forms should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Prejudice Related Language

Racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist language includes terms of abuse used towards people because of their race/ethnicity/nationality; because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transsexual, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer or sibling who is; because they have a learning or physical disability. Such language is generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior. This may also be used to taunt young people who are different in some way or their friends, family members or their parents/carers are different.

In the case of homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language, particularly dismissing it as banter is not helpful, as even if these terms are not referring to a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, they are using the terms to mean inferior, bad, broken or wrong. We will challenge the use of prejudice related language in our school even if it appears to be being used without any intent. Persistent use of prejudice related language and/or bullying will be dealt with as with any other form of bullying.

Where does bullying take place?

Bullying is not confined to the school premises. It also persists outside school, on the journey to and from school and in the local community.

The school acknowledges its responsibilities to support families if bullying occurs off the premises.

Cyberbullying

The increasing use of digital technology and the internet has also provided new and particularly intrusive ways for bullies to reach their victims.

Cyberbullying can take many forms and it can often influence behaviour in school.

Whilst incidents of cyberbullying generally occur outside school, we will offer support and guidance to parents/carers and their children who experience online bullying and will treat cyberbullying with the same severity as any other forms of bullying.

Cyberbullying can include: -

- hacking into someone's accounts/sites
- Posting prejudice / hate messages
- Impersonating someone on line
- Public posting of images
- Exclusion
- Threats and manipulation
- Stalking

We will ensure that our children are taught safe ways to use the internet (see our e-safety policy), encourage good online behaviour and support parents/carers by publishing information and advice in our fortnightly newsletter.

Bullying can take place between:

- young people
- young people and staff
- between staff
- individuals or groups

Child on Child Harm

This is highlighted in our Safeguarding Policy.

It must be taken into account if this is a bullying issue or a 'one off' incident.

Strategies for promoting an anti- bullying atmosphere

As part of our on-going commitment to the safety and welfare of our pupils at St Mary's Primary School & Little Oaks Nursery, we have developed the following strategies to promote positive behaviour and discourage bullying behaviour:

- Through encouraging caring and cooperative relationships in the classroom, teachers can do a great deal to promote an anti-bullying culture.
- Whole-school assemblies provide another opportunity for promoting a caring school community where bullying is seen as very harmful.
- A different Roots & Fruits Christian value is explored each half term
- Golden Rules displayed in areas around the room.
- Celebration of good behaviour in class and Gold Assembly.
- Rewards given, such as 'Kindest Class', 'Shining Light' and 'Gold Awards'.
- Anti-bullying and relationships as part of the PSHE curriculum
- Specific curriculum input on areas of concern such as cyberbullying and internet safety
- Lunchtime Nurture Groups and Playground Leaders (Y6) to support those children who struggle socially at playtime
- ELSA support for emotional wellbeing
- Interventions, such as Circle of Friends, ELSA, Social Skills Group, Lego Therapy and Nurture Groups
- Mini Chaplains to develop the Christian Ethos of the school, and promote our Christian values.
- Wellbeing group to support staff relationships and wellbeing

Support for parents/carers:

- PFSA
- Tuning Into Kids
- Padlet
- Newsletters

Support for all school staff

- Staff training and development for all staff
- The Headteacher, Deputyhead, SENDCO and Pastoral staff are always available to support and advise staff.

Reporting and responding to bullying

Our school has clear systems to report bullying for the whole school community (including staff, parents/carers, children and young people). This includes those who are the victims of bullying or have witnessed bullying behaviour.

Procedures

All identified bullying incidents should be reported to the Headteacher or Deputy as soon as possible. Incidents may be reported directly by the victim, by one of the victim's close friends or other peers, or via another member of staff (teaching or non-teaching). Incidents may sometimes be reported to the Headteacher by a parent.

All reported incidents will be taken seriously and investigated, involving all parties. Staff are aware of and follow the same procedures.

The following steps will be taken:

- All parties will be given an opportunity to share their view to discover if bullying has happened.
- If bullying has taken place, the Headteacher/Deputyhead will reassure the victim that the bullying will now stop and if it ever does re-occur, the victim must report it immediately. The Headteacher/Deputyhead will then discuss with the victim the best way to proceed suggesting the process below for the victim's approval.
- Parents of both parties will be informed,
- The child who has been bullied will be offered support; a named person that child feels safe with will support. ELSA support may be suggested in some cases.
- Appropriate disciplinary sanctions will be implemented in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy. These are graded according to the seriousness of the incident but send out a message that bullying is unacceptable. Responses may also vary according to the type of bullying and may involve other agencies where appropriate
- A short-term behaviour action plan may be appropriate for the bully(ies). This may include an opportunity for ELSA to build self-esteem and development of better friendships. PFSA support may be offered if there are difficulties at home
- Follow up conversations will take place, in particular keeping in touch with the person who reported the situation, parents/carers
- A clear complaints procedure is in place for parents/carers who are not satisfied with the school's actions
- A range of follow-up responses and support is appropriate to the situation for all involved, e.g. solution focused, restorative approach, circle of friends, individual work with victim, perpetrator and bystanders, referral to outside agencies if appropriate
- Contact with the wider community will be undertaken if the bullying is taking place off the school premises, i.e. in the case of cyberbullying or hate crime.

Recording bullying and evaluating the policy

Bullying incidents will be recorded on CPOMS by the member of staff who deals with the incident, and this will be read by the anti-bullying lead, other staff who work with the children, and the safeguarding team.

Information stored in school will be used to ensure individual incidents are followed up. It will also be used to identify trends and inform preventative work in school and development of the policy. This information will be discussed by the Safeguarding Team and Pastoral staff during their weekly pastoral meeting.

The information will be presented to the governors as part of the Headteacher's Report to Governors.

Prejudice related bullying/incidents are reported to the local authority using the guidelines set out by Somerset County Council.

Links with other policies and why

Policy	Why
Behaviour Policy	Rewards and consequences, Codes of conduct
Relationships policy	Restorative approach
Safeguarding Policy	Child protection
E-safety and Acceptable Use Policy	Cyberbullying and e-safety
Confidential Reporting Code (Whistleblowing) Policy	Staff guidelines and procedures for reporting a concern
Equalities Policy	Prejudice related crime (homophobia, race, religion and culture and SEN/disability)
Complaints Policy	Guidelines to make a complaint if families are not happy with the school's response

Useful organisations

Anti-bullying Alliance (ABA) - <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk>

Brings together more than 65 organisations with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

Mencap – <https://www.mencap.org.uk>

Mencap is a learning disability charity that provides information and support to children and adults with a learning disability, and to their families and carers.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender charity - Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) – www.eachaction.org.uk

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) is a charity and training agency helping people and organisations affected by homophobia. The website gives guidance, contact details and a freephone helpline.

School's Out – www.schools-out.org.uk

Childnet International – www.childnet-int.org

Childnet International - the UK's Safer Internet Centre

NSPCC - www.nspcc.org.uk

NSPCC run several campaigns to support young people around bullying and internet safety

ChildLine

ChildLine is a private and confidential service for children and young people up to the age of 19. www.childline.org.uk

Show Racism the Red Card – <https://www.theredcard.org>