

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Anti Bullying Policy



***“With God’s Love we are a family:
Caring, Learning and Growing together”***

	Name of School	St John Fisher Catholic Primary
	Policy Review Date	November 2026
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	Who reviewed this policy?	Head Teacher and Governors

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1. Statement of intent and aims

At St John Fisher Catholic Primary School, every child has the right to feel safe, valued and able to learn. Our Catholic ethos calls us to care for one another, recognise the dignity of every person and build a community where everyone belongs. Bullying is contrary to our mission, “With God’s Love we are a family: caring, learning and growing together”, and to our expectations to be Ready, Respectful and Safe.

We take all reports of bullying seriously. We will listen to children, act promptly, investigate fairly, protect children from further harm and work with families. We aim to prevent bullying through positive relationships, teaching, early intervention and a culture where children feel able to speak up.

This policy applies to pupils and to incidents affecting the school community, including incidents involving online activity or behaviour outside school where the school has a lawful and appropriate reason to respond. It should be read alongside the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse procedures, Equality Information/Objectives, SEND policy and complaints procedure.

Our aims

- Make clear that bullying and discriminatory behaviour are unacceptable and will be addressed.
- Help children understand kindness, respect, empathy, difference, boundaries and safe relationships.
- Ensure pupils know how to report worries and which trusted adults can help.
- Respond consistently, proportionately and without prejudging what has happened.
- Support the child who has been harmed, the child whose behaviour has caused harm and other pupils affected.
- Use records and pupil voice to identify patterns and improve prevention.

2. Definition of bullying

Bullying is behaviour that hurts, intimidates, humiliates or excludes another person and is typically repeated over time. It often involves a real or perceived imbalance of power, which may make it difficult for the person targeted to defend themselves or stop the behaviour. Children may remember STOP: “Several Times and On Purpose”. This is a helpful prompt for understanding common patterns of bullying, but it is not a test that must be passed before school takes action.

A single incident may not meet the school’s definition of bullying, but it can still be serious, harmful, discriminatory or a safeguarding concern. Every report will be considered and responded to on its own facts. The school will not dismiss a concern simply because it is the first reported incident or because the child finds it difficult to explain what has happened.

Bullying is not the same as every disagreement

Children can fall out, argue, make mistakes or say unkind things without this necessarily being bullying. Staff will still address such behaviour, help children understand its impact and support them to repair relationships where appropriate. Repeated exclusion, intimidation or unkindness must not be minimised as ordinary friendship difficulties.

The school will consider the pattern, impact, context, power dynamics, age and developmental needs of the children involved, and whether the behaviour relates to a protected characteristic or other vulnerability.

3. Types of bullying and harmful behaviour

Bullying can be direct or indirect, take place face-to-face or online, and involve one child or a group. Examples include:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, damaging belongings or threatening physical harm.
- Verbal: name-calling, insults, mocking, threats, humiliating comments or repeated hurtful teasing.
- Emotional or relational: deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, encouraging others to reject someone or repeatedly undermining confidence.
- Cyberbullying: hurtful or threatening messages, group-chat exclusion, sharing humiliating content, impersonation, posting rumours or encouraging others to target someone online.
- Prejudice-based bullying: targeting a person because of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sex, disability, SEND, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, family circumstances, appearance, language or another actual or perceived difference.
- Sexual or sexist bullying: sexualised name-calling, degrading remarks, sexual jokes or repeated unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature. These behaviours may also be child-on-child abuse and require safeguarding action.
- Bullying related to poverty or circumstances: mocking clothing, belongings, family income, housing, caring responsibilities or other personal circumstances.

The examples are not exhaustive. Discriminatory language or behaviour will be challenged even where a child says they were joking or did not intend harm. Staff will consider the impact and context, not just the explanation given.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Board

- Approve and review this policy and seek assurance that it is implemented effectively.
- Consider appropriate, anonymised information about patterns, groups affected and the effectiveness of school responses.
- Promote an inclusive culture and ensure the school fulfils its duties under equality and safeguarding legislation.

Headteacher and senior leaders

- Ensure staff understand this policy and apply it consistently alongside the Behaviour and Safeguarding Policies.
- Ensure reports are investigated promptly, recorded appropriately and escalated where necessary.
- Review patterns and ensure suitable support, training and preventative work are in place.
- Ensure parents/carers receive appropriate communication while respecting confidentiality and the privacy of other children.

Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputies

The DSL is Mrs N Dickinson (Headteacher). Deputy DSLs are Mrs J Harrison (Deputy Headteacher) and Mrs C Smith (Pastoral Lead). Staff must refer safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a deputy without delay. Bullying that includes abuse, exploitation, sexual harassment or violence, serious threats, discriminatory harm or significant risk must be considered through safeguarding procedures as well as this policy.

All staff

- Model respectful behaviour, notice social dynamics and challenge unkind, discriminatory or intimidating behaviour.
- Listen calmly and take concerns seriously; do not promise secrecy.
- Record and report concerns promptly using the school's agreed recording arrangements.
- Protect pupils from immediate harm and refer safeguarding concerns without delay.
- Provide appropriate follow-up and monitor whether the behaviour has stopped.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers should contact the class teacher or school office if they are concerned that their child is being bullied or may be bullying someone else. They should share relevant information calmly, preserve online evidence where possible and work with school to support a safe and respectful resolution. If a concern remains unresolved, they may follow the school's published complaints procedure.

Pupils

Pupils should treat others with respect, tell a trusted adult if they are worried about bullying, and seek help rather than retaliating. Pupils who witness bullying are encouraged to report it safely. Children will not be blamed for being unable to stop bullying themselves.

5. Prevention and education

Preventing bullying is everyone's responsibility and is part of everyday school life, not only Anti-Bullying Week. The school will promote our expectations to be Ready, Respectful and Safe through assemblies, class discussions, PSHE/Jigsaw, relationships and health education, religious education, online safety teaching and day-to-day interactions.

- Teach children to recognise bullying, prejudice, unsafe behaviour and the difference between conflict and bullying.
- Teach how to seek help, be an active bystander safely, manage disagreements and repair relationships.
- Promote respect for differences and challenge stereotypes and discriminatory language.
- Use pupil voice, age-appropriate questionnaires and feedback to understand children's experiences.
- Maintain appropriate adult supervision and consider hotspots, transitions, playground dynamics and online risks.
- Work with parents and relevant professionals when a child needs additional help.
- Provide reasonable adjustments and accessible ways for children with SEND, communication needs or other vulnerabilities to report concerns.

The school will support children who display bullying behaviour to understand its impact and change their behaviour. This does not excuse the behaviour or reduce the school's responsibility to protect the child who has been harmed.

6. Recognising possible signs

Bullying may be hidden, and children may not tell an adult directly. Possible indicators include:

- Reluctance to attend school, changes in attendance, punctuality or willingness to join activities.

- Anxiety, tearfulness, irritability, reduced confidence or changes in behaviour.
- Unexplained injuries, damaged belongings or missing items.
- Changes in friendships, isolation, exclusion from games or fear of particular pupils or places.
- Declining engagement with learning, concentration or progress.
- Changes in sleep, appetite or physical complaints reported by the child or family.
- Distress about phones, devices, online messages or social media.

These signs do not prove that bullying is happening. Staff should sensitively explore the concern, record relevant information and consider whether pastoral, SEND, health or safeguarding support is needed.

7. Reporting concerns

A pupil can speak to their class teacher, teaching assistant, Mrs Smith (Pastoral Lead), Mrs Harrison (Deputy Headteacher), Mrs Dickinson (Headteacher) or another trusted adult. Parents/carers can contact the class teacher or school office. A concern may be reported by a child, parent/carer, staff member or witness.

Staff will listen, reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up and explain what will happen next in language the child can understand. Staff must not promise that information will remain secret. Information will be shared only with those who need it to safeguard children and respond appropriately.

If the concern involves a member of staff, or a person who would normally receive the report, the concern must be raised through the school's safeguarding, allegations or complaints procedures and with an alternative appropriate senior leader or the Chair of Governors as relevant.

Where a child is in immediate danger, staff must take immediate protective action and contact emergency services where necessary. Safeguarding concerns must be referred to the DSL/deputy without delay and must not wait for the bullying procedure to finish.

8. Responding to an allegation

The response will be proportionate to the reported behaviour, the risk and the needs of the children involved. Staff will not assume that an allegation is either proven or false before considering the available information.

1. Make sure any child at immediate risk is safe. Arrange first aid or medical assistance if needed.
2. Listen to the child or person reporting the concern. Record their account as accurately as possible, using their own words where appropriate. Avoid leading questions or repeated questioning.
3. Inform the class teacher and appropriate senior leader. Refer safeguarding concerns to the DSL or deputy immediately.
4. Consider whether the incident may involve child-on-child abuse, discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment, violence, threats, online exploitation or a possible criminal offence. Follow the relevant safeguarding procedure and seek external advice or make referrals where appropriate.

5. Gather information fairly. Speak to pupils separately where appropriate, consider witness accounts and relevant digital evidence, and avoid confrontation or mediation where this could put a child at risk.
6. Make a reasoned decision about the nature of the behaviour and what action is needed. Record the evidence considered, decisions, rationale and actions. If evidence is inconclusive, still assess risk and consider preventative steps.
7. Inform parents/carers of the concern and the action relating to their child, unless doing so would create a safeguarding risk or conflict with advice from children's social care or the police. Do not disclose confidential information about another child.
8. Agree support and safety measures, identify who will check in with the child and set a date to review whether the behaviour has stopped.

The school will not require a child to face the child whose behaviour has harmed them, take part in mediation, accept an apology or agree to reconciliation. Restorative work may be considered only when safe, suitable and voluntary for the child who has been harmed. Where the concern does not meet the definition of bullying, the behaviour will still be addressed under the Behaviour Policy or relevant safeguarding procedure. A lack of evidence to substantiate bullying does not mean that a report was dishonest.

9. Safeguarding and child-on-child abuse

Bullying can overlap with child-on-child abuse. The school recognises that children can harm other children in person or online and that harmful behaviour may occur once or repeatedly. Sexual violence, sexual harassment, coercion, threats, serious physical assault, sharing intimate images, exploitation or other abusive behaviour must be managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the current statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Staff must not treat sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour as banter, an ordinary friendship issue or a matter to be resolved solely through an apology. The DSL/deputy will consider immediate safety, the wishes and needs of the child harmed, the needs and circumstances of the child alleged to have caused harm, risk to other children, and the need for referrals to children's social care and/or police.

Staff should not view, copy, forward or ask a child to send intimate images. Follow the school's safeguarding and current UKCIS guidance on sharing nudes and semi-nudes. Preserve relevant information safely and seek DSL advice.

Children who have additional needs, communication differences or difficulties understanding social boundaries may require tailored teaching and support. This must not result in harmful behaviour being ignored or a child who has been harmed being left without protection.

10. Cyberbullying and online incidents

Cyberbullying may happen through messages, games, social media, group chats, image sharing, video, impersonation or other online services. Online incidents can continue outside school and may reach a wide audience. They will be taken as seriously as face-to-face incidents.

- Encourage the child to stop responding or retaliating, block or report the account where appropriate, and tell a trusted adult.

- Preserve relevant evidence such as screenshots, usernames, dates and links where safe to do so. Do not circulate harmful content further.
- Refer sexual imagery, threats, coercion, exploitation or other serious online harm to the DSL/deputy immediately.
- Consider school action where an out-of-school incident affects pupils' safety, wellbeing, relationships or education, or risks disrupting school life, and where the school has lawful authority to act.
- Work with parents/carers and, where appropriate, platform providers, the police or other agencies.

Staff must follow the Online Safety Policy and current procedures for searching, screening and confiscation. Any search of a pupil or their device must be lawful, necessary and proportionate, carried out by authorised staff and recorded in accordance with school procedures.

11. Support and consequences

The school will take action to stop bullying and reduce the risk of it happening again. The response will reflect the seriousness and pattern of behaviour, the impact on the child harmed, the age and needs of the pupils involved and any relevant safeguarding considerations.

Support for the child who has been harmed

- Reassurance that reporting the concern was the right thing to do.
- An identified trusted adult and planned check-ins.
- Practical steps to increase safety and reduce unwanted contact.
- Pastoral support to rebuild confidence, relationships and participation in school.
- Communication with parents/carers and referrals to additional support where appropriate.

Support and action for the child whose behaviour has caused harm

- A clear explanation of what behaviour must stop and why it is harmful.
- Proportionate consequences in line with the Behaviour Policy.
- Support to develop empathy, self-regulation, respectful relationships and safer choices.
- Consideration of any underlying needs, experiences or safeguarding concerns.
- Work with parents/carers and relevant professionals where needed.

Possible responses may include a clear warning, restorative work where appropriate, loss of a privilege, increased supervision, a behaviour plan, parent meetings, pastoral intervention or sanctions up to suspension or permanent exclusion in line with the Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance. Consequences are not automatic or limited to a fixed sequence; serious behaviour may require a more immediate response.

Support and consequences are not alternatives. The school may support all children involved while also applying appropriate sanctions. Any apology must be meaningful and must not be used as a substitute for protection, investigation or follow-up.

12. Bullying outside school

The school will consider reports of bullying that occur outside the school premises, including on journeys to and from school, on school transport, in the local community or online. The

Headteacher may use the powers available under education law and the Behaviour Policy where the behaviour has a relevant connection to school or affects school life. The school will also consider whether another agency is better placed to act. The school will not suggest that it has unlimited authority over all out-of-school behaviour. Any action will be lawful, proportionate and focused on pupils' safety and education.

13. Recording, monitoring and review

All reported or identified bullying concerns must be recorded in the school's agreed central system, including concerns that are not ultimately substantiated as bullying where recording is appropriate. Records should include:

- Date, time, location/platform and how the concern came to the school's attention.
- Names of pupils involved and any witnesses, with a factual account of what was reported.
- Actions taken to protect children, enquiries made and relevant evidence considered.
- Decision, rationale, referrals, parent communication and consequences/support provided.
- Follow-up arrangements, review dates and whether the behaviour has stopped.

Records will be stored securely and accessed only by staff who need the information. Information will be retained and shared in accordance with the school's data protection and safeguarding procedures.

The Headteacher and safeguarding/pastoral team will review patterns at appropriate intervals, including repeated concerns involving the same pupils, locations, protected characteristics or online spaces. Anonymised information will be reported to governors as appropriate. Pupil voice, parent feedback and incident trends will inform prevention work. This policy will be reviewed by the Headteacher and senior leaders and approved by the Governing Board. It will be reviewed earlier if legislation, statutory guidance, school practice or identified risks change.

Key legislation and guidance

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including section 89.
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Department for Education, Preventing and tackling bullying (current publication).
- Department for Education, Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff.
- UK Council for Internet Safety, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people.