

# Anti-Bullying Policy

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## 1) THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- Religious Education Policy
- Spiritual & Moral Policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy

## 2) DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils

### **3) TYPES OF BULLYING**

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

**Homophobic and biphobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

**Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

**Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

**Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

**Ableist bullying:** Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

**Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

**Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

**Socioeconomic bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents'

occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived “quality” of their clothing or belongings.

#### **4) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### ***The Governing Board of St George’s is responsible for:***

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection.
- Ensuring that St George’s adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSLs) have the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL/DDSLs to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

##### ***The Headteacher is responsible for:***

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Ensuring all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, are recorded on CPOMS to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- Analysing the data at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

##### ***The Assistant Headteachers are responsible for:***

- Corresponding and meeting with parents where necessary.
- Providing a point of contact for pupils and parents when more serious bullying incidents occur.

##### ***Teachers are responsible for:***

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting and documenting (CPOMS) any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

- Liaising with parents and informing them of any reported incidents within the school day.

**Parents are responsible for:**

- Informing their child's teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

**Pupils are responsible for:**

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing parents and school staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

## **5) STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

At St George's, we understand that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

We understand that our school must take bullying seriously. The Headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the appropriate legal legislation and will fully involve their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

## **6) PREVENTION**

St George's will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

All staff members will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the relationships, sex and health education curriculum, in line with the Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy.

The curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

Healthy and respectful relationships.

Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.

Body confidence and self-esteem.

How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.

Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through the curriculum. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

Pupils deemed vulnerable will be monitored by their teachers to ensure any problems can be actioned quickly. The Headteacher also has an 'open door' policy allowing pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.

When a new pupil joins the school, particularly when this happens in-year, their class teacher will monitor and observe to ensure they have a friendship group and are joining in. Where a new pupil is deemed vulnerable, some observation and monitoring may be undertaken on the part of the DSL/DDSLs.

We will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

The staff at St George's will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional, spiritual and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

## **7) SIGNS OF BULLYING**

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly

- Decreased interaction in class
- Missing possessions
- Taking possession from the classroom
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet
- Lack of eye contact
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to other social, emotional or mental health issues and are still worth investigating. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by their class teacher or TA to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a pupil is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated
- They have been the victim of abuse
- Their academic performance has started to fall and they are showing signs of stress

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will investigate further and monitor the situation.

## **8) STAFF PRINCIPLES**

St George's will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision. Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. They will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL/DDSLs immediately. Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped.

## **9) CHILD-ON-CHILD ABUSE**

Our school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, we will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns. We teach tolerance, respect and living out the Gospel Values through the curriculum, daily Collective Worship, assemblies and bespoke PSHE lessons, in line with the 'Prevention' section of this policy.

All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of the school setting.

- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as “banter/joking” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, preventing unacceptable behaviours and ones that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting.
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

Further information on our school's approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **10) CYBERBULLYING**

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can draw bystanders in.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
- Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
- Silent or abusive phone calls
- Using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
- Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.



We have a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. We view cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of Bullying' section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

- Avoiding use of the computer
- Being on their phone routinely
- Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

- Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer
- Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer
- Becoming upset or angry when the computer is taken away

Parents should also report to their child's class teacher if their child displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to members of the SLT for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or pupil, we will take immediate action to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the school, the Headteacher will request they remove it directly.

We will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, St George's has the right to examine and delete files from pupils' personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone.

## **11) PROCEDURES**

Incidents will be reported to the victim's class teacher who will investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator, and inform the SLT verbally, and via CPOMS, of the incident and outcome.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Teachers ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately for first aid
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents

- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the teacher to obtain the full picture
- The SLT/Headteacher will gather evidence of a cyberbullying incident; this may involve text messages, emails, photos, etc. provided by the victim
- Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
- Teachers listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- All pupils involved are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils

Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, teachers involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

## **12) SANCTIONS**

If the teacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. They will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, following the school's Behaviour Policy & Procedures.

The teacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will be face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken. All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

Class teachers will monitor the pupils involved over the following days and weeks.

## **13) SUPPORT**

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online

The appropriate staff will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them

sharing classes or spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary. Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining after-school clubs or activities.

#### **14) FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT**

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their class teachers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence will be arranged with parents a month after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied will be offered further support from the DSL/DDSLs who will check whether the bullying has stopped – these informal meetings may continue to take place weekly/monthly until the staff and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

Pupils who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

Pupils who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

#### **15) BULLYING OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL**

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The Headteacher has a specific statutory power to sanction pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the Headteacher the power to regulate pupils' conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a staff member. Teachers have the power to sanction pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, e.g. travelling to and from school, on public transport, outside local shops, in the park, etc.

Where bullying outside school is reported to staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only sanction the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The Headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

## **16) RECORD KEEPING**

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions. This will all be recorded on CPOMS as soon as possible following incidents and investigations.

The DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.

## **17) MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy is reviewed **annually** by the DSL/DDSs. Any changes to this policy will be communicated to all staff and the Governing Body.

The scheduled review date for this policy is **November 2025**