



## Anti-Bullying Policy 2026

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## Document Control Table

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### Introduction

At St Mark's Church of England Primary School, we do not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind. We believe that every child has a right to learn in a supportive, safe, and caring environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and will be managed through both behaviour and safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

This policy explains our whole-school approach to preventing and dealing with bullying and should be read in conjunction with the school's Positive Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. We acknowledge that all schools contain individuals with the potential for bullying behaviour and that instances of bullying can come and go depending on relationships and influences. The policy and procedures described below aim to minimise the occurrence of bullying and should give clarity to parents, pupils, and staff so that, if incidents do occur, they are dealt with quickly. School staff members have received training and relevant guidance on managing behaviour.

### Aims of the policy

To help children, parents and staff know what bullying is and how to prevent and deal with it. The policy aims to prevent or reduce incidents of bullying and provide a clearly defined framework for dealing with victims and/alongside everyone connected with bullying.

### What is bullying?

**Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person by another where the relationship involves an imbalance of power and is a form of child-on-child abuse.**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, in person /cyber-bullying via social media / text messages or the internet) and can happen to anyone. At St Mark's, we strive to create a culture where prejudice and hatred is not accepted. Unacceptable behaviour includes behaviour and language which is deemed homophobic, transphobic, racist, targeted at faith, sexist and disablist amongst others (Prejudice Based Bullying and Discriminatory Bullying).

At St Mark's, we have clear behaviour boundaries which are understood by all pupils. Through assemblies (Collective Worship), PSHE and circle time, the children are taught how to be respectful to others both inside and outside of the classroom. Name-calling, rumour mongering, unwanted touch and disrespect are all actions which are not tolerated at St Mark's and result in sanctions as outlined within the Positive Behaviour Policy. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the school's first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical, so we feel it is of utmost importance that this is swiftly dealt with too.

Bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The

imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways. It may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Pupils who join in with bullying by watching, laughing or shouting encouragement are considered bullies.

### **Bullying is not:**

- Teasing between friends without intention to cause hurt
- Falling out between friends after a quarrel or disagreement
- Behaviour that all parties have consented to and enjoy
- single act of unkind behaviour

It should not be confused with 'relational conflict' whereby two or more children get into conflict but the dispute is equally provoked and both sides have been hurtful to the other.

### **Bullying can take a number of forms:**

- Physical: For example - Hitting, pushing, gesturing, taking or damaging personal belongings or any unwanted physical touch
- Verbal: For example - Name-calling, sarcasm, racist taunts, sexually abusive comments, comments related to physical and social disability and rumour mongering
- Psychological: For example - ignoring someone, excluding, glaring, isolating a person, graffiti, rumour spreading, sending unwanted text messages or emails, publishing hurtful material on social networking sites (cyber-bullying)

Bullying is different from the normal disagreements which sometimes occur in the playground or classroom, when children learn to deal with differences of opinion among peers. It is focussed anti-social behaviour directed intentionally at a 'victim' with malicious intent, usually over a period of time. It can happen in public – such as physical assault in the playground, or it can be very subtle and harder to detect – such as the spreading of rumours or deliberate social exclusion.

### **Cyber or Online bullying**

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying, which can occur in or outside of school. Cyber-bullying can happen at all times of the day with a potentially bigger audience. Staying safe online, cyberbullying and how to report concerns is taught explicitly through the SCARF PSHE scheme of work, and through computing lessons.

At St Mark's, we take our approach to cyberbullying very seriously. Ipad and Internet use is monitored by the Designated Safeguarding Leader and Deputy Headteacher through a filtering platform called Securly, and any concerns with regards to safety are shared with the Designated Safeguarding Leads. Teachers are responsible for talking to parents about their child's/children's' internet usage should a problem arise in school. This is in line with the Home School Agreement, which parents and carers sign in agreement (for both parents and pupils) to act responsibly and respectfully online.

### **Signs and Symptoms**

Pupils being bullied may show changes in behaviour - such as:

Physical: Unexplained bruises, scratches, cuts, missing belongings, damaged clothes or schoolwork, loss of appetite, stomach aches, headaches, soiling/bedwetting.

Emotional: Losing interest in school, withdrawn, secretive, unusual shows of temper/emotions, refusal to say why unhappy, high level of anxiety, mood swings, tearfulness for no reason, lack of confidence, headaches and stomach aches, signs of depression.

Behavioural: Asking to be taken to school, coming home for lunch, taking longer to get home, asking for more money from a parent/carer, using different routes to school, 'losing' more items than usual, sudden changes in behaviour and mood, concentration difficulties, school avoidance.

*Please note, these changes are indicators parents / carers may notice. Signs and symptoms vary according to age and level of independence (i.e. walking to school).*

## **Support for victims**

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by :

- Reassuring them that it is not their fault
- Support from a teacher, LSA (Learning Support Assistant) or the SEND Team/ELSA
- Trying to minimise the opportunities for bullying
- Ensuring that all staff are aware of the problem
- Offer continuous support (from staff and/or children)
- Learning how to 'say no' and developing assertiveness
- Restore self-esteem and confidence
- Monitor and review
- Peer support systems/buddies

We will raise the awareness of what bullying is and how to respond safely through circle time discussions, assemblies (Collective Worship), the PSHE curriculum and through the school curriculum. These activities, along with this policy, will be reviewed annually.

## **School Procedure**

- If bullying is reported or suspected, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff approached
- An account of the incident will be recorded on CPOMS and forwarded to the class teacher, SEND Team and to the Deputy Headteacher
- All concerned will be interviewed and the meetings recorded
- Parents will be invited to discuss the matters with the appropriate staff
- Appropriate measures will be applied (see disciplinary sanctions)
- Victims will be consulted
- Agreed support drawn up between key adult/s for child/group etc
- Children concerned will be monitored over an agreed period of time

## **Possible interventions to support the pupils** (approaches which may be used- this list is not exhaustive)

- Restorative discussion
- Personal development plan
- Offer strategies to deal with their behaviour including anger management if necessary
- Inform the parents/carer to help support the pupil
- Accept responsibility for harm caused to individual(s) being bullied
- Learn how to take steps to repair relationships

### **Possible sanctions (see Positive Behaviour Policy for more details)**

- Verbal warnings
- Time out/thinking time
- Social/internal suspension
- Fixed Term Suspension
- Permanent exclusion

### **In School Strategies**

At St Mark's school we educate children about bullying, what it is and who they can report it to through the PSHE Curriculum and a number of other activities throughout the school year:

- Assemblies/Collective Worship
- Anti-bullying week
- NSPCC Speak Out, Stay Safe
- PSHE curriculum
- Whole school CIRCLE values
- British Values
- Emotional literacy support
- Group work/circle time
- Reward and sanction system (see Positive Behaviour Policy)
- Supporting children in managing conflict
- Lunch time clubs
- External agency involvement, e.g. PBS
- Quiet Zone – a safe space for children to go to during playtime

### **Other documents related to this policy:**

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Approach to Child on Child Abuse

It was ratified by the Governors September 2026.

This policy is due for review in September 2027