



Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Our commitment

At St John's C of E Academy, we are committed to providing a safe, caring, respectful and inclusive environment where every child can learn, play and participate without fear of bullying. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are unacceptable and will be taken seriously. Every pupil has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

We recognise that pupils may need support to understand the impact of their actions and change their behaviour. We will support pupils who experience bullying, pupils who display bullying behaviour and others affected. Our response will be child-centred, proportionate, consistent and informed by safeguarding needs.

2. Aims

- Make sure pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors understand bullying and how to report it.
- Prevent bullying through positive relationships, teaching, supervision and an inclusive school culture.
- Respond promptly, fairly and consistently to reports and record decisions and actions.
- Monitor patterns and check that behaviour has stopped, including checking for retaliation.
- Challenge prejudice, discrimination and harmful language, including behaviour related to protected characteristics or additional needs.

3. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that hurts, intimidates, humiliates or harms another person. It often involves repeated behaviour and an imbalance of power, making it difficult for the targeted pupil to defend themselves. The imbalance may be physical, social, emotional or linked to status, group size or online influence.

Repetition, intention and power imbalance are useful indicators, but staff must not use a rigid definition to dismiss a concern. A single serious incident, discriminatory abuse, threats, violence, sexual harassment or other harmful behaviour must still be addressed and recorded appropriately, even if it is not categorised as bullying. Staff will consider the context, impact, any pattern and the children's accounts.

4. Types and forms of bullying

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, damaging or taking belongings, or threatening physical harm.
- Verbal: name-calling, insults, threats, mocking, humiliating comments or repeated teasing.
- Social or emotional: deliberate exclusion, intimidation, manipulation, spreading rumours or encouraging others to isolate a pupil.
- Cyberbullying: harmful messages, posts, group chats, images, videos, impersonation, threats or sharing private information online.
- Prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying related to race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, disability or other personal characteristics.
- Sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour, including sexualised comments, unwanted touching or threats to share sexual images. These concerns must also be managed through safeguarding procedures.
- Bullying related to SEND, appearance, health, family circumstances, being a young carer, being looked after or previously looked after, or any perceived difference.

5. What bullying is not

Not every disagreement, friendship difficulty, one-off unkind comment or accidental action is bullying. However, these incidents can still hurt children and may breach the school's behaviour expectations. Staff should respond proportionately and help pupils repair relationships where appropriate. Staff must not assume a situation is simply 'falling out' without considering patterns, power imbalance, discriminatory language, coercion and safeguarding concerns.

6. Where bullying can happen

Bullying may occur in classrooms, corridors, toilets, dining areas, playgrounds, school visits, on the journey to and from school, or through phones, games, social media and other online platforms. The school will consider off-site or online behaviour where it affects pupils' safety or welfare, relationships in school or the orderly running of the school. Any action must be within the school's lawful powers and consistent with current guidance and the behaviour policy.

7. Roles and responsibilities

All staff

- Take every report seriously, listen calmly and avoid promising absolute secrecy.
- Make pupils safe and report safeguarding concerns to the DSL or deputy without delay.
- Record concerns and actions in line with school procedures.
- Challenge bullying and discriminatory behaviour and follow up to check it has stopped.

Senior leaders

- Oversee investigations and ensure responses are fair, proportionate and consistent.
- Review records for repeat incidents, patterns, locations and discriminatory concerns.
- Coordinate parent/carers communication, safeguarding referrals and support plans as appropriate.
- Review prevention work, staff training and pupil support.

Pupils and parents/carers

Pupils should tell a trusted adult if they experience or witness bullying. They should not join in, forward harmful content or retaliate. Parents/carers should contact the school promptly, share relevant information and work with the school to support a safe resolution. The school will listen and explain the process while respecting the privacy of all children.

8. How pupils can report bullying

Pupils can speak to a teacher, teaching assistant, midday supervisor, senior leader, DSL/deputy DSL or another trusted adult. They can ask a friend or adult to help them report a concern or write it down. Pupils should keep telling an adult if they feel the problem has not been addressed. Reports will be handled sensitively and information shared only with those who need it.

9. Staff response: reporting, investigating and recording

1. Make the situation safe. Separate pupils if needed, attend to injuries and seek urgent help if anyone is in immediate danger.
2. Listen to the child reporting the concern and other children involved, normally speaking to pupils separately. Avoid leading questions or pressuring children; record accounts accurately.

3. Consider safeguarding, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment, threats, violence, online harm and risk of retaliation. Report safeguarding concerns to the DSL/deputy without delay.
4. Inform the appropriate senior leader and gather relevant information, including witness accounts and online evidence where available and safe to retain.
5. Assess whether the behaviour appears to be bullying, another form of harmful behaviour, a safeguarding concern or a combination. Record the rationale for the decision.
6. Take prompt, proportionate action under this policy and the behaviour policy. Do not require mediation or a face-to-face apology where it could make a child feel unsafe.
7. Contact parents/carers as appropriate, taking account of safeguarding advice and other children's privacy.
8. Agree support and safety measures, identify who is responsible and set a review date.
9. Record the concern, actions, decisions, rationale, referrals, communications and outcomes on CPOMS in line with school procedures. Complete any additional incident form required.
10. Follow up with the affected pupil and monitor for recurrence or retaliation.

If an allegation is not substantiated, staff should still consider whether support, monitoring or action for other behaviour is required. A lack of evidence at one point does not mean a child's concern should be ignored.

10. Safeguarding and serious incidents

Bullying may be a safeguarding concern, although not every incident requires a statutory referral. Staff must follow the child protection policy and report concerns to the DSL or deputy without delay. The DSL will consider early help, children's social care, police involvement or other multi-agency support as appropriate. If a child is in immediate danger, emergency services must be contacted.

Sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercion, extortion, hate incidents or significant physical harm must be considered under relevant safeguarding, behaviour and reporting procedures. Staff should not delay reporting while trying to resolve matters informally.

11. Cyberbullying and online incidents

- Take online harm seriously, including incidents occurring outside school hours.
- Advise pupils not to retaliate, forward harmful material or engage with abusive accounts. Where safe, preserve relevant evidence such as screenshots, usernames, dates and links.
- Do not ask children to circulate or unnecessarily reproduce intimate or sexual images. Refer these matters to the DSL immediately and follow safeguarding procedures.
- Consider effects on safety, attendance, relationships and behaviour in school, and whether action under school policies is appropriate.
- Involve parents/carers and external agencies where appropriate, following online safety procedures.

12. Equality, inclusion and pupils with SEND

The school will challenge discriminatory language and behaviour and will not treat prejudice-based bullying as harmless teasing. Staff will consider the impact on the pupil, any relevant protected characteristics, disability or SEND, communication needs and reasonable adjustments that may be required.

A pupil's additional needs or difficulty regulating emotions do not make harmful behaviour acceptable, but may be relevant when assessing the circumstances and planning support. Responses should be individualised, proportionate and consistent with the SEND, behaviour and safeguarding policies.

13. Sanctions and support

Responses will reflect the nature, seriousness, frequency and impact of the behaviour, pupils' safety and needs, and relevant circumstances. Responses may include:

- Clear instruction that the behaviour must stop and an educational response explaining its impact.
- Increased supervision, adjusted arrangements or a written safety/support plan.
- Work with parents/carers, school staff or external professionals.
- Behaviour support, targeted interventions or restorative work where appropriate and safe.
- Sanctions under the behaviour policy, potentially including suspension or, in the most serious circumstances, permanent exclusion where lawful and appropriate.

Any suspension or permanent exclusion must be considered and decided in accordance with current statutory guidance and the behaviour policy; it must not be an automatic consequence of an allegation. Support must also be considered for the pupil who experienced bullying and others affected. An apology or reconciliation will not be forced.

14. Supporting pupils and preventing retaliation

- Regular check-ins with a trusted adult and a clear way to report further concerns.
- Additional supervision, agreed safe spaces or routes where needed.
- Support to rebuild confidence, friendships and belonging.
- Work with parents/carers, the SENCO, pastoral staff or external agencies where appropriate.
- Clear expectations and support for pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour, to help them understand the impact and change.
- Monitoring for further incidents, intimidation, exclusion or retaliation.

15. Prevention and education

- Teach respectful relationships, inclusion, difference, online safety and how to seek help through PSHE, assemblies and the curriculum.
- Participate in Anti-Bullying Week and use age-appropriate resources.
- Maintain appropriate supervision in classrooms, corridors, playgrounds, dining areas and identified locations.
- Ensure all staff, including lunchtime and temporary staff, know how to recognise, report and record concerns.
- Provide trusted adults and accessible ways for pupils to share worries.
- Listen to pupil voice, including through the School Council and pupil feedback.
- Review incident patterns and use findings to target supervision, teaching and support.

16. Monitoring and review

The senior leadership team will monitor records and outcomes, including repeat reports, locations, behaviour types, pupil groups affected, discriminatory incidents, actions taken and recurrence. Information will be handled confidentially and shared appropriately. Findings will inform prevention work, staff training and support. The policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy cycle and sooner if guidance, law, safeguarding practice or school circumstances change.

17. Related policies and guidance

- School Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use arrangements
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion / Equalities information
- SEND Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Department for Education: Preventing and tackling bullying (updated July 2026)
- Department for Education: Behaviour in schools
- Department for Education: Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance effective July 2026

18. Sources of help

Check external contact details before publication. General sources include:

- Childline: 0800 1111 — www.childline.org.uk
- NSPCC Helpline: 0808 800 5000 — www.nspcc.org.uk
- Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
- Childnet: www.childnet.com

Official guidance links

- Keeping children safe in education 2026: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Preventing and tackling bullying: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-bullying>
- Behaviour in schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>
- School suspensions and permanent exclusions: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions>