



## Statement of intent

St Mary's Rickmansworth C of E Primary School believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment, free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy sets out how we prevent, identify, and respond to bullying, and how we record and monitor incidents to reduce recurrence.

We promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos through our Christian vision and values and through the curriculum - learning about tolerance and difference is built into PSHE, RE, computing and wider provision.

Under Education and Inspections Act 2006 s.89, the school has measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying. These measures are part of, and consistent with, the Behaviour Policy, which is communicated to all staff, pupils and parents.

At St Mary's there is zero tolerance for bullying. Staff, pupils and parents work together to prevent and reduce any instances, and we act swiftly and proportionately when concerns arise.

## 2. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to (including, but not limited to):

- 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 *Preventing and tackling bullying*
- DfE *Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools*

- DfE *Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025*
- DCMS/DSIT/UKCIS *Sharing nudes and semi-nudes* (education settings)

This policy operates alongside and is consistent with the school's:

- Behaviour Policy (including yellow/red card system, reflection, exclusions, POP test)
- Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy
- Searching, Screening & Confiscation Policy
- Relationships & Health Education Policy (primary)
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy

## Definitions

Bullying is persistent behaviour by an individual or group that intends to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm, is repeated over time, is targeted, and involves a real or perceived power imbalance.

We teach and use the POP test with pupils to help recognise bullying: Purposeful; Over time; Power imbalance.

Vulnerable pupils may be more likely to be targeted (e.g., pupils who are adopted; with a health problem; young carers; socioeconomically disadvantaged). Pupils with certain characteristics may also be targeted, including pupils with SEND, LGBTQ+ pupils (or perceived to be), and Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils.

## Types of bullying

Bullying can be related to almost anything and may be:

- Verbal, Physical, Emotional / Relational, Online (cyber)
- Racist, Homophobic/bi-phobic, Transphobic, Sexist, Sexual

- Ableist (disability-related)
- Prejudicial (e.g., religion, mental health)
- Relational (exclusion/ostracism)
- Socioeconomic

Note: Racist bullying can constitute a criminal offence. Some online behaviours can be offences under the Malicious Communications Act and Communications Act.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

The Governing Board will:

- Ensure this policy is implemented and reviewed; monitor for discrimination; analyse data/patterns; maintain an inclusive ethos.
- Ensure the DSL has appropriate status/authority and appoint a safeguarding link governor.
- Receive termly anonymised bullying summaries from the Headteacher/DSL. (Aligned to Behaviour Policy monitoring/oversight.)

The Headteacher will:

- Review the policy; ensure training; maintain a Bullying Log and ensure analysis each term to identify trends and actions; ensure consistency with the Behaviour Policy. Be a point of contact for pupils/parents, coordinate investigations, liaise with class teachers and oversee follow-up.

The Teachers & Support Staff will:

- Be alert to class/social dynamics; challenge all unkindness; take all reports seriously; record on CPOMS; provide follow-up support; avoid stereotyping; know vulnerable pupils; refer patterns and concerns to leaders. (Recording and reflective practice align with Behaviour Policy.)

Parents/Carers will:

- Inform school promptly of concerns; support restorative approaches; encourage reporting; monitor online activity.

Pupils will:

- Report concerns; avoid retaliation; keep evidence of cyber-incidents; treat others with kindness; seek help from Helping Hands adults.

## **Statutory requirements (Equality & Human Rights)**

Under the Equality Act 2010, the school must eliminate unlawful discrimination/harassment, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. Under the Human Rights Act 1998, failing to take bullying seriously could breach pupils' rights. All staff share responsibility for compliance.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, related behaviours (e.g., harassment, malicious communications, hate crime, assault, theft) may be criminal and could be referred to the police where appropriate.

## **Prevention (whole-school approach)**

We maintain a culture where kindness and respect are the norm and where behaviour expectations are taught, modelled and practiced. In line with our Behaviour Policy (de-escalation, relational practice, emotion coaching), we:

- Teach about healthy, respectful relationships, boundaries/consent, equality, stereotypes and online safety (PSHE/RE/computing).
- Embed Christian values (Friendship, Courage, Thankfulness, Trust, Forgiveness, Compassion) across worship and curriculum.
- Use our code of conduct (Respect; Ready; Reflective) and explicit behaviour systems (verbal warning → yellow card → red card with reflection), consistently across the school.
- Organise seating/groups to protect pupils; provide safe spaces at unstructured times; run buddy/playleader systems.

- Provide staff training and clear Helping Hands networks for pupils.
- Use data from the Bullying Log and CPOMS to guide supervision, curriculum input and targeted support; report trends to governors termly.
- Put induction strategies in place for in-year entrants and vulnerable pupils.
- Monitor and support mental health and wellbeing; address motivation behind bullying as well as behaviour.

## **Signs of bullying (indicators)**

Staff will be alert to indicators such as: reluctance to attend, anxiety, lost/damaged items, injuries, social withdrawal, appetite/sleep change, online avoidance, sudden temperament shift. Indicators merit curious, timely follow-up - they may signal bullying or broader SEMH needs.

## **Staff principles**

- Act immediately on concerns; never ignore 'banter'.
- Respect privacy; share on a need-to-know basis, escalating to the DSL if risk of harm.
- Provide follow-up support for all involved over time.

## **Child-on-child abuse**

We operate zero tolerance for all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment/violence, harmful sexual behaviour, initiation/hazing, upskirting, and image sharing. Staff recognise that any pupil can be a victim or perpetrator, and that under-reporting does not equal absence.

The school educates pupils about respect, consent and safety; all concerns are managed under KCSIE 2025 and the Child-on-Child Abuse and Safeguarding policies. Where risk of significant harm exists, the DSL will refer to children's services and/or police.

## **Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is treated with equal seriousness. Staff/pupils do not retaliate; they keep evidence (e.g., screenshots) and report promptly. We educate pupils and parents, and we may search a

device and act in line with the Searching, Screening & Confiscation Policy and Education Act 2011 where justified.

Where content targets staff or pupils, we will seek removal via platform mechanisms and take school action. Ongoing support and check-ins are provided.

## **Procedures (reporting, investigating, deciding)**

Minor incidents may be addressed by the class teacher with restorative guidance, proportionate consequence and written record to the DSL/Headteacher as needed.

For all reported bullying:

1. Listen and reassure the pupil; ensure immediate safety.
2. Record on CPOMS and update the Bullying Log.
3. Inform a senior leader/Headteacher and the DSL where safeguarding risk may exist.
4. Investigate: interview pupils separately; gather witness accounts/evidence (including screenshots for cyber); ensure pupils kept apart during investigation; use a private room; involve first-aider if needed.
5. Decide whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying (use POP test).
6. Inform parents/carers of those involved.
7. Plan actions (support and consequences) and log them; set review date(s).
8. Monitor for at least a half-term after resolution; escalate if patterns persist.

Where behaviours suggest sexual harassment/violence or other serious harm, safeguarding procedures are followed.

## **Consequences (aligned to Behaviour Policy)**

Disciplinary action is proportionate, educative and consistent with the Behaviour Policy:

- Verbal reminder → yellow card → red card with reflection (missed play/lunch under supervision; reflection sheet). Parents informed for red cards.
- Loss of privileges; restorative tasks; supervised/social time adjustments; behaviour target card; internal exclusion.
- Fixed-term suspension for serious or persistent bullying; in extreme cases, permanent exclusion per statutory guidance.

Consequences and support happen together. We avoid unnecessary criminalisation while ensuring safety and accountability.

## **Support for pupils**

### **For the child experiencing bullying**

- Named trusted adult; regular check-ins; safe space at unstructured times
- Seating/grouping changes; increased supervision; personal support plan
- Restorative meeting if appropriate and only with the child's agreement
- Advice on online safety; consideration of external support (eg Early help/CAMHS)
- Ongoing review meetings until all agree bullying has stopped

### **For the child displaying bullying behaviour**

- Clear explanation of impact; reflection, restorative conversation
- Emotion coaching/ mentoring, behaviour support plan (SEND reasonable adjustments as needed)
- Proportionate consequences which can include a loss of privileges
- Close parental involvement; sustained monitoring to support change

## **Bullying outside school**

In line with the Behaviour Policy and Education and Inspections Act 2006 s.90–91, poor behaviour outside school (including online) may be sanctioned when it affects school order, safety or reputation. Staff investigate and act; the Headteacher determines police notification where conduct may be criminal.

## **Record-keeping, monitoring and governor reporting**

- All incidents and actions are recorded on CPOMS and entered into the Bullying Log (date/time/location, pupils involved, type, actions, outcomes, follow-up).
- The Headteacher/DSL reviews data termly to identify patterns (times/locations/groups/types) and adjusts prevention accordingly; anonymised summary reported to LGB each term.
- Records inform: targeted supervision, curriculum, staff training, and evaluation of policy effectiveness.

## **Training**

- Annual staff training covers identifying/responding to all bullying types, child-on-child abuse and cyberbullying; playground staff included.
- Parents offered guidance sessions on online safety/cyberbullying signs.

## **Complaints**

If a parent believes a case has not been handled appropriately, they may use the school's Complaints Policy.

## **Monitoring and review**

This policy is reviewed every two years by the Headteacher and DSL (or sooner if legislation/guidance changes or monitoring indicates a need). Changes are communicated to stakeholders and approved by the LGB.