



Anti-Bullying Policy

Document History – March 2025

Date of Change	Author	Notes (changes made)

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a fundamental principle of St Thomas' Primary School that all members of the community – teachers, support staff, governors, volunteers and pupils – are expected to treat each other with courtesy and respect. Everyone has the right to be safe and secure, whether at school or elsewhere, and to be protected when vulnerable, so that they may flourish without fear of unfair treatment or harassment.

Bullying must be dealt with quickly and firmly because it is a very serious matter. The whole school community has a responsibility to combat bullying. And action which is taken must take careful account of the needs of both the victim and the bully.

Failure by any member of the school community to treat others with courtesy and respect undermines the ethos and wellbeing of the whole school, and will always be regarded as a serious matter. The School's approach to bullying is clear: it is always unacceptable. It damages children and the School will, therefore, do all it can to prevent it.

Most experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. 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 humiliation or by isolating them either in real life or online. Sometimes the perpetrator is just being thoughtless. Bullying causes fear and distress for the victim(s) and may distract them from their schoolwork. It may also affect other pupils who witness it and it can damage the atmosphere in a class or even in the entire school.

The aim of this policy is therefore to describe what the School understands as bullying, establish the School's stance towards such unacceptable behaviour, indicate how it will be dealt with and how it may be prevented from occurring.

The statutory framework which governs anti-bullying strategy in all schools in England is provided in Appendix 1 of this policy. This policy pays particular regard to the 2010 Equality Act, the provisions of the 1989 Children's Act and Keeping Children Safe in Education, whereby a bullying incident should be treated as a safeguarding concern when there is "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm."

2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

Any behaviour which makes another person feel uncomfortable or threatened may be construed as bullying – whether intended or not.

Bullying may be of a racist, sexist, homophobic or otherwise personal nature such as commenting on a person's culture, religious background, sexual orientation, or disability, or holding up members of a person's family to ridicule on the basis of their race, gender, sexuality, religious belief, disability or appearance, or because of the

fact of the person targeted by the bully/bullies being adopted, or looked after, or looking after others themselves.

There are many definitions of bullying, but most have three things in common:

- it is deliberately hurtful behaviour.
- it is repeated often over a period of time.
- it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

At St Thomas' Primary School, we respond to and record as bullying incidents where hurtful behaviour is repeated. Bullying behaviour which is repeated after a sanction or a warning about that behaviour is of particular concern and liable to serious sanctions.

While the school's definition of bullying requires that a behaviour be repeated for it to be treated as a bullying incident, a racist incident can be logged as such after a single instance of behaviour.

Bullying is listed as a type of child-on-child abuse in Keeping Children Safe in Education and in St Thomas' Primary School's Safeguarding Policy. The Staff team will always consider, in discussion with a member of the Safeguarding Team, whether there is a safeguarding concern presented by an incident or pattern of bullying behaviour.

2.1 TYPES OF BULLYING

Bullying can take many forms, but the main types are:

2.1.1 Physical Bullying

This may include fighting, hitting, kicking, taking or damaging belongings, setting up someone else to get the blame for a breach of school rules

2.1.2 Emotional or Psychological Bullying

This may include excluding someone from a group, activity or place; spreading rumours, being deliberately unfriendly; unpleasant digital communication or telephone calls or unpleasant material placed on websites.

2.1.3 Verbal Bullying (including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying)

This may include aggressive name calling, teasing, mockery, insults, use of homophobic, racist, sexist, ableist and other types of discriminatory language. Any or all of the listed forms of bullying may, by some, be considered to be harmless 'banter' but will still be considered as bullying behaviour by the School.

2.1.4 Sexual Harassment This may include making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited propositions, uninvited touching, and using innuendo or inappropriate imagery or taking/sharing inappropriate images.

2.1.5 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying – this is the use of information and communications technology particularly mobile phones, email, social media, text / direct messages, group chats, cameras and the internet, which could reasonably be seen to be unkind, whether intended or not. Even if this occurs outside of school, staff should be aware that a potentially large audience and/or more accessories, since others are able to ‘forward on’ bullying content at a click. Given the extent to which young people engage with one another online, staff should be open to the likelihood that any type of bullying may have an online / cyber component that facilitates, threatens or encourages the abuse.

3. PREVENTING BULLYING AND PROMOTING POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AT ST THOMAS’

The School, at all times, seeks to promote a culture of courtesy and mutual respect amongst all members of the School’s community. Positive values of mutual respect, kindness and consideration will be promoted within the school in a wide range of contexts from collective worship and in classrooms to informal discussion.

The School implements disciplinary sanctions for bullying behaviour. The consequences of bullying reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

Information available in the DfE advice documents listed below has been used to inform this policy and the messages disseminated to the School community:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Preventing and tackling bullying (DFE, July 2017)
- Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff (DFE, November 2014)
- Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying (DFE, November 2014)

3.1 ANTI-BULLYING EDUCATION

The School addresses the nature and implications of bullying through our PSHE curriculum, through class discussion and through collective worship. The School aims to sustain an inclusive environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause and nature of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination. All pupils are given clear advice about the part they can play to prevent bullying, including when they find themselves as bystanders.

We aim, through our PSHE lessons, to openly discuss and celebrate the differences between people with an understanding that these differences can motivate bullying. We also give clear advice to pupils and staff that using any prejudice-based language is unacceptable and aim to challenge the use of such language any time it is used.

There is a focus on ‘kindness’ in discussions that staff have with individuals and groups of students in relation to behaviour between pupils, with the intention of encouraging pupils to act kindly and notice when unkindness happens.

Pupils are also educated about the importance of being an ‘active bystander’ or ‘upstander’ if they should witness an incident of bullying.

3.2 REPORTING BULLYING

The School aims to make it easy for pupils to report bullying, so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Pupils are encouraged through the PSHE curriculum and other curriculum areas to feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school, including cyber-bullying.

3.2 STAFF TRAINING

We understand that policies are most effective when all school staff understand the principles and purpose of the School's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems, and where to seek support. Staff receive training as part of induction and ongoing CPD.

3.3 MONITORING AND RECORDING OF BULLYING INCIDENTS

All staff record incidents of relationship/friendship issue or bullying on CPOMS. Incidents of bullying are only recorded when they meet the definition of bullying noted in section 2 above. Incidents which do not meet this definition will be responded to sensitively and with due regard to appropriate record keeping, as any pastoral concern would be, with the understanding that they could be a precursor to bullying (eg if repeated). Incidents of bullying that include racist behaviour also trigger the completion of a 'racist incident reporting form' and are also logged on CPOMS.

The safeguarding team will identify any patterns relating to bullying behaviour and decide what action needs to be taken to prevent recurrences of such behaviour.

3.4 MEASURES TO PREVENT CYBERBULLYING

Online, the School monitors and filters anything connected to the St Thomas' school network. Personal devices connected to other networks cannot be monitored by the School, but through the computing curriculum, PSHE curriculum, online safety sessions pupils are educated as to good and safe use of digital technologies. Furthermore, school rules around mobile phone mean that pupils do not have access to phones during the school day.

The School regularly evaluates and updates its approach to take account of developments in technology, for instance by updating 'acceptable use' policies for devices and regularly reviewing and updating this policy.

3.5 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The School aims to ensure parents are clear that the school does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents should feel confident that the School will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child. The School also expects all parents to reinforce the value of good behaviour, compassion and kindness at home.

4 WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STAFF, PUPILS, PARENTS AND GOVERNORS?

All members of the St Thomas' Primary School community - and this includes staff, students, parents and governors - have a responsibility to show that they believe that any form of bullying is unacceptable and to set an example which reflects that view.

All members of the School should help to create an atmosphere in which bullying and inappropriate behaviour or language that demeans any individual or section of society, will be spoken of openly, taken seriously and responded to with appropriate action.

The school expects staff, pupils, parents and governors to:

- treat other people with respect and sensitivity – including (but not limited to) members of the school and the wider community and visitors from other schools
- think carefully before speaking/commenting/acting (whether face-to-face or via any form of media or communications technology) in ways which may cause upset
- respect and celebrate differences and diversity
- report concerns about bullying to relevant staff as soon as possible.

4.1 ADVICE TO PUPILS

Bullying and its effects can only be dealt with if responsible adults are made aware of what is happening. Pupils must, therefore, tell their class teacher or any other member of staff

- they feel that they have been a victim of bullying.
- they see someone else being bullied
- they have bullied someone themselves and would like to stop.

Telling is absolutely necessary. The bully believes he or she is safe so long as nobody tells. In fact, we help nobody - victim, school, bully or future victims - by keeping such behaviour secret. For victims and onlookers to tell is not just their right, it is an obligation. In the end, telling helps everybody.

4.2 ADVICE TO PARENTS

A parent who is concerned that a pupil (their own son/daughter or another pupil) may be being bullied, should speak to their child's class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

4.3 ADVICE TO STAFF

All staff should be alert to the possibility that bullying may occur at any time and any place. Staff should be sensitive to changes in behaviour, mood, and patterned absenteeism. If you believe you have noticed such a pattern emerging, discuss your concerns as soon as possible with a designated safeguarding lead. Staff must take every incident of bullying seriously. For a member of staff to allow or to condone the bullying of a pupil is an extremely serious matter and will be investigated by the Deputy Head.

5. DEALING WITH AN ALLEGATION OF BULLYING

All reported incidents of bullying will be taken seriously and investigated by the Senior Leadership Team or the Safeguarding Team. Investigations will involve

interviewing alleged victims and perpetrators, as well as witnesses, if there were other pupils present at the time of the incident or who have other relevant information.

In cases where an allegation is made but evidence (e.g. independent witnesses, digital records) is unavailable, and the alleged perpetrator denies involvement, it will not always be possible for sanctions to be applied. However, the following action will be taken:

- a report of the investigation will be kept on CPOMS
- all of the pupils involved will be made explicitly aware that the behaviour in question is unacceptable and should they be involved in this or similar behaviour in future, the School would take serious action.

In an instance of alleged bullying, the class teacher, Assistant Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher has the responsibility for initiating the School's response

and he or she may take advantage of the expertise of any other member of staff, subject to the following considerations:

- the member of staff receiving the report must inform the Headteacher
- the details of the incident should be recorded on CPOMS
- the headteacher must be informed whenever parents are contacted.
- If racist behaviour is involved, the Racist Incident Recording Form used to make a record of the incident.
- the case is discussed with the Safeguarding
- serious bullying must be reported to both sets of parents in a calm, clear and reassuring manner

In dealing with bullying, the following considerations should apply:

- always talk sensitively and privately to both victim and bully
- a written record will be recorded on CPOMS
- reassure and guarantee support to victim
- that SEND students may find reporting bullying more difficult and may need additional support after incidents
- the victim may need advice on how to respond to, or avoid, similar incidents in future
- the bully must see and feel the School's (and his/her parents') disapproval and must understand that his/her acts must stop
- try to get the bully to see the victim's point of view – empathy is the key to improvement; this may entail a face-to-face meeting if the victim is comfortable with this.
- with a group, deal with the pupils separately
- the bully may also require subsequent support
- the bully should be involved in restorative behaviour which may include, for example, formally expressing an apology to the person(s) who has been hurt.

6. SANCTIONS FOR BULLYING

Punishment needs careful consideration and must go hand in hand with pastoral support. For sanctions to be applied allegations must be substantiated (to the standard of 'on balance of probabilities').

The following should also be noted:

- the bully may have had some provocation and needs to be listened to
- the bullying behaviour may be related to a deeper issue in that child's life and circumstances.

In accordance with the School's Relationships and Behaviour Policy, a pupil found to have bullied another member of the School community can expect to receive a sanction.

7. APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Further information is available online as follows:

- [Preventing and tackling bullying](#) (DFE, July 2017)
- [Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (DFE, November 2014)
- [Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying](#) (DFE, November 2014)
- <https://www.childnet.com/resources/cyberbullying-guidance-for-schools>