



We *place our children at the heart of all we do*,
inspired by the love, life and teachings of Jesus.

“I am the way, the truth and the life.”
(John 14:6)

Nurture, Prepare, Support, Enable

Anti-Bullying Policy

Date of Policy	September 2025
Policy Approved by	Governing Body
Review Date	September 2026

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding policy, Positive Pupil Welfare, Home school Agreements and Behaviour Policy.

Statement of Intent

Plymouth Diocese and Plymouth CAST insist on the highest standards of academic achievement in its schools, so that our young people leave us as 'agents of change' – educated and caring people who have the qualifications, knowledge and skills they need to flourish as human beings and make the world a better place.

Inspired by our Teacher, Jesus Christ, and his good news to the poor, we have a commitment especially to those who are disadvantaged. We are determined that a child's start in life need not determine their future. We are committed to the well-being of the earth, our common home, inspired by the example of Pope Francis: to live wisely, think deeply and love generously.

In all our schools we will develop a culture of high expectation and aspiration, based on our fundamental belief in the dignity of all human beings. We want all our pupils to flourish in safe, happy and enriching environments, taught and supported by adults who are skilled, motivated and committed to our shared vision and values.

We will work together as one Trust, one family of schools, a community inspired by a vision for excellence. We commit ourselves to deepen our mission and raise standards in order to provide an excellent Catholic education for every child in our care. We are defined by our mission and our Gospel values. These stand at the heart of everything we do:

Humility – *seeing life as a gift*

Compassion – *empathy*

Kindness – *gentleness*

Justice – *working for a fairer world*

Forgiveness – *reconciliation*

Integrity – *do what you say*

Peace – *committed to peace-making, non-violence*

Courage – *standing up for truth*

It is a primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. The school's anti bullying policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, valued, safe and secure.

St Mary's School Values are integral to our vision alongside our Gospel Values

- **EDUCATE** – we aim to do the best, particularly in our work
- **PROTECT** – how we are kept safe, treat our school and everything in it
- **LOVE** – how we treat each other
- **SERVE** – we are a school with many differences but we are all equally as important as each other and we show this in the way we support one another

At St. Mary's we want all our children to be free to learn, free to achieve, free to be whoever they want to be in life, free from the effects of bullying.

Introduction

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we are aware that pupils may be bullied in any school or setting, and recognise that preventing, raising awareness and consistently responding to any cases of bullying should be a priority to ensure the safety and well-being of our pupils.

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment where children can learn in a secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, it is essential that our school:

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, 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; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

At St Mary's Catholic Primary School, we are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Under the Children Act 1989, a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a pupil is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the school staff should report their concerns in accordance with our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

It is the responsibility of the governing body and the Headteacher to ensure that all members of the school community work within a safe and enabling environment. We value pupils developing meaningful respect for and tolerance for others.

Definitions

This is our agreed definition of bullying:

- the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person;
- repeated behaviour over a period of time;
- resulting in pain and distress to the victim.

We are aware that bullying can happen in any of the relationships in school: between pupils, between pupils and staff and between staff. In its extreme form it can constitute a criminal offence and is a denial of human rights and of equal opportunities.

There are many different types of bullying that can be experienced by children and adults alike, some are obvious to spot while others can be more subtle. The different types of bullying that we look at below are some of the ways that bullying could be happening.

Physical bullying

Physical bullying includes hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching and pushing or damaging property. Physical bullying causes both short term and long term damage.

Verbal bullying

Verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, teasing, intimidation, homophobic or racist remarks, or verbal abuse. While verbal bullying can start off harmless, it can escalate to levels which start affecting the individual target.

Social bullying

Social bullying, sometimes referred to as covert bullying, is often harder to recognise and can be carried out behind the bullied person's back. It is designed to harm someone's social reputation and / or cause humiliation.

Social bullying can include:

- lying and spreading rumours
- negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks
- playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- mimicking unkindly
- encouraging others to social exclude someone
- damaging someone's social reputation or social acceptance.

Cyber bullying

The Cyber Bullying Research Centre defines cyber bullying as: Intentional and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, phones, and other electronic devices.

Cyber bullying can be overt or covert bullying behaviours using digital technologies including hardware such as computers and smartphones, and software such as social media, instant messaging, texts, websites and other online platforms.

Cyber bullying can happen at any time. It can be in public or in private and sometimes only known to the target and the person bullying.

Cyber bullying can include:

- abusive or hurtful texts, emails or posts, images or videos
- deliberately excluding others online
- nasty gossip or rumours
- imitating others online or using their log-in.

This is our suggested definition of racism that could incur the sanction of being reported to the local authority

- the deliberate use of language which is intended to convey hatred of a person's ethnicity or country of origin;
- a physical attack on an individual as a result of that person's ethnicity or country of origin which is intended to insult that ethnicity or country of origin.

Name calling or any form of Child on Child abuse is treated very seriously and sanctions are incurred in line with the remainder of this policy. All incidences will be reported to the Senior Leadership team and will be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Remember...it could happen here

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying and Child on Child abuse?

Bullying and Child on Child abuse hurts. No one deserves to be a victim. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

We are aware of the impact that child on child abuse can have upon children's lives and on those who care for them. Everyone at our school has a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of peer on peer abuse.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he/she is being abused. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child:

- becomes unwilling to come to school
- begins to regularly feel unwell without any apparent symptoms
- becomes reluctant to take part in certain activities
- becomes withdrawn or anxious or lacking in confidence
- becomes disfluent e.g. starts stammering
- attempts to self-harm
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts taking money (to give to the bully)
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

We will use a variety of methods, curriculum materials and resources to help children prevent bullying. These include:

- Use of anti-bullying materials and participation in November's Anti-Bullying Awareness Week (a nationwide effort to stop bullying and its harmful effects).
- Use of Class Liturgy which gives children opportunities to talk, share concerns and participate in decision-making. Class Liturgy creates a positive ethos by encouraging respect for all participants, provides a space for listening and being listened to in a secure and supportive atmosphere and encourages a feeling of community and responsibility.
- Friendship buddies at lunchtime.
- Provision Nurture Team (Deputy Head, Headteacher, SENDCO and all staff) to work with children individually or in groups and to support them in nurture sessions, breaktimes and lunchtimes.

If a Child on Child incident happens

- Follow the behaviour response outlined in the Behaviour for Learning policy.
- It should be reported via CPOMS to the Deputy Head who have responsibility for behaviour
- The most appropriate member of staff e.g. Headteacher, Deputy Head, Pastoral Lead, SENDCO Class teacher, teaching assistant (depending on who it is judged to have the best relationship with pupils involved) work with both the victim and the bully to emphasise appropriate behaviour and bring about restorative justice.
- If necessary the victim is recorded as a vulnerable pupil and supported under the safeguarding process/policy.
- The abuse will be subject to behaviour management sanctions.

Listening to children

It is important that children are and feel that they are listened to when discussing or disclosing any potential incidents of bullying.

- Listen to the child
- Take them seriously
- Show empathy
- Let the child know it's not their fault
- Avoid stereotypes
- Reassure them they were right to tell you
- Follow our procedures for reporting concerns

Remember

- Bullying can have a huge negative impact on children – in the short and long term
- Be on the lookout for signs of bullying, and be aware of who might be more vulnerable
- Report any concerns you have
- Take prejudice-based bullying seriously and listen to children affected by it