**ST JULIE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ECCLESTON**



Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed by Governing Body and staff

December 2024

**ST JULIE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MISSION STATEMENT:**

***A caring, family school where we learn, grow******and walk in the footsteps of Jesus.***

In consequence of our school mission it is a fundamental aim of St. Julie’s to be an inclusive school. To be a school which:

* Is a caring community
* Provides and respects equal opportunities
* Offers partnership between school, parents and parish
* Reflects upon the teachings of Christ and puts them into practice
* Values all of the school community
* Its members show respect for themselves, each other and their learning environment.

We define an inclusive school as one where:

* Everyone, irrespective of age, gender, ability or disability, race or religion is encouraged and given equal opportunity to participate in the full life of the school
* All of the school community are given the opportunity and support to achieve their true potential
* All of the school community, and the contributions they make to the life of the school, are valued; everyone is treated with mutual respect, care and consideration
* Everyone feels empowered to play a full and effective role in the school.

**Statement of intent**

St Julie Catholic Primary School believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.

These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference as part of the school’s curriculum, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos at the school.

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines several legal obligations regarding the school’s response to bullying. Under section 89, schools must have measures in place to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullyingamongst pupils. These measures are part of the school’s Behavioural Policy, which is communicated to all pupils, school staff and parents.

All staff, parents and pupils work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying at the school. There is a zero-tolerance policy for bullying at the school.

# Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

* 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 (2017) ‘Preventing and tackling bullying’
* DfE (2018) ‘Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges’
* DfE (2018) ‘Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools’
* DfE (2024) ‘Keeping children safe in education 2024’
* DCMS, DSIT, and UK Council for Internet Safety (2020) ‘Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people’

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

* Behavioural Policy
* Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
* Primary Relationships, Sex and Health Education Policy

# Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

* **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
* **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
* **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
* **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

The whole school initiative of STOP (Several Times On Purpose) highlights what bullying is and the language that we use to describe bullying behaviours in school

# Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything.

Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

* Verbally
* Physically
* Emotionally
* Online (cyberbullying)

**Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

**Homophobic/biphobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person’s gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

**Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

**Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

**Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.

**Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

**Socioeconomic bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents’ occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived “quality” of their clothing or belongings.

**Giving children and young people the confidence to tell**

It is imperative that children and young people have the confidence to tell adults about bullying behaviours that they witness or experience, if bullying is to decrease. Very early on, children can learn that telling an adult that they are being teased/bullied may rebound on them and this may lead them to feel vulnerable.

School and other settings need to encourage young people to report bullying cases and to have effective support mechanisms in place for this to happen

Establishing that trust can be made easier by:

* Listening to young people
* Consulting with young people
* Publicising procedures for dealing and bullying
* Responding to all incidents of bullying in a consistent manner

**The behaviour of bystanders**

Young people may fail to help someone who is being bullied for a variety of

reasons. Research suggests that this is not apathy, rather a feeling of not knowing what to do as well as having fears that they, themselves, will be teased or bullied. Children and young people may also be apprehensive that they will not receive the support of peers and teachers. Schools and other settings would benefit by making explicit, the vital role of bystanders in helping to eliminate bullying.

# Roles and responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for:

* Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
* The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
* Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
* Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
* Ensuring the school is inclusive.
* Analysing any bullying data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
* Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
* Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
* Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The headteacher is responsible for:

* Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
* Keeping a record of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
* Analysing the data in the bullying record at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
* Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Teachers are responsible for:

* Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
* Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
* Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
* Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil’s heads of year of such observations.
* Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
* Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
* Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support.

The school nurse is responsible for:

* Offering emotional support to victims of bullying.

Parents are responsible for:

* Informing their child’s teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.
* Being watchful of their child’s behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

Pupils are responsible for:

* Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
* Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
* Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
* Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

# Statutory implications

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual 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.

Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The headteacher will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; the headteacher understands that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

* Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
* The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
* Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
* Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

# Prevention

The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the relationships and health education curriculum, in line with the Primary Relationships and Health Education Policy.

This curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

* Healthy and respectful relationships.
* Boundaries and consent.
* Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
* Body confidence and self-esteem.
* How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
* Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

Staff will encourage pupil cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated through various lessons.

Seating plans will be organised and altered in a way that prevents instances of bullying. Potential victims of bullying will be placed in working groups with other pupils who do not abuse or take advantage of others.

Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will be provided through participation in special events, e.g. drama productions, sporting activities and cultural groups.

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

A safe place, supervised by a teacher, will be available for pupils to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. The teacher supervising the area will speak to pupils to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.

The school will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause of bullying behaviour.

If or when incidents of bullying occur class teachers will discuss and reinforce the following strategies;

1. Remember that your silence is a bullies greatest weapon
2. Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong
3. Be proud of who you are
4. Be assertive, shout ‘No’ and walk away
5. Fighting back may make things worse
6. Tell the teacher straight away

As staff within the school we will always encourage children to speak up if they are aware of bullying. If children feel they want to remain anonymous there is a STOP box where they can leave a message, or a concern

**Working with Parents and Carers**

Effective liaison with parents is vital to tackle bullying successfully. Schools need to involve parents/carers at an early stage in order to explain the situation fully, and parents should be informed of any incident within 24 hours of it being reported to the school. Parental concerns must be taken seriously. They need to be fully included in the process to prevent a serious breakdown of confidence between them and the school. Support may need to be provided for the parent/carer in working with the school over bullying issues, as some parents may themselves feel intimidated by attending meetings in school or may feel worried about the consequences for their child.

Parents of children who are alleged bullies often find it hard to accept the image of their child presented by the school and deny that their child is capable of such behaviour. It is therefore important that discussions are based on well-documented evidence. Schools are able to use parenting contracts as an early intervention strategy to ensure parents tackle problem behaviour before a child/young person reaches the point of being excluded from school.

# Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

* Unwillingness to attend school
* Repeated or persistent absence from school
* Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
* Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
* Decreased involvement in schoolwork
* Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
* Cuts or bruises
* Lack of appetite
* Lack of eye contact
* Becoming short tempered
* Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

# Staff principles

The school will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its anti-bullying vision.

Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and they will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

Staff will always respect pupils’ privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying are not discussed with others, unless the pupil has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped.

# Child-on-child abuse

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons.

All staff will:

* Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
* Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
* Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
* Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
* Never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”, and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as “boys being boys”, as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
* Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
* Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

* Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
* Sexual “jokes” or taunting.
* Deliberately brushing against someone.
* Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
* Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
* Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services (CSCS) and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

# Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target pupils, staff and others, and may take place inside school, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.

Cyberbullying can include the following:

* Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages
* Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips
* Disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress
* Silent or abusive phone calls
* Using the victim’s phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible
* Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else’s name
* Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom
* Unpleasant messages sent via instant messaging
* Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. Facebook

**NB**. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents.

All members of staff will receive training on an annual basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify pupils who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively.

Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the ‘Signs of Bullying’ section of this policy; however, staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is being cyberbullied:

* Avoiding use of the computer
* Being on their phone routinely
* Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages

Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a pupil is cyberbullying others:

* Avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
* Acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
* Spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
* Becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

All learning at home will follow procedures outlined in the Remote Education Policy. During times when remote education is being utilised, the school will frequently be in contact with parents to make them aware of their activities online, but also to reinforce the importance of pupils staying safe online, and explaining how filtering and monitoring procedures work.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

* **Possible extensive scale and scope** – pupils may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
* **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – pupils may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times
* **The** **person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is** – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social media, and pupils may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity
* **The** **perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying** – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to pupils crossing boundaries without realising
* **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – pupils may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and pupils will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to their line manager or the headteacher for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided. Pupils will report incidents to a trusted member of staff.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or pupil, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the school, the headteacher will request they remove it directly.

The school will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with this policy.

In accordance with the Education Act 2011, the school has the right to examine and delete files from pupils’ personal devices, e.g. mobiles phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person’s mobile phone. In these cases, the school’s Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy will be followed.

# Procedures

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

* The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
* Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed.
* A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
* A witness is used for serious incidents
* If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
* Premature assumptions are not made, as it is important not to be judgemental at this stage
* Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
* All concerned pupils are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other pupils

Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

# Sanctions

If the headteacher is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The headteacher will inform the pupil of the type of sanction to be used.

If possible, the headteacher will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to-face, but only with the victim’s full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

# Support

For a month after the initial complaint of bullying, the class teacher will hold an informal discussion with the victim, on a weekly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped.

The head of key stage holds a formal meeting, on a monthly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped – these formal meetings will continue to take place once a month until the head of key stage and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

If necessary, group dynamics will be broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes. The victim will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.

Staff, particularly the DSL, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

# Follow-up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their class teachers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported in the following ways:

* Being listened to
* Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their head of key stage or a member of staff of their choice
* Being reassured
* Being offered continued support
* Being offered counselling, where appropriate

Pupils who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

* Receiving a consequence for their actions
* Being able to discuss what happened
* Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
* Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
* Appropriate assistance from parents

Pupils who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

In cases where the effects of bullying are so severe that the pupil cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the headteacher and DSL will look to transfer the pupil to another mainstream school with the consent and involvement of the pupil’s parents.

Where a pupil who has been the victim of bullying has developed such complex needs that alternative provision is required, the pupil, their parents, the headteacher and DSL will meet to discuss the use of alternative provision.

# Bullying outside of school

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The headteacher has a specific statutory power to discipline pupils for poor behaviour outside of the school premises. Section 89(5) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 gives the headteacher the power to regulate pupils’ conduct when they are not on school premises, and therefore, not under the lawful charge of a school staff member.

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, e.g. on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The headteacher is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

# Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions.

The headteacher and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

* Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
* Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
* Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
* Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
* Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

# Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every year by the headteacher and the DSL.

The scheduled review date for this policy is December 2025