



Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2024

Anti-bullying Policy

Policy to be reviewed annually			
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Reported	Education Committee		
Approved	Board of Governors		

To be published on	
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School website	✓
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Accessibility notice

To enable easier reading, this Policy is available in a larger font upon request.

This policy applies equally to the Early Years Foundation Stage setting, KS1 and KS2 as taught at St Christopher's School. ***This policy is reviewed annually by the Deputy Head Pastoral.***

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documents:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Online Safety Policy

1.1. The school notes the following documents as critical in its approach to anti-bullying and useful sources of information:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools, September 2022
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying, July 2017
- Cyberbullying: Advice for Head Teachers and School Staff, November 2014
- Supporting children and young people who are bullied, March 2014
- Equality Act, 2010

2. Aims

2.1. We aim:

- To create an environment where pupils can grow and flourish without fear. Each pupil has the right to be safe in and out of school and to be protected when she is feeling vulnerable.
- To ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied.
- To demonstrate that the school takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school and during off-site activities.
- To support everyone in actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied.
- To clarify for all pupils and staff that bullying is wholly and always unacceptable.
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of pupils is paramount.
- To promote an environment where children feel they can trust and tell adults if they are being bullied or know about any bullying.
- To promote positive attitudes in pupils (including conflict management training).
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their duty of care over those in their charge and the need to be alert to signs of bullying.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of procedures through regular training.

3. Guiding principles

- 3.1. The Governors value the good relationships between all of the school community as fostered by the school and expect that every allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. The Governors consider that a child should be treated as being bullied simply because they perceive that they are.
- 3.2. All staff, pupils and parents should be aware of the negative effects that bullying can have on individuals and the school in general and should work towards ensuring that pupils can work in an environment without fear.
- 3.3. **Bullying is unacceptable at St Christopher's School and will not be tolerated.**
- 3.4. The school recognises that it must take note of bullying perpetrated outside school. The school will do what is reasonably practicable to eliminate any such bullying. The school aims to promote Emotional Literacy, defined as people being able to 'recognise, understand, handle and appropriately express their emotions' (Sharp, 2001).
- 3.5. The school takes a strong stance against bullying of any type, since it indicates a lack of appreciation for the feelings of others. Bullying can cause deep distress, to the extent of victims refusing to attend school or even, in extreme cases, attempting or committing suicide.

4. Definition of bullying

4.1. Definition of bullying or child on child abuse

- 4.1.1. Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. (*Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, DfE, 2017, p. 8*)
- 4.1.2. There is no "hierarchy" of bullying – all forms of bullying must be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately. Bullying can be
 - between pupils, between pupils and staff, or between staff;
 - by individuals or groups;
 - face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyber bullying methods (e.g. text messages, social media, or gaming).
- 4.1.3. We understand that all children have disagreements with each other, and friends fall out for a time. This is not usually bullying.
- 4.1.4. Child on child abuse manifests itself in many ways and is taken very seriously.

4.2. Examples of bullying behaviour:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, taking or hiding belongings
- Verbal: name calling, teasing, insulting, writing or sending unkind notes or messages, including cyber-bullying (see also Online Safety Policy.)

- Emotional or psychological: being intentionally unfriendly, excluding, tormenting looks, spreading rumours.
- Sexual violence and harassment include making inappropriate comments about appearance and attractiveness, uninvited proposition, uninvited touching, using innuendos, sexualised language or inappropriate imagery or upskirting.
- Child on child abuse, including relationship abuse, sexual exploitation.
- Prejudice-based bullying relates to perceived or actual differences. It can be based on characteristics unique to a child's identity or circumstance, and can lead to prejudice or discriminatory language behaviour, including racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia.
- Cyber: email and internet chat room misuse, mobile phone threats by text, calls, social websites, creating embarrassing images or videos, trolling, excluding children from online games, activities and friendship groups, sending explicit messages, including nudes.

5. Relational aggression and child on child abuse

5.1. Children can abuse other children in a number of ways. Relational aggression is defined as behaviour that harms others through damage to relationships or feelings of acceptance, friendship, or group inclusion. It is a deliberate intention to damage a pupil's peer relationships or social standing, and ultimately cause social exclusion. It can therefore be covert or overt. Examples include:

- Teasing; embarrassing a pupil
- Imitating them behind their backs
- Breaking secrets
- Spreading rumours, gossiping
- Whispering
- Sending abusive notes
- Maliciously excluding them
- Coercive behaviour

5.2. Relational aggression and covert bullying should be taken seriously and acted upon; it cannot be passed as normative behaviour in adolescents. If staff and older students condone relational aggression, covert bullying may be allowed to flourish.

5.3. Safeguarding issues can manifest themselves via child-on-child abuse. This includes:

- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Upskirting
- Sexting
- Initiation/ hazing type violence and rituals

5.4. Upskirting is a criminal offence. It is an act of taking a photograph, without consent, from underneath a person's clothing. The purpose may be sexual gratification, or to cause the victim distress and alarm.

6. Sexual violence and sexual harassment

6.1. Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex, including in primary schools. It can occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

6.2. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face to face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable. As set out in Part one of Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE), all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.

7. Vulnerable children

7.1. The School recognises that some pupils are more vulnerable to child-on-child abuse, for example LGBTQ+ pupils (or perceived to be LGBTQ+) or pupils with SEND.

7.2. The School takes steps to ensure these children are able to seek help, ensuring policies are flexible and respond to their specific needs.

8. Cyber-Bullying

8.1. The DSL has overall responsibility for online safety at school, and is supported by the Online Safety Coordinator.

8.2. To prevent any form of cyber-bullying, the school has a no-mobile phone policy for pupils from Reception to Year 5. Pupils in Year 6 may bring a mobile phone into school, if they hand in their device to the Front Office in the morning.

8.3. The school recognises that many pupils have mobile phones and access to the internet outside school.

8.4. The school marks Internet Safety Day each year, in which the risks of technology and cyber bullying are discussed in depth. The school arranges internet safety workshops, addressing the safer use of the net and mobile phones.

8.5. All pupils agree to adhere to the Acceptable Use Agreement, which the parents sign on their behalf. Acceptable Use agreements are reviewed annually with all pupils in school so that they have a good understanding of how they must behave online. Parents are encouraged to discuss the Acceptable Use Agreement with the children.

8.6. The DSL and the Online Safety Coordinator update policies and provide parents with advice, helping them to understand how children can use technology safely, as well as the risks and consequences of mobile phone use.

- 8.7. Staff have a duty to make sure that they are familiar with their role in dealing with cyber bullying. Staff receive regular online safety training and updates.
- 8.8. Victims should keep emails and text as evidence for tracing and possible police action. Children are taught that they must tell an adult if they are being bullied online , that they should not delete any bullying messages or texts, but they should never respond to these.
- 8.9. The school has a filtering and monitoring system in place.
- 8.10. Balance and perspective are essential as is a whole community approach to ensuring safer use of the internet. The responsibility for this is both the school's in educating their pupils for safer use on the net, and the parents' in understanding that they need to monitor and manage their children's use of the net.
- 8.11. Useful websites:
- www.childnet.com
 - www.digizen.org
 - www.thinkuknow.co.uk

9. Roles within Bullying

9.1. Different roles within bullying have been identified:

- Those relying on social power, dominating others, often with group support (ring leader).
- Others joining in and therefore afraid of ring leader (associates).
- The awareness of a silent majority that bullying is taking place, but feeling unable to do anything about it (bystanders).
- Those who try to stop bullying (defenders).

2. Signs and symptoms

2.1. A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs, and they should investigate if a child:

- is unwilling to go to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens self-harm
- cries herself to sleep at night or has nightmares/ bedwetting
- regularly feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions go missing
- has unexplained cuts and bruises
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- is frightened of walking to or from school
- changes her usual routine.

9.2. All staff should be aware of these possibilities and report promptly any suspicions of bullying to the Designated Safeguarding Lead, Lizi Courtney-Magee.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1. Governors

10.1.1. The Governors will liaise with the Head over all anti-bullying strategies, and be made aware of individual cases where appropriate.

10.1.2. The Governors will discuss, review and endorse agreed strategies and will discuss the Head's report on the working of this policy.

10.1.3. The Governors will liaise with the Head to arrange for a regular programme of staff development, which will include child protection and counter-bullying strategies. This will include training for support staff as well as teachers.

10.2. The Head

10.2.1. The Head has a legal duty under the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to draw up procedures to prevent bullying amongst pupils.

10.2.2. The Head will:

- ensure that all staff have an opportunity of discussing strategies; and
- review them regularly;
- determine the strategies and procedures;
- discuss development of the strategies with the Senior Leadership Team;
- ensure appropriate training is available;
- ensure that the procedures are brought to the attention of all staff, volunteers, parents and pupils; and report to the governing body.

10.3. The DSL

- is responsible for the day-to-day management of the policy and systems;
- ensures that there are positive strategies and procedures in place to help both the alleged victim of bullying and the alleged perpetrators of bullying;
- keeps the Head informed of incidents;
- refers and liaise with inter-agency working groups when there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. See [Thresholds criteria](#) for legal thresholds at the LSCP.
- arranges relevant pupil training with the Head, determine how best to involve parents in the solution of individual problems; and ensure proper record keeping.

10.4. The Head of Lower School and the Head of Upper School

- monitor friendship issues in their section
- support their form tutors in implementing anti-bullying strategies and delivering the pastoral curriculum
- support pupils, victims of bullying, or perpetrators of bullying
- support the Head, as required when managing a bullying incident
- keep the Deputy Head Pastoral informed of issues that arise in their section.

10.5. Heads of Department

- are responsible for ensuring that the school's positive strategies are put into practice; and
- know the school's procedure and deal with any incidents that are reported.

10.6. Form teachers

- are responsible for liaising with the DSL over all incidents involving pupils in their forms
- are involved in any agreed strategy to achieve a solution
- teach the anti-bullying programme in the PSHCE lessons.
- encourage an open dialogue with pupils and offer them many ways to share concerns with a trusted adult. For example, each classroom has a 'Problem Solving Box' to share and dedicated form time is used to address any issues.

10.7. All Staff and volunteers

- know and follow all relevant policies and procedures
- keep clear records on the school's system (CPOMS)
- are observant and talk to pupils
- deal with incidents according to the policy
- never let any incidence of bullying pass by unreported, whether on-site or during an off-site activity
- take action to reduce the risk of bullying at all times and in places where is most likely; and
- discuss from time to time where extra staff might be needed.

11. Dealing with incidents

11.1. If bullying (in school or outside school premises) is suspected or reported, the Heads of Section and the DSL must be informed. The incident will be investigated and dealt with immediately. All the parties will be interviewed, and a record made on CPOMS. The teacher will record the details of the incident on CPOMS, using one of the bullying categories. Staff teaching the bullied pupil(s) and the alleged perpetrator(s) and the Form Teacher will be alerted.

11.2. The Heads of Section and the DSL will agree the appropriate strategy, support and any sanction, as well as other possible whole-school action. This may include carrying our risk assessments to mitigate further risk to the victim or other pupils.

- 11.3. Where incidents involve material posted online, the School may request that the electronic device be handed over as part of the investigation and may use legal powers to search and confiscate property.
- 11.4. Parents will be kept informed.
- 11.5. Bullying that takes place outside of school and which is reported to school staff will be investigated and acted upon. The DSL will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or children's services in the event of the matter being deemed a safeguarding concern.
- 11.6. The DSL may consider whether it is appropriate to notify the policy or anti-social behaviour coordinator in the local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.
- 11.7. In any incident of bullying, staff are expected to adhere to the following principles:
- It is important that children who experience bullying can be heard.
 - It is important to note that people react differently to bullying and it is often very difficult to tell if someone is upset or hurt.
 - If children feel upset, they are encouraged to speak to their teacher or a responsible adult at an appropriate time or put a note in the confidential worry box in each classroom.
 - It must be emphasised to the children that they should NEVER take the law into their own hands and should remember that physical aggression is not acceptable.
 - They should be reassured that the adult will try to sort out the problem as calmly as possible.
 - Abuse is abuse and should never be passed off as 'banter' or 'part of growing up'.
 - Gender issues may be prevalent when dealing with child on child abuse.
 - The most serious incidents are referred to the Head.
 - Parents will be requested to come and discuss matters.
 - Pupils will be told always to report incidents of bullying.

12. Reporting and Recording

- 12.1. Reports of bullying will be logged by teachers on CPOMS.
- 12.2. Full details must be included: the alleged behaviour, details of the incident(s) as well as their frequency, names of the pupils (possible perpetrators, victims and other pupils involved directly or indirectly) and staff involved.

13. Supporting Pupils

- 13.1. **Bullied Pupils:** Bullying may lead to social, emotional, or mental health difficulties. Staff who deal with pupils who have been bullied must always offer reassurance. Pupils who have been bullied will be given support. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need and may include support from the ELSA (emotional literacy support assistant).

13.2. **Bullies:** It is recognised that support must also be given to the perpetrator(s). Changing the attitude and behaviour of bullies will be part of the responsibility of the positive procedures used by the school. However, the school recognises that sanctions will also have to be used against bullies.

13.3. A major part of the strategy will consist of educating pupils in how to cope with bullying, e.g. in PSHCE or pupil engagement activities such as School Council (see section 14 of this policy). Pupils must know to whom they should go if they are being bullied or if they are concerned about another child.

14. Involving Parents

14.1. Parents, as well as all staff and pupils, should know that the school will not tolerate bullying and takes a positive, active approach to educating pupils to combat it. Parents will be informed of the policy and procedures.

14.2. Parents of pupils who are being bullied and parents of the bullies will be involved in the solution to the problem as appropriate.

14.3. St Christopher's is a Tooled Up Education School. Parents have access to a library of resources covering all aspects of children development, including bullying, resilience, self-esteem and mental health.

15. Sanctions

15.1. Where pupils do not respond to preventative strategies to combat bullying, tougher action will be taken to deal with persistent and violent bullying. Sanctions are determined by the nature of the bullying on a case to case basis. Sanctions might include:

- Writing a letter of apology
- Removal from the group (in class);
- Withdrawal of break and lunchtime privileges;
- Withholding participation in any school trip or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum;

16. Fixed term and permanent exclusion from school.

16.1. An exclusion would only be considered in a case of extreme and continuing bad behaviour, bullying, etc. See the Exclusions policy.

17. Criminal Law

17.1. Although bullying is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence.

17.2. Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends a letter, electronic communication or article of any description which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to

be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

18. Confidentiality and information sharing

- 18.1. The Children Act 2004 places a safeguarding duty on schools to provide a legal basis to share information with other agencies in order to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when taking action in response to child-on-child abuse.
- 18.2. The School should try to obtain consent to making any referrals but should inform the victim, perpetrator and parents that consent is not needed should it be withheld.
- 18.3. Anonymity should be given to victims and alleged perpetrators whilst allegations are being progressed through the criminal justice system.

19. Preventing bullying

19.1. Anti-Bullying Education in the Curriculum

- 19.1.1. The school raises the awareness of the anti-social nature of bullying through a PSHCE programme, school assemblies, the School Council, use of form time and in the curriculum as appropriate.
- 19.1.2. Positive values of kindness, friendships, diversity, inclusion and respect are promoted within the school in a wide range of contexts.
- 19.1.3. The Head of PSHCE is responsible for initiating and developing an anti-bullying programme as part of the PSHCE curriculum, to which the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion coordinator may also contribute, as part of the Rights Respecting Schools award.
- 19.1.4. Subject Leads are responsible for introducing anti-bullying material in their programmes of study as appropriate. Some of the themes taught in the curriculum provide opportunities for raising awareness of bullying, diversity, inclusion and respect.
- 19.1.5. Changing the attitudes and behaviour of bullies will play a major part in the strategies used by the school. Children's emotional literacy is developed by teaching them a wide vocabulary of words for emotions.
- 19.1.6. Wellbeing-Posters outlining adults that pupils can talk to are displayed in every classroom around the school.
- 19.1.7. Talks to pupils, staff and parents, by staff or external speakers, help to raise awareness of the issues around friendships, bullying (including cyber-bullying) and how to prevent it.

19.2. Pupil leadership

19.3. The Rights Respecting Schools programme equips students with the tools needed to promote kindness and inclusion throughout the community.

19.4. Inclusion ambassadors (Rights Reps) are elected every academic year. The role has a clear job description, reviewed annually.

20. Managing transition to Senior School

20.1. The School instils resilience and adaptability from Reception. A more formal transition process to senior school starts in Year 4. During the competitive 11+ process, the school promotes respect and privacy. Girls are encouraged not to speculate about others' destinations.

21. Monitoring and evaluation

21.1. The Head and the Heads of Section will consider reports of bullying to determine what can be learned from the incidents and how they were handled, with a view to improving the school's strategies. These reports will also enable patterns to be identified. The Head will report to the governing body.

21.2. The DSL, the Head of Lower School and the Head of Upper School will identify patterns and decide what action needs to be taken to prevent similar occurrences. They will review the pastoral curriculum to address any arising needs.

21.3. Pupils are included in the review of the policy: they are regularly asked to complete surveys or share their feelings.

22. Remote Education

22.1. In instances of remote education, the school maintains the same expectations of its pupils in regard to their online conduct, which will be routinely monitored wherever possible.

22.2. Child on child abuse, or concerns around behaviour which may be perceived as such, will be referred to the DSL. Parents and pupils will be supported in their awareness of the importance of online safety through regular communication. Sanctions for inappropriate behaviour will be adjusted to suit the remote circumstances as determined by Heads of Sections and the Head.