



# THE WILLOWS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Date 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024

Signed by:

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**Catholic schools are special, Christ's teachings and values, through the Gospel, permeates through absolutely everything we do. Whether this is the way in which we interact with each other, forgiving those who have upset or hurt us and how we treat anyone within our family or community.**

Our central aim at The Willows is our school motto:  
**God Loves Me, God Loves Everyone.**

*With Christ at our heart, we are a loving, caring family where each individual is nurtured in mind and spirit to fully become the person God created.*

*In learning together, we support each other to reach our full potential in a safe and stimulating environment where all are valued and respected.*

Our school motto: 'God loves me, God loves everyone' guides our journey.

# **ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Willows 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, e.g. 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 bullying amongst pupils. These measures are part of the school's Behaviour for Learning 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.

We believe that The Willows is a community where everyone feels safe, secure and valued. Bullying of any sort prevents this from happening and will not be tolerated. We work hard to ensure that all children know the difference between bullying and simply 'falling out'. This is reinforced through our HRSE (Human Relationships and Sex Education) policy and our scheme of work 'Life to the Full'. Through this an appropriate attitude towards relationships is explored and discussed within the school year, through assemblies, class discussions and direct work by the Learning Mentor.

## **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) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- 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:

- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation Policy
- HRSE (Human Relationships and Sex Education) policy
- Suspension and Exclusion Policy
- Child-on-child Abuse Policy

## **Definition of Bullying**

At The Willows we pride ourselves on being totally committed to inclusion and consider ourselves a fully inclusive school, therefore we will not tolerate any bullying behaviour towards pupils with

disabilities or racist, sexual or homophobic bullying. (See Single Equality and Equal Opportunities Policies)

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 an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator 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.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils.
- Pupils with SEND.

## **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, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

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

**Homophobic and 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.

**Ableist bullying:** Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

**Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion 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.

### **The role of the 'Bystander'**

At The Willows we recognise the role of the 'bystander' and the impact they can have on an incident of bullying. A bystander is an observer, onlooker or witness to bullying.

- The ringleader – those leading the bullying, but not always the person 'doing' the bullying.
- Assistant(s) – those involved in 'doing' the bullying.
- Reinforcer(s) - support the bullying, might laugh or encourage other people to collude with what is going on.
- Outsider(s) - ignore any bullying and doesn't want to get involved. This can actually include adults too!
- Defender(s) - stand up for someone being bullied. Know that bullying is wrong. Feel confident enough to do something about it. We recognise and reward defenders of bullying.

When investigating incidences of bullying, we will ensure that all individuals concerned are dealt with appropriately in line with this policy.

### **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 CPOMS 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.

Parents/Carers 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 requirements**

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.

## INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

As outlined in our Behaviour for Learning Policy we have many strategies in place: including circle time, whole school assemblies, SEAL, an active school council and clear day to day procedures as well as many cross curricular links to promote an anti-bullying school where emotional health and well-being is seen as paramount in developing a healthy and successful school learning community.

All members of staff work together to develop all pupils' self-esteem and confidence and promote a listening ethos where all pupils know it's ok to tell.

The HRSE 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.

Staff 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 including within the Religious Education Curriculum. 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.

Seating plans are 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.

Safe places (Gabriel's Room and the Worship Area) are available for pupils to go to during free time if they feel threatened or wish to be alone. The Learning Mentor will speak to pupils to find out the cause of any problems and, ultimately, stop any form of bullying taking place.

Class teachers offer an 'open door' policy allowing pupils to discuss any bullying, whether they are victims or have witnessed an incident.

Before a new pupil joins the school, particularly when this happens in-year, the Learning Mentor and the Class Teacher meet to discuss appropriate groupings for the child and the class are prepared to welcome a new friend.

Where a new pupil is deemed vulnerable, the pupil will meet with the Learning Mentor and a 1:1 programme is implemented.

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

The school will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **The Willows takes a ZERO-TOLERANCE approach to bullying.**

At The Willows we believe in direct action, immediate intervention and constantly reinforcing to pupils that all forms of bullying are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Early involvement of parents is essential and following up any incidents is crucial, as pupils who expect follow up are unlikely to start bullying again. Accurate records of any incidents are kept. Pupils are aware that they will be listened to and know that is ok to tell, who to tell and how to tell. Our main aim is to encourage pupils to tell staff about bullying rather than retaliating.

The responsibility of monitoring and recording incidents of bullying lies with the Head teacher. The Head teacher reports incidents of bullying in the termly report to governors and will also provide a termly report to governors outlining any trends or patterns of bullying incidents.

Class teachers have a responsibility to ensure children have channels in which to report incidents of bullying. This is provided through caring relationships and opportunities in HRSE lessons to consider and discuss behaviour towards others.

#### **Information for children**

##### *If you are being bullied*

- Try to stay calm and look as confident as you can
- Be firm and clear – look them in the eye and tell them to stop
- Get away from the situation as quickly as possible
- Tell an adult what has happened as quickly as possible

##### *After you have been bullied*

- Tell a teacher or another adult in your school
- Tell your family
- If you are scared to tell an adult by yourself, ask a friend to come with you
- Don't blame yourself for what has happened

**REMEMBER – BULLIES DEPEND ON YOUR SILENCE. ALWAYS TELL AN ADULT. WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU.**

#### **Information for staff**

- If a child reports bullying, reassure them that they are behaving appropriately
- Do not promise confidentiality
- Dealing with the issue without reference to individuals in a class discussion may be helpful
- If the class teacher is not the adult initially approached by the child, then the class teacher must be informed
- The class teacher may judge that the incident is one which could be dealt with within normal classroom procedures and policies. If not, then the following strategies will be followed:

- a. The Key Stage leader will be notified.
- b. The Head teacher will be notified by the Key Stage leader and will discuss the issues with relevant parties, i.e. class teacher, teaching assistants, etc.
- c. We will contact the parents of the children involved and the details of the incident(s) will be explained to them.
- d. We will give support to the victim. The nature of the support will be appropriate to the needs of the child and will be provided by the Learning Mentor in the first instance and supported by the School Counsellor.

- e. We will work with the bully to help them understand their behaviour and so change it. Some of the strategies outlined above will be used, and arrangements will ensure that this is done sensitively so as not to compromise the support given to the victim.
- f. We will work with the bystander to help them understand their behaviour and so change it. Some of the strategies outlined above will be used, and arrangements will ensure that this is done sensitively so as not to compromise the support given to the victim and/or bully.
- g. We will put in place sanctions that are appropriate and which may include:
  - i. apology to the victim
  - ii. loss of playtimes
  - iii. loss of privileges
  - iv. weekly reports
  - v. internal exclusion
  - vi. fixed term exclusion
  - vii. permanent exclusion

### **Incidents outside the school's premises**

School is not directly responsible for bullying incidents off the school premises however we encourage our pupils not to suffer in silence and it's ok to tell and we support pupils and parents/carers by providing advice on a range of steps to be taken. Any incident and advice given will be recorded. The Education and Inspection Act 2006, gives head teachers the ability to discipline pupils for poor behaviour, outside of the school premises.

### **Information for parents**

- Watch for signs of distress in your child. There could be an unwillingness to come to school, unexplained illness or equipment that has gone missing.
- Take an active interest in your child's friendships and how playtimes are spent

#### *If you think your child is being bullied*

- Calmly talk to your child about what has happened.
- Reassure your child that telling you was the right thing to do. Tell them that there is nothing wrong with them.
- Make an appointment to see your child's teacher. Do not be deterred by your child asking you not to tell anyone. Early intervention is better than hoping things will sort themselves out.
- Explain in detail to the teacher what has happened. Be specific regarding who, what, where and when.
- Do not encourage your child to hit back. It will only make matters worse. Such behaviour could be contrary to your child's nature. More positively, encourage your child to recruit friends. A child who has friends is less likely to be bullied.
- Advise your child not to try to buy the bully off with sweets or other 'presents' and not to give in to demands for money.
- Stay in touch with school.

#### *If you think your child is bullying other children*

- Talk calmly to your child about what is happening, explaining that bullying is unacceptable and makes others unhappy
- Discourage other members of your family from bullying behaviour or from using force or aggression to get what they want
- Show your child how to join in with other children without bullying
- Discuss with your child's teacher how you and the school can stop the bullying
- Regularly check with school how your child is behaving

Parents/carers who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspects that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately.

Parents/carers of a pupil found guilty of being a perpetrator of bullying will be contacted immediately and will be expected to support school in the consequences that follow.

Parents/carers have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

All members of The Willows team monitor this policy on a day-to-day basis. This anti-bullying policy is the governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by examining the school's incident books, and by discussion with the Headteacher. Governors analyse information with regard to gender, age and ethnic background of all children involved in bullying incidents.

The scheduled review date for this policy is August 2025.