Saint Edmund's Catholic Primary School

'Together we learn and grow through worship and celebration'

Anti-bullying Policy

Committee responsible for policy	Community
Statutory/Non-statutory	STATUTORY
Frequency of Review	Annual
Date of next review	**December 2026**
Purpose of policy	To understand that bullying is not accepted at St Edmund's school
Consultation	Staff, Governors (including parent governors)
Links to other policies	All other subject policies Specifically Behaviour and Anti-bullying (journal version) PSHE, RE, Equality, Complaints, H & S

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable at our school.

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St Edmund's Catholic Primary School Mission Statement

Our Catholic School exists to provide an education that is God centred.
It is based on the belief that everything of worth comes from God
and builds on the faith already established by the family through Baptism.
Together we grow through worship and celebration.

We encourage our children to develop their spiritual and academic potential and individual talents. We nurture qualities of honesty, tolerance, forgiveness, caring and patience.
All are made welcome and the worth of every individual is recognised, valued and celebrated.

'Together we grow and learn through worship and celebration'.

This Policy aims to share important information from research into bullying behaviours and to outline some of the strategies we may use to deal with incidents.

We **define** bullying as any intentional behaviour that results in another child/person being marginalized and anxious and the wrongdoer(s) achieving a sense of power. It is usually repetitive or persistent, although some one-off attacks can have a continuing harmful effect on the victim.

There are two overall types of bullying:

- DIRECT- takes place between victim and wrongdoer(s)
- INDIRECT- associated with social rejection by a wider peer group and is more subtle in its nature (e.g. spreading rumours or deliberately ignoring the victim).

Bullying can take many forms:

- VERBAL –name calling, insults, jokes, offensive language or comments, including graffiti, threats, innuendo, teasing, taunting, ridicule.
- PHYSICAL – unprovoked assaults including pushing, prodding, hitting, or kicking, inappropriate touching, blocking the way, contact involving objects used as weapons.
- SOCIAL- humiliation through exclusion or rejection by peers, blanking, spreading rumours, gossiping, peer pressure to conform, using difference as a dividing factor.
- CYBER – via the internet, e-mail, or mobile phone including calls, texts, video clips, chat rooms, messages or posts on websites or social media.

- NON-VERBAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL – staring, throwing dirty looks, intimidating behaviour, invasion of personal space, silence, spitting, stalking.
- PROVOCATIVE – inciting others to behave in a threatening/ racist or homophobic way, bringing in provocative literature or propaganda.
- HOMOPHOBIC – when people behave or speak in a way which makes someone feel bullied because of their actual or perceived sexuality.
- RACIST - when people behave or speak in a way which makes someone feel bullied because of their actual or perceived race or culture.
- OTHER – extortion, blackmail, hiding or interfering with personal property, sexual comments or threats.

At St Edmund's education is for the whole person.
We aim to:-

- assist the growth and development of the whole school by encouraging that growth and development in all its members;
- meet each member of the community on their faith journey and help them grow and develop in their relationship with God;
- provide a well-balanced and broad-based curriculum that fulfils all legal requirements placed on it and develops the spiritual, moral, social, emotional, physical and intellectual needs of the individual;
- create an outward looking community including pupils, staff, parents, governors, clergy and wider community.

At St Edmund's we teach the children that we are ALL part of God's family and that, as such, we treat everyone with respect. We teach that we are all responsible for the well- being and care of others. **We work hard to ensure that if bullying does occur:**

- All pupils should be able to tell someone and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively;
- Anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell a member of staff.

To be able to work towards a Non-Bullying school:

- each member of the school community needs to feel responsible for dealing with bullying
- the victim needs to know where to seek help and that they are being listened to and are protected and supported. Doing this will help restore the victim's confidence, decrease the long-term impact of bullying on the victim and prevent a cycle of bullied then engaging in bullying.
- those engaged in bullying behaviours are helped to change their attitude and beliefs about bullying as well as their actual behaviour.

Adults need to be aware of the different types of bullying and the subtleties involved in dealing sensitively but firmly with incidents.

What motivates bullying behaviour?

Bullying behaviour is often motivated by issues linked to power, status, strength and age, and may be underpinned by jealousy or a sense of threat. However, we are aware that bullying can also be triggered by prejudice about faith, gender, race, SEN needs and disability.

Who is more susceptible to bullying?

Some children may be more susceptible to being bullied and we ensure staff are aware of these types of children to enable them to be more vigilant as these children may need additional support. Children more susceptible to bullying may fall into any of these categories:

- Have a physical disability/learning difficulty
- Have experienced neglect or abuse
- Are or have been looked after by foster carers or the LA
- Have witnessed domestic violence
- Are refugees or asylum seekers
- Are over-weight
- Are young carers
- Have physical or linguistic characteristics that are perceived to be different from the norm
- Have transferred schools especially in mid- year
- Have had long periods of absence/ illness or be persistent absentees,
- Have low self esteem
- Lack self confidence
- Have gay/ transgender identities
- Members of the travelling community
- Have prior involvement in incidents of bullying-either as the harmed or the harmer

Times & Places

Children who bully are likely to look for situations where they know that they are more likely to be unobserved or where there is less supervision by adults. We aim to minimise these occasions by ensuring that the school site is well monitored and expect all staff to be punctual when on duty.

Bystanders

Bystanders are people who witness bullying. They are a crucial group who can either be **complicit** in allowing bullying behaviour to continue (by joining in, by becoming an audience and encouraging the attack through laughing etc., by not being involved but allowing the bullying to continue through 'silent approval') or **instrumental in stopping** it. Through the school's ethos and PSHCE curriculum we encourage children to become instrumental in actively displaying anti-bullying behaviour, comforting the victim or telling an adult.

Spotting signs of bullying

A child usually gives an indication that things are not going right for them, often through a change of behaviour or emotional state. The list below details changes in behaviour which may be displayed by young children; staff are encouraged to be observant in noticing these:

- Lack of concentration
- Be intermittently absent from school
- Be reluctant to walk to/ from school; wanting an adult to come with them
- Be reluctant or refuse to talk about school
- Become withdrawn, anxious
- Loss/ increase of appetite
- Become aggressive/ disruptive
- Have unexplained cuts/ bruises
- Complains of stomach aches/headaches
- Start to stammer
- Have nightmares, bedwetting
- Cry more often without explanation
- Have torn clothes
- Have possessions that are damaged or 'missing'
- Bully other children
- Have a sudden change of social group
- Become clingy
- Be afraid to tell you what's wrong
- Deliberate self- harm

Staff are trained to know that changes of behaviour can be the result of abuse. Staff will explore this avenue if children's behaviour suddenly deteriorates. If this is the case, staff will follow the School's Safeguarding Policy.

Peer on Peer Abuse

The school recognises that children sometimes display harmful behaviours towards themselves and/or their peers and that such incidents or allegations must be referred on for appropriate support and intervention.

Such abuse is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. To prevent peer-on-peer 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.

The school will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, RSE and group sessions.

Such content will be age and stage of development specific, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers and will never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up". All staff receive regular training to be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting and gender issues, such as girls being sexually touched or assaulted, and boys being subjected to hazing/initiation type of violence which aims to cause physical, emotional or psychological harm. All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are three times more likely to be abused than their peers. Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil's SEND and will always explore indicators further. LGBT children can be targeted by their peers. In some cases, children who are perceived to be LGBT, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBT children. The school's response to boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl sexual violence and sexual harassment will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between children of the opposite sex.

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 child has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to the LA Single Point of Access – SPA and a call will be made to the police.

Dealing with Incidents

When an incident occurs or is brought to the attention of a member of staff, strategies that have been agreed by the school should be adhered to and the child who displayed bullying behaviours left in no doubt that their behaviour is unacceptable and that their conduct will be monitored.

The victim should be reassured that they are being listened to, that the necessary support will be given to them and that the incident is being taken seriously.

As a general principle however, it is best to avoid confrontation and harsh punishment since aggression breeds aggression and the child who displayed bullying behaviour is more likely to change their behaviour when they are helped to see things from the victim's perspective and to feel social pressure from their peers rather than righteous indignation from adults.

First steps for adults: Remember that it can take courage for a child to report a bullying incident, whether they are the victim or bystander or have used bullying behaviour.

- Remain calm, you are in charge.
- Show that you are listening so that the child feels listened to and that they are being taken seriously. Finding a quiet place to talk so that the conversation will not be disturbed, or witnessed by other classes, is good practice.
- At this stage it should be clearly established, using our school's definition of bullying that the incident reported is one of bullying. (This may take time and be confirmed once all facts have been ascertained).
- Remember, reacting emotionally may escalate behaviours and we need to deescalate the situation.
- Also, consider whether there may be a child protection issue, if so the follow school's Child Protection procedures. (Safeguarding Policy)
- Investigate the incident to establish as far as you can what has happened.
- Use open questions when interviewing those involved, though closed questions are useful when you are clarifying a point.
- Interview each child individually; it can be useful to have another adult present to take notes.
- Questions might include -
    - What has been happening?
    - Who has been involved?
    - How do you feel? Are you hurt?
    - Where/when did the incident take place?
    - What happened just before/after the incident took place?
    - Has this happened before? When? How often?
    - What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
    - What are you thinking/feeling since?
    - Is anyone else also being bullied?
- It is useful to summarise, at regular intervals, what has been heard back to the individual being interviewed. Feeling understood is very important.
- Consider asking the child to write down what happened.
- Investigate further/ fact finding exercise (recorded)
- Decide on a response. Whatever response is chosen should be communicated clearly to all those concerned so that everyone is clear and misunderstandings are avoided.
- A written record should be kept which can then be passed on to the SLT, DH or HT
- Think hard about whether your action needs to be private or public; who are the pupils involved?
- Reassure the victim(s); don't make them feel guilty, inadequate or foolish. Remember they may be experiencing some or all the following;
    - Isolation (real or imagined)

- Self-doubt and uncertainty
- Fear of reprisals
- Self-blame
- Fear of being bullied by others
- Depression or sadness

- Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim. Show them the care, respect and concern needed to return them to normalcy.
- Make it plain to that you disapprove of bullying **behaviour** and **why** choosing to behave in that way was a wrong **decision** on their part.
- Consider ways in which the can be encouraged to see the victim's point of view.
- Ask the child what they think can be done to help the victim eg: an apology (in writing?), making a contract not to behave that way again on school premises or outside school, listing behaviours that need changing and others that may be appropriate.
- Consider that the idea is not so much to punish the wrongdoer but to encourage the culprit to carry out some corrective action to improve relationships. Punish the child/ren taking part in bullying as appropriate but be careful how this is done. Reacting aggressively or punitively gives the message that it's all right to bully if you have the power.
- Explain clearly the consequences of their behaviour and why selected sanctions are appropriate.
- Make sure that the child who has been bullied knows how and who to report further incidents to, and feels confident enough to do so.

Involving Others

- Bullying incidents should be reported to a member of the school leadership team.
- Inform **ALL** colleagues so that everyone is vigilant.
- After discussion with the SLT it may be appropriate to involve parents.
- If parents are involved then staff should report the incident calmly, clearly and concisely and detail actions that the school is undertaking both to support the victim and to help the child who displayed unexpected bullying behaviours to avoid repeating their mistake; reassure both sets of parents that the incident will not linger on or be held against anyone once actions or activities outlined in the meeting are completed. Since the first meeting with parents may take place immediately or soon after a particular incident it may not have been possible to identify actions required, or the meeting with parents may shape those actions.

  A follow-up meeting may therefore be needed to discuss actions, with a further meeting possibly required at the closure of those actions (e.g. to understand from the parent if the victim is now feeling normal again after reintegration activity.)
- Appropriate staff should be made aware so that they can exercise informed and assistive judgement around behaviour and academic performance of the victim while things return to normal.

- Encourage parents to reward the child for keeping to the contract and for non-bullying behaviour. A two-way diary can help to focus attention on positive aspects of behaviour at home and school.
- Inform parents of the very serious consequences should bullying behaviour continue.
- If necessary and appropriate consult police.
- Keep governors informed of serious incidents.
- It may be appropriate that the head teacher needs to consider internal, fixed or permanent exclusions.

Re-integration of the victim

It is important to understand the root cause of the bullying wherever possible so that targeted actions can be taken and specific support for both parties provided. The bully themselves may have wider ranging issues which have led to their behaviour and this is dealt with in Section 4, but the victim of the bullying and the potential for long-term impact on their life should not be forgotten. Support of the victim can in some cases prevent a cycle of bullied-becomes- child/ren taking part in bullying, and can help maintain the confidence of a young person at a critical time in their life. Events at primary school can shape a child's experience at secondary school and thereon into adult life.

Depending on the severity of the bullying a plan of action for the victim should be enacted. This can include:

- Regular meetings with a member of staff that the victim trusts to discuss their feelings and issues.
- Reassurance that what they share is important and will be treated confidentially, and, appropriate actions will be taken to prevent further bullying.
- Positive reversal of any ostracism that the victim may feel to restore their confidence enabling them to take part in class life and the wider school community.
- Strategies to help the victim with any issues of self-confidence, providing direction in how to be clear and assertive in rejection of being bullied.
- Advice on avoiding situations where bullying may occur and how to remain calm and look confident if confronted
- Giving academic support and catch up opportunities to the victim if they have fallen behind as a result of the bullying.

Appendix 1 lists some example questions for children to ask themselves which might be used as a class exercise where bullying has occurred.

Final Steps

- Provide on-going support to all those involved in the incident who need it. Monitor the situation for an agreed period of time to ensure that the way it was resolved has been

successful. If the incident has thrown up other issues the school may want to consider making referrals to an external provider.

- If a further incident involving the same children is reported the school should follow the same procedures above (ascertaining facts etc.) and having communicated with relevant people (School leadership, parents/carers, referral providers if any), decide what further action or different action needs to be taken.
- Try to prevent future incidents. Look for trigger factors. Record everything and follow up incidents with further discussion, meetings, monitoring etc., depending on the behaviour.

Closure

- Once the agreed period of monitoring has passed and there has been no recurrence of the bullying incident, then the case should be formally closed and a note placed on the record to reflect the outcome.
- Make sure the incident doesn't live on through reminders by staff.
- Keep reinforcing preventative strategies as outlined in this policy.
- As a result of the incident the school may decide to review practice and amend policy. Amendments will be shared and consultations may be necessary with others in our school community e.g. school council, governors, parents, staff.

Prevention

There are a number of universal strategies that will benefit all members of the school's community as well as encourage a culture of healthy relationships where bullying is not accepted. We also have strategies in place for low- mid level intervention and different strategies for high level more intensive intervention.

Universal Strategies of prevention include-

- An agreed definition of bullying
- Systems in place for intervening and responding
- Teaching children the difference between bullying and conflict which does not involve an imbalance of power.
- Staff modelling of good relationships. This conveys to pupils the values and expectations of the school
- An agreed anti-bullying policy accessible to all and reviewed regularly.
- Dialogue and feedback opportunities. We have on-going opportunities for dialogue between pupils, their parents/carers and staff. This may be through the School Council, pupil /parent questionnaires, class council meetings, anti- bullying focus weeks, class circle time activities, classroom communication books/worry boxes. A culture of dialogue will increase the chances of pupils telling adults about bullying.
- Effectively managed use of play spaces. We zone out areas on the playground and ensure that there is range of activities on offer for all children, shared through a rota system.

- Staff on the playground should be clearly visible (wearing Hi-Viz jackets) and available to children in order that their presence discourages bullying behaviour.
- Curriculum opportunities within teaching programmes used for PSHE, Citizenship, Religious Education, Drama/ Role play, Fundamental British Values and Sex & Relationships Education. These programmes all help pupils to learn to respect themselves and others, realise the consequences of bullying and how to respond and ask for help. They also help to promote self-esteem and a sense of responsibility.
- Peer support- We have a 'Buddy' system to help our children support and train each other in playground games to help them engage with others.
- School has a staff managed HUB to enable children support during lunchtimes if they are feeling vulnerable or in need of a safe space.
- Y6 prefects help to support and look after younger children.

Strategies to help change the behaviour of the child who bullies

The aim is to make the bullying stop therefore it is necessary to:

- Provide increased supervision and the elimination, if possible, of areas where supervision is obstructed.
- Those involved are closely monitored, especially at break times.
- Investigate what triggers incidents and remove these triggers - e.g. choosing of football teams, certain playtime games, friendship groups or gangs etc.
- Ensure that parents of both bullies and victims are aware of strategies being used to stop the recurrence of bullying.
- Follow procedures in school policy.
- Ensure that all interactions are kept emotionally low key

To prevent bullying in our school, we may use a number and range of strategies, for example:

- Bring the topic of bullying to the attention of the class for discussion/action. This is done in all classes through PSHE curriculum and is a special focus during Anti-Bullying weeks. However, teachers may also allocate extra curriculum time regularly over a period of days/ weeks to further develop explicit social and emotional learning to link anti-bullying work with personal development. This gives pupils opportunities to discuss bullying and issues that arise about telling others when it happens
- Teach the recipients skills to be more assertive, ways to say "no" so that they know how to resist being coerced into bullying behaviour and know some strategies to help them walk away without losing face, ways to tell an adult.(eg a 'worry box' in classroom).
- Give recipients a task to do in playtime to break the cycle of taunts.
- Teach the class skills of negotiation, conflict resolution and team work. Teachers use class 'circle time' games to explore these skills.
- Identify differences between bullying behaviour and falling out with a friend and understanding the differences between the two.

- Talk to the pupil responsible for the bullying about the victim's perception of it and how it differs from their own.
- Emphasise that those who watch bullying and do nothing are encouraging power-seeking behaviour. Teach children about how being a bystander who does nothing is actually giving 'silent approval'. Talk about how we are all responsible for keeping our school free from bullying behaviour, by our own actions.
- As and when appropriate, prevention may also include revisiting and writing a set of school/class rules, signing a behaviour contract, writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying, reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly, making up role plays, circle time and having discussions, making pupils aware of how bullies can use technology to access others and feel anonymous and how we should deal with this particular type of bullying.
- Possibly give pupils involved in bullying behaviour constructive and challenging tasks to do during breaks.
- Encourage all pupils to break the silence about bullying behaviour.

Low-mid level Interventions

Some pupils need additional support in developing and maintaining relationships. These strategies are to support them.

- Small group work. There are special programmes designed to meet specific needs- social skills, anger management, self-esteem work. Sessions may run for up to 6-8 weeks and would be facilitated by ELSA staff. Activities may include role play, practical work and discussions.
- Circle of Friends. A social skills intervention activity but one that involves peer support. It works to help individuals who are experiencing rejection. Again this would be facilitated by a trained adult and the school would seek specialist trainers to assist in setting this up.
- Restorative discussions. This could be a 'chat' that takes place between the child/ren who did the bullying when s/he has caused harm and the victim. They do not involve parental involvement as they happen informally and frequently- a few minutes daily- and the conversation contrasts with a 'disciplinary' conversation. The child is given a clear message about the school's values around relationships and asked how they can avoid the problem happening again, what strategies they are trying to put things right. It is an opportunity for the child to discuss and resolve issues rather than allowing a negative atmosphere to continue and poor behaviour to potentially escalate. The teacher may need some thought and preparation to help support the child to come up with answers themselves.

High level intensive interventions

A small number of pupils may need intensive help with types of behaviour that mean their relationships frequently breakdown and they experience a significant amount of conflict. The following strategies require more specialist support and will often result in a child having a Behaviour Support Plan.

- One to one support. This may be from within the school or a key worker eg from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service-CAMHS or the Local Authority Behaviour Team.
- Full restorative conferences. The facilitator needs to be a trained person not directly involved in the incident. The school will look to the LA for support in providing this service.
- Classroom conferences involving a whole class to explore any problems that are disrupting learning. These need to be run by trained facilitators and again the school will take advice from specialists within the LA support services.

Training

This Policy is shared during Induction of new staff and any other appropriate training for all staff is implemented as part of our CPD programme. Governor training is provided through the LA or Diocesan governor training programme.

Review and Monitoring of Policy

Understanding this Policy and its strategies is important for consistency across the school. This Policy is regularly reviewed especially in the light of new research and whenever monitoring indicates a need to revisit more frequently due to increase in incidents or as a consequence of an incident.

All partners in our school community are included in the review of this policy-staff, pupils, governors and parents/carers. It is available to access on our school website by everyone in our school community.

Its salient points are clearly linked with other school policies e.g. PSHE, Behaviour & Discipline, Equality, RE, Complaints Procedure, Health & Safety - and its aims are intrinsic to our school ethos and are continually monitored to ensure that we keep developing good anti-bullying practice and that we expect everyone to commit to it.

Appendix 1

Am I someone who takes part in bullying? Example questions for pupils to ask of themselves to prevent or avoid bullying which might be used as the basis of a class exercise:

Bullying should not be in our nature, but sometimes the things we do scare other people without us knowing. We might think that calling someone a name or poking them is fun, and at first they might laugh, but if we do it a lot, if we kick and trip them, then they might get scared.

We might think it's good fun but they might think we are someone who takes part in bullying, so it's good to ask ourselves some questions: If someone said that to me, would it make me feel angry? Or sad or scared?

- Am I doing this to hurt someone?
- Am I doing this to make them feel bad?
- Am I doing this to show I'm strongest?
- Am I doing this because I am angry? Or sad?
- Am I saying this because they look or sound different to me and my friends?
- Am I hurting someone because someone hurts me?
- Or because someone I love is not here, so I am sad?
- Would I feel bad if someone bigger did this to me?
- Is this game fair? Am I, or are we, changing the rules so that one person always loses?
- How can I help that person who looks lonely?
- Can I ask that person to join in my game so that they have fun and are happy again?

If you are the strongest in your class, sometimes you can scare other people when you show how strong you are and they may think you are someone who takes part in bullying.

Strength should be used to help other people, not hurt or scare them.

Calling people names might seem like fun, but it's more fun to smile and laugh and make a new friend than it is to make them upset. You never know, that person who looks different to you may become your "bff" - your best friend for life!