ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

2026–2027

"Learning, Living, Loving together in Christ."

Approved by	Governing Body
Date approved	22.10.2026
Review date	Autumn 2027

1. Policy Statement and Catholic Mission

At Our Lady and St Rose of Lima Catholic Primary School, every child is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves to feel safe, respected, included and valued. Our mission, "Learning, Living, Loving together in Christ", guides how we build relationships, challenge unkindness and respond to harm. Bullying in any form is unacceptable.

We are committed to preventing bullying, listening carefully to concerns, responding promptly and supporting everyone affected. We recognise that bullying can occur in person or online, on or off the school site, and that some pupils may face heightened risks.

2. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy operates alongside the school's Pastoral and Positive Behaviour Policy 2026–2027, which must include measures to prevent all forms of bullying. It is informed by the Education and Inspections Act 2006 (as amended), Equality Act 2010, Children Act 1989 and 2004, relevant criminal law, DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance (2017; publication page updated July 2026), Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and statutory Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance effective September 2026.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Pastoral and Positive Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, RSHE Policy, SEND Policy, Mobile Phones and Smart Devices Policy, Staff Code of Conduct and Complaints Policy. The school will follow current statutory guidance if any linked policy is awaiting update. Where an incident raises a safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy takes precedence for immediate protection, referrals and confidential safeguarding records; behaviour consequences are determined under the school's Behaviour Policy.

3. Definition and Recognition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally. It commonly involves an imbalance of power, whether real or perceived. This can arise from age, size, popularity, group dynamics, access to information, disability or other circumstances.

Bullying may include name-calling, threats, intimidation, deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, taking or damaging belongings, physical aggression, online harassment or sharing humiliating content. Repeated online acts or the continued circulation of a single harmful post can cause sustained harm.

A single disagreement or isolated unkind act is not automatically bullying; nevertheless, all harmful behaviour will be addressed. A one-off serious incident, including discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment or violence, may require immediate safeguarding action even when it does not meet the definition of bullying. Staff will not dismiss harmful conduct as "banter" or "just joking".

4. Types of Bullying and Discriminatory Behaviour

- Physical, verbal, relational or emotional bullying, including intimidation, exclusion and coercion.
- Online or cyberbullying through messaging, games, social platforms or manipulated images, including AI-generated content.
- Prejudice-based bullying connected with race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, disability or SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or perceived differences.
- Bullying connected with appearance, health, family circumstances, poverty, being looked after, caring responsibilities or other vulnerabilities.
- Sexualised bullying, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour, which will also be considered under safeguarding procedures.

The school will respond to racist, discriminatory and other prejudicial incidents even when they are not repeated. Staff will consider barriers to reporting, including communication needs and power imbalances.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Governing Body oversees the effectiveness of prevention and response arrangements, receives anonymised information on patterns and checks that duties under equality and safeguarding legislation are met.
- The Headteacher, Mrs Hensman, leads implementation, ensures fair and proportionate responses, and monitors incidents and trends.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is Mrs Hensman. Deputy DSLs are Mrs Nicky Edgington and Miss Paula Kavanagh, as named in the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026–2027. The DSL/deputies assess child-on-child abuse, online harms and discriminatory incidents and coordinate safeguarding actions and external referrals where needed.
- All staff, including lunchtime staff, supply staff and volunteers, must intervene safely, listen, report and record concerns promptly and maintain confidentiality.
- Pupils are encouraged to treat others with dignity, seek help, report bullying and support peers without placing themselves at risk.
- Parents and carers should share concerns promptly and work constructively with the school.

6. Prevention: Culture, Curriculum and Pupil Voice

We promote a culture of belonging through our Catholic virtues, Catholic Social Teaching, prayer, liturgy, assemblies, pupil leadership, positive behaviour expectations and restorative relationship-building where safe and appropriate. Teaching through RSHE, Computing and Online Safety develops respectful relationships, empathy, consent, bystander responsibility, digital resilience and recognition of bullying and prejudice.

We will teach children how to report worries; provide accessible routes for pupils with SEND or communication needs; seek pupil voice; identify hotspots and patterns; supervise shared spaces; and use events such as Anti-Bullying Week to reinforce year-round expectations. Support will be adapted to individual needs, including reasonable adjustments.

7. Reporting Bullying and Seeking Help

Children can tell their class teacher, any trusted adult, a member of the pastoral team or a DSL. Parents can contact the class teacher or school office on 0121 464 2283 and may ask for a meeting with a senior leader. Staff who witness or receive a report must act promptly and pass concerns to the appropriate leader; safeguarding concerns must be referred to the DSL without delay.

Reports may be made by a child affected, a witness, a parent or another adult. Children will be listened to without being promised absolute confidentiality. The school will explain, in age-appropriate terms, what will happen next and how the child will be kept safe.

8. Responding to Reports and Investigating Concerns

- Ensure immediate safety, provide reassurance and identify any urgent medical or safeguarding needs.
- Record every reported or suspected bullying concern promptly and factually on CPOMS, including the account, date, pupils involved, witnesses, actions and outcome. Alert the DSL or deputy without delay where safeguarding is indicated; entering a CPOMS record does not replace an immediate verbal referral when a child may be at risk.
- Speak separately and sensitively with the children involved and any witnesses; avoid leading questions and premature conclusions.

- Assess whether the concern is repeated bullying, an isolated behaviour incident, discrimination or child-on-child abuse. Prejudice-based incidents, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, threats or significant harm must be considered for safeguarding escalation even if a single occurrence. Consider power imbalance, SEND, communication barriers, and the impact on all children.
- Inform parents and carers as appropriate, respecting safeguarding, privacy and the rights of other children.
- Agree proportionate actions, support and behaviour consequences, record reasons and communicate relevant outcomes without disclosing another child's confidential information.
- Set a follow-up date, check that the behaviour has stopped and review safety and wellbeing; escalate if concerns continue.

Where a child may have suffered significant harm, or where there are concerns about sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, serious physical harm, exploitation or abuse, the DSL/deputy will apply the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, including referral thresholds and local multi-agency arrangements. Staff must not delay referral while establishing whether an incident meets the definition of bullying. Restorative conversations must never be imposed on a child who has experienced harm.

Behaviour Policy alignment: Section 7 and Appendix B of the Pastoral and Positive Behaviour Policy 2026–2027 classify bullying as Level 3 (serious) behaviour. Staff must secure safety, notify senior leaders and the DSL where appropriate, record the incident on CPOMS, communicate with parents as appropriate and arrange support, consequences and follow-up. The policy also identifies racial or sexual abuse, fighting and directed verbal abuse as serious behaviour. The Headteacher or SLT will determine appropriate proportionate consequences under that policy, which may include parental contact, loss of privileges, a behaviour contract, removal from class and, in the most serious circumstances, suspension or permanent exclusion. The Headteacher alone makes suspension or exclusion decisions in accordance with the relevant statutory procedures. Support and safeguarding action are considered alongside, not instead of, appropriate consequences.

9. Supporting Children Affected by Bullying

Children experiencing bullying will be offered a trusted adult, pastoral support, an agreed safety plan where needed, appropriate adjustments to supervision or routines and regular check-ins. Staff will monitor wellbeing, attendance, learning and relationships and consider external support or early help when appropriate. The child will not be expected to resolve bullying alone.

Children who have engaged in bullying will receive a clear response alongside education, pastoral support and opportunities to repair harm only when safe and voluntary. Any sanctions must follow the school's current Behaviour Policy and be fair, proportionate, consistent and adjusted where required for disability or SEND. This policy does not create a separate sanctions ladder; the exact stages must be checked against the current school Behaviour Policy.

SEND and reasonable adjustments: Responses must take account of individual needs, disability-related factors, communication differences and the requirement to make reasonable adjustments. Mrs Edgington (SENDCo and deputy DSL) will be consulted where appropriate. This does not diminish the right of children experiencing bullying to effective protection.

10. Online Bullying and Harmful Digital Content

Online bullying will be addressed where it affects pupils' safety, welfare or school life, including outside school hours. The school will apply the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy's Online Safety and Filtering section, including the risks of AI-generated or manipulated content and harmful sharing of images. The DSL/deputy must be informed promptly where there are concerns about sexual images, coercion, threats, exploitation or serious harassment. Staff will preserve relevant evidence safely and will not ask pupils to forward or reproduce intimate images.

Any search, screening or confiscation of devices must follow current law and DfE guidance and the school's associated policies. Staff must not assume they have unrestricted authority to search the contents of a device. Threats, exploitation, hate incidents or other suspected offences may require police involvement.

11. Bullying Outside School and Involving Adults

The school may respond to off-site behaviour where it affects pupils or the school community, within the scope of lawful school powers and safeguarding duties. Where appropriate, staff will liaise with parents, other schools and agencies. Concerns involving staff, parents or visitors will be handled under the relevant staff conduct, grievance, complaints or safeguarding procedures rather than pupil behaviour sanctions.

Off-site and online sanctions must follow section 11 of OLSR's Pastoral and Positive Behaviour Policy 2026–2027: behaviour may be addressed when it threatens or harms another pupil, affects the orderly running of school, or otherwise meets the policy's stated criteria. Sanctions are imposed only on school premises or when a pupil is under the lawful control of school staff.

12. Recording, Monitoring and Confidentiality

All reported or suspected bullying concerns, including those not ultimately substantiated, must be recorded on CPOMS. Records must distinguish allegations from findings and include relevant incidents, patterns, discriminatory elements, decisions, sanctions, support, parental contact and follow-up checks. The DSL team will oversee safeguarding entries and records in line with section 15 of the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Monitoring: The Headteacher and DSL team will review CPOMS records for recurrence, locations, times, types of bullying and disproportionate effects on children with SEND or protected characteristics. Findings will inform supervision, curriculum, staff training and anonymised reporting to governors.

13. Working with Parents and Carers

We will listen respectfully to parents' concerns, explain the process and provide appropriate updates. We will share information about their own child while respecting safeguarding confidentiality and the privacy of other pupils. Parents who remain dissatisfied may use the school's Complaints Policy. Parents should be advised that safeguarding investigations or referrals may limit what can be shared.

14. Monitoring, Review and Approval

The Headteacher and DSL team will monitor implementation and use incident analysis, staff and pupil feedback and parent concerns to inform improvements. Governors will review this policy annually, or sooner following significant changes to law, guidance or safeguarding practice.

15. Key Guidance and Support

Policy alignment: This policy has been cross-referenced with OLSR Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy 2026–2027 and OLSR Pastoral and Positive Behaviour Policy.

- Department for Education: Preventing and Tackling Bullying — gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-bullying
- Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 — gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- Department for Education: Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance (September 2026).
- Anti-Bullying Alliance — anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk; Childline — childline.org.uk; NSPCC — nspcc.org.uk; Childnet — childnet.com.

16. Operational Consistency with the Pastoral and Positive Behaviour Policy

Behaviour levels and reporting

Bullying is Level 3 serious behaviour under section 7 and Appendix B of the Pastoral and Positive Behaviour Policy. A single discriminatory, sexual or violent incident can also require Level 3 or immediate safeguarding action without being labelled repeated bullying. Level 1 or 2 unkindness is addressed through graduated teaching and support; persistent or escalating patterns are reviewed and recorded on CPOMS.

CPOMS and escalation

All reported or suspected bullying concerns are recorded on CPOMS. Staff promptly alert SLT and speak directly to a DSL where there is a safeguarding concern. Recording alone does not constitute a safeguarding referral. Entries distinguish reports, evidence, decisions, parent contact, safety measures and subsequent reviews.

Consequences, support and inclusion

Any sanction is selected under section 8 of the Behaviour Policy and must be lawful, reasonable and proportionate. Restorative work is voluntary and only appropriate where safe. SEND-related adjustments follow section 12; they do not remove the duty to protect children experiencing harm. Formal removal, reintegration and exclusion follow section 13 and the separate Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policy.

Prevention and recognition

Preventive teaching and positive reinforcement complement the behaviour curriculum and the school's awards: house points, Star of the Week, Mission Statement Luminary, Catholic Virtue Luminary and Class Wish Luminary. Recognition never replaces a response to a reported bullying concern.

Online, off-site and safeguarding decisions

Online and off-site incidents follow section 11 of the Behaviour Policy; child-on-child abuse and protection decisions follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The DSL leads safeguarding risk assessment and external referrals as appropriate.

Approval and review

Date approved	22.10.2026
Approving body	Governing Body
Next review	Autumn 2027