St. Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy updated: May 2023

Policy Review: July 2025

Signed by:

Chair of Governors

<u>**Anti-Bullying Policy: One Page Summary**</u>

St. Anthony's is a loving, inclusive and respectful school community. Safeguarding the welfare of all members of our community is of paramount importance to us. All our students should be able to learn in a safe environment: we have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying.

<u>**Key definitions**</u>

Bullying is defined behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can include physical, verbal or psychological harm and it can happen face-to-face or online. Bullying is intended to harm the confidence and self-respect of a person and can be motivated by prejudice against certain groups or perceived differences between individuals. Bullying is recognised by the school as a form of child-on-child abuse and can have a detrimental impact on a pupil's emotional development.

Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of technology (in particular, mobile phones, social media and the internet) to intentionally hurt someone.

How to report incidents of bullying

If bullying is suspected, or if a pupil believes they are a victim of bullying, they should speak with any member of staff they feel comfortable with and this can include: a teacher, their form tutor, any member of the Pastoral Team or a member of SLT. A pupil can also ask a parent/carer to contact school on their behalf.

Outcomes

<u>Mental Health Wellbeing</u>

Supporting pupils involved in bullying whether victim or perpetrator is vital. Our school provides a range of mental health services and resources that will support pupils through this.

<u>Sanctions</u>

As a compassionate school community, we acknowledge that sanctions alone are not always the most successful response to bullying and a multi-faceted approach may be needed. Equally, where hurtful behaviour occurs we must adhere to our Behaviour Policy.

Sexual harassment

We have a dedicated email address where pupils can report any form of sexual abuse or harassment. This email is sent directly to our Designated Safeguarding Lead who will respond appropriately.

reportit@st-anthonys-academy.com

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Why do we have an Anti-Bullying Policy?

St. Anthony's is a loving, inclusive and respectful school community. Safeguarding the welfare of all members of our community is of paramount importance to us. All of our students should be able to learn in a safe environment: we have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying. We have an Anti-Bullying Policy so that everyone understands what bullying is, why bullying is not acceptable, how to report a concern and what we do as a school if bullying takes place.

We are a compassionate school and recognise that students need support in developing as moral and social beings so that they can interact with one another and the wider community, creating positive relationships with those around them. Our approach to bullying is based on education, respect, tolerance and support. We are proactive in our approach to bullying and prioritise intervention to stop bullying taking place but, if bullying does occur, we work quickly to ensure it is stopped as soon as possible, and that those involved receive the support they need alongside any sanctions.

Our policy outlines what we do to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying and has been developed with the involvement of the whole school community: students, staff, families and governors have all had direct input into our policy. St. Anthony's is committed to developing an anti-bullying culture where bullying is not tolerated in any form.

2. Mercy ethos and values of our school community

As a Mercy Academy our school was founded on our core values, to be Christ-centred; faith-enlightened; to show concern for the poor, especially women and girls; to build communities and pursue excellence. We are here to support all members of our school community in becoming the person God is calling them to be and recognise that it is crucial our school provides a safe space in which all of us can grow in the image and likeness of God. At the heart of our values is a recognition that we are here to love and serve one another. We have a comprehensive Personal Development curriculum that ensures students are fully guided in how to form respectful caring relationships and what to do if they experience hurtful or harmful behaviour. This is delivered through Personal Development lessons, assemblies, form time, mass, liturgies, opportunities for prayer, internal and external speakers and educational visits. We have established a broad range of enrichment and leadership opportunities where all students feel valued and are encouraged to develop themselves and those around them.

3. How does the Anti-Bullying Policy link to other policies and guidance from the Department for Education?

Our school must comply with statutory (legal) guidance which is provided to schools by the Department for Education, this policy is informed by (but not limited to):
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'

- DfE (September 2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Promoting and Supporting Mental health and Wellbeing in Schools and Colleges'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2021)
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy also relates to other school policies we have including:
- Safeguarding Children / Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Relationships and Health Education Policy
4. **Definitions**

- **Bullying** is defined as behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual; either physically and/or emotionally. Bullying can include physical, verbal, or psychological harm and it can happen face-to-face or online. Bullying is intended to harm the confidence and self-respect of a person and can be motivated by prejudice against certain groups or perceived differences between individuals. Bullying is recognised by the school as a form of child-on-child abuse and can have a detrimental impact on a pupil's emotional development.

Bullying can be characterised by:

Repetition – incidents are sustained over time and not one-off

Intent – the perpetrator (s) intend to cause harm either emotionally or physically

Power imbalance – bullying creates unequal power balances and can impact a child's emotional development and state

- **Cyberbullying** can be defined as the use of technology, for example, mobile phones, social media, and the internet, to intentionally hurt someone. It is committed over a sustained period. Examples can be seen below under section 5. Due to the increase in usage and the fast-paced changes in technology, we are aware that this could have an impact on the nature of bullying that takes place inside and outside of our school. Updates and changes in technology and social media platforms will be closely monitored by staff and the school will respond to developments, as necessary.

It is important that we highlight the key differences between **bullying** and **harmful behaviour.**

- **Harmful behaviour** is defined as singular or one-off behaviour that hurts an individual emotionally or physically. It can be by accident or intentional and can be the result of ignorant attitudes.

Pupils who have certain protected characteristics or vulnerabilities can be the targets of bullying these could be related to:

- Physical appearance
- Young carers, children in care or other home circumstances
- Physical / mental health conditions

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- Race
- Religion, faith and belief or for those without faith
- Ethnicity, nationality or culture
- SEND or perceived SEND
- Pupils with neurodiversity
- Sexual orientation including homophobic and biphobic bullying
- Gender based bullying including transphobic bullying and bullying of a sexual nature
- Teenage parents including pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act
- Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals or Pupil Premium qualification

5. How to recognise incidents of bullying

Acts of bullying can be categorised and can include these examples:

Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching, taking belongings

Verbal - name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling, gossiping

Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, mocking, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion

Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic, bi-phobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate pictures and / or films, inappropriate comments, sending or requesting degrading images, humiliating images being shared via the internet or instant messaging services, behaviour that subordinates or intimidates another person. This can be based upon harmful sexist and gender stereotypes.

Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending inappropriate and harmful messages, social exclusion, threatening or intimidating messages, threatening or intimidating videos or pictures, silent or abusive phone calls or voice notes, using the victim's phone to harass others to make it look like the victim's fault, threatening or intimidating emails possibly using someone else's name or email address, threatening or intimidating messages via a chatroom, unpleasant messages sent via instant messages, upsetting and defamatory information posted to websites and social media outlets

How it could look if someone was being bullied?

- Isolation from peer groups
- Upset and distress
- Not themselves
- Acting in a manner different from usual
- Repeated absences from school
- Being frightened to travel to and from school
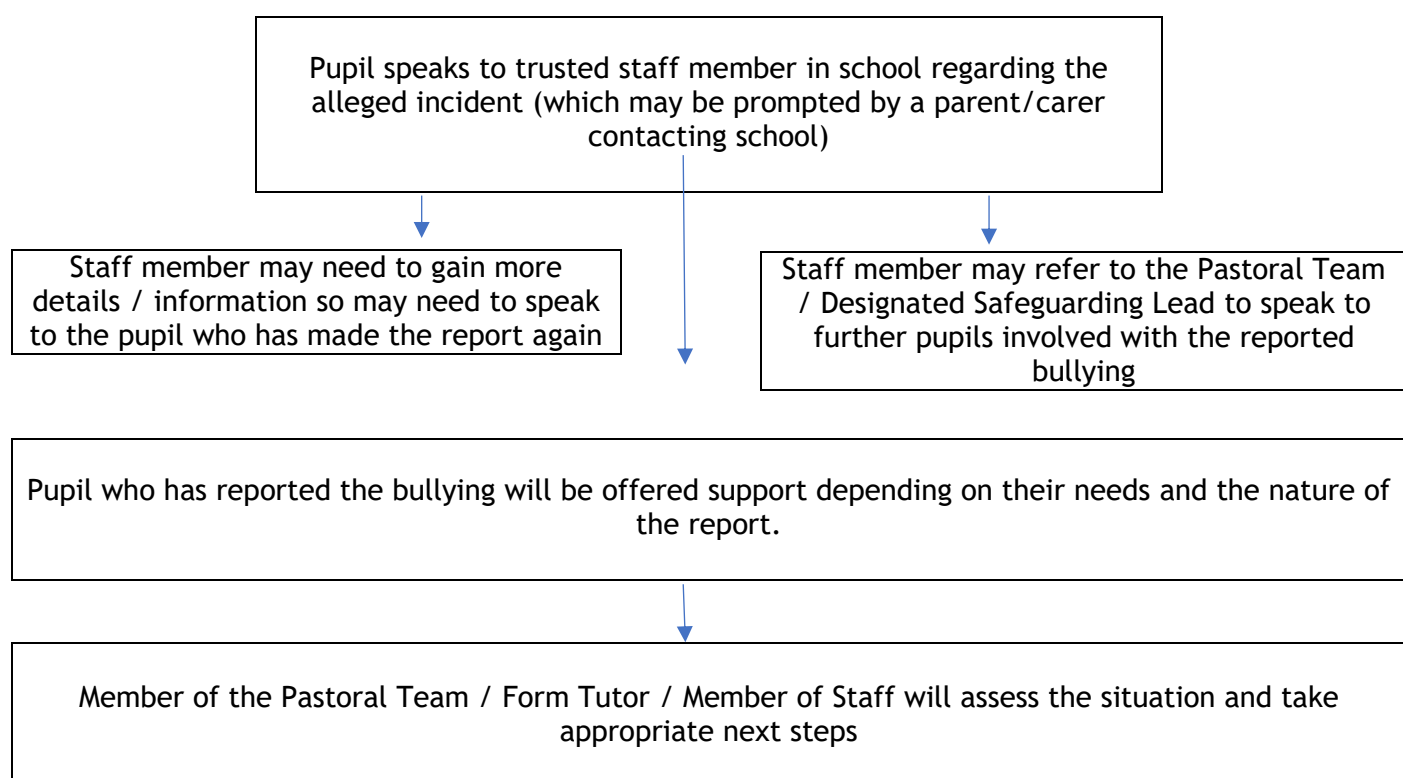- Stating that they feel ill repeatedly

- Decreased involvement in school work
- Decreased involvement in extra-curricular activities
- Missing possessions including money and items of monetary value
- Lack of appetite
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Unwillingness to use mobile devices
- Over use of mobile devices
- Becoming upset when receiving messages via mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Short temper or bursts or anger or frustration
- Change in attitude and behaviour at home

These changes in behaviour may not be due to bullying but other factors, including mental well-being. Pupils who display these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the cause of such behaviours and support will be offered.
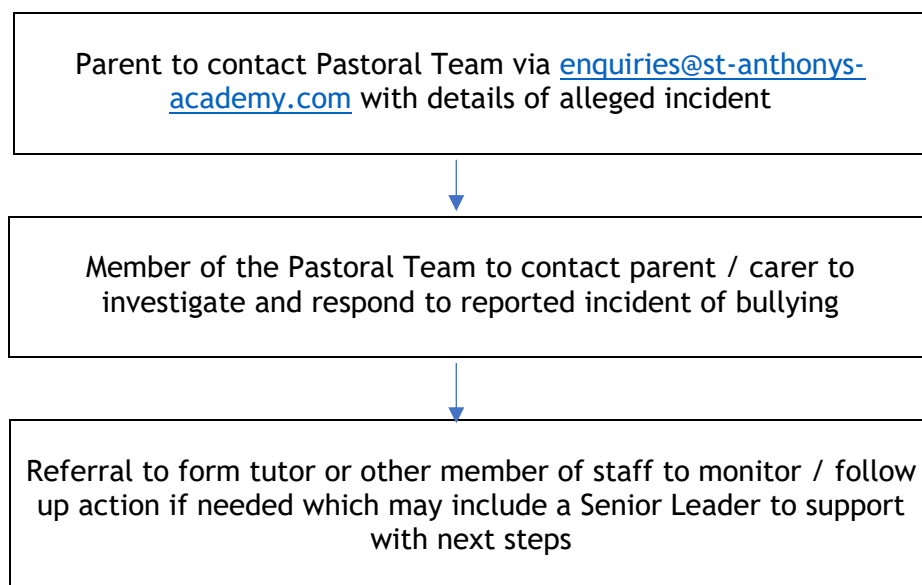
6. How to report incidents of bullying

If bullying is suspected, or if a pupil believes they are a victim of bullying, they should speak with any member of staff, this can include: a teacher, their form tutor, a member of the Pastoral Team or a member of SLT. A pupil can also ask a parent/carer to contact school on their behalf.

Reporting system for pupil informing school of bullying

> Pupil speaks to trusted staff member in school regarding the alleged incident (which may be prompted by a parent/carer contacting school)

> Staff member may need to gain more details / information so may need to speak to the pupil who has made the report again

> Staff member may refer to the Pastoral Team / Designated Safeguarding Lead to speak to further pupils involved with the reported bullying

> Pupil who has reported the bullying will be offered support depending on their needs and the nature of the report.

> Member of the Pastoral Team / Form Tutor / Member of Staff will assess the situation and take appropriate next steps

Reporting system for Parental Contact Informing school of bullying

Parent to contact Pastoral Team via enquiries@st-anthonys-academy.com with details of alleged incident

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Member of the Pastoral Team to contact parent / carer to investigate and respond to reported incident of bullying

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Referral to form tutor or other member of staff to monitor / follow up action if needed which may include a Senior Leader to support with next steps

Depending upon the nature of the report, the staff member may have to gain further understanding of the situation, this may involve:

- Speaking to the alleged victim to assure them that they are being listened to and to make sure the alleged incidents are reported accurately and, in enough detail
- Speaking to the alleged perpetrator
- Speaking to alleged witnesses of the bullying
- Recording the alleged incident to pass on the report to pastoral staff members if needed

Key roles and responsibilities

Board of Governors

- Evaluating and monitoring this policy
- Analysing data and incidents reported from senior staff

Headteacher

- Overall implementation of this policy
- Analysing data and incidents reported by senior staff
- Reporting any incidents and trends to Board of Governors

Staff with pastoral responsibilities

- Corresponding and meeting with parents/carers and victims or perpetrators
- Monitoring the incident and aftermath including support to pupil's involved
- To coordinate with the Headteacher on effective consequences for serious incidences of bullying
- To lead and disseminate information on this policy and the school's view on bullying behaviour

Teachers

- Being alert to potential incidents of bullying
- To listen and report any incidents of bullying

- Provide support for pupils involved
- Being alert to changes in behaviour of members of their form group or class

Parents and carers

- Informing the school if their child is involved in bullying whether as a victim, observer, or perpetrator
- Being watchful of any significant changes in their child's behaviour and informing the school of this change

Pupils

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying
- Not retaliating either verbally or physically if they are a victim of bullying or witness bullying either in person or via online activity
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff if they witness or become a victim of cyberbullying

7. How will we deal with incidents of bullying?

Prevention

As a Mercy Academy we are committed to preventing bullying before it occurs, by promoting our inclusive nature in line with our Ethos. We endeavour to utilise various strategies to successfully prevent and tackle bullying. These include:

- Listening to pupil voice responses and discussing issues that may provoke conflict or may lead to bullying behaviours before they arise.
- Our Mercy Ethos and values of respect are continually addressed and promoted, and these behaviours are maintained and encouraged outside of the classroom into the corridors, yard areas and outside of school.
- Involving pupils in the amending of this Anti-Bullying Policy so they fully understand the school's approach to bullying.
- Regularly evaluating and updating our approach dependent on developments in technology.
- Openly discussing differences between people that could lead to bullying.
- Having an equality and diversity enrichment club in school called Safe Space where differences are celebrated.
- Discussing and learning about bullying in Personal Development lessons.
- Inviting external organisations to attend our establishment and promote our anti-bullying message.
- Making it easy for students to report bullying inside or outside of school and continually listen to pupils' concerns if they arise.
- Providing opportunities to extend pupils' peer groups via the offering of numerous enrichment activities.
- Naming safe spaces and trusted members of staff that vulnerable students can talk to.
- Changing or amending seating plans in response to incidents of bullying.
- Being aware of and addressing any mental health issues amongst pupils.
- Online safety discussed by Heads of House to ensure consistent messaging across our school community.

- Availability of mental health support in school and if needed, referrals to external agencies.
- Staff are trained to respond effectively to incidents of bullying and safeguarding training is regularly updated.

Outcomes

Counselling and support

Counselling of pupils is paramount in addressing the incidents of bullying. This includes counselling for the victim and perpetrator. This initially may be via the pupils' form tutor but may be supplemented by any of these options:

- Counselling from a member of the Pastoral Team
- Referral to Director of Pupil Support
- Referral to external agency alongside support in school if required

Sanctions

As a compassionate school community, we acknowledge that sanctions alone are not always the most successful response to bullying and a multi-faceted approach may be needed. Equally, where hurtful behaviour occurs we must adhere to our Behaviour Policy. The sanction is against the behaviour not the pupil. Please see our Behaviour Policy for further detail.

8. **How will we support victims of bullying and restorative justice**

We know that an individual approach is necessary when pupils have been the victims of bullying. We use a variety of strategies to support students in the aftermath of a reported bullying incident.

Pupils who have been victims of bullying will be supported by:

- Being listened to
- Timely support from trusted member of staff
- Re-building self-confidence through discussions with their Form Tutor or Pastoral Team
- Referral to an external support group if they feel this is needed
- Access to The Haven if required
- Access to safe spaces during lunch time and break time if required
- Check in meetings with their Form Tutor or Pastoral Team to monitor mental health and emotional well-being

Perpetrators of bullying will be supported by:

- Access to mental health support either internally or externally
- A forum to discuss the incident
- Being supported to understand why this happened and what they did wrong
- Being supported to change their attitudes and behaviours
- Education on any prejudice that may be the root cause of the bullying behaviour
- Consequences (including sanctions) appropriate to the incident and the individual
- An opportunity to have a restorative conversation with the victim under guided supervision from staff
- An opportunity to access a mentor to support with behavioural needs

9. Sexual harassment

- Sexual harassment or abuse can happen between children of any age. It can be a group of pupils abusing or harassing a single pupil or number of pupils.
- Staff are aware that this could happen at any stage of education, and we are aware of signs of such abuse in the pupils in our care. Our school has a zero-tolerance stance for child-on-child abuse.
- Our school community are united that sexual abuse and harassment is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It should never be passed off as "banter," "just having a laugh," "a part of growing up". Failure to recognise harassment can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviour, an unsafe environment and in worst case scenarios a culture that normalises abuse, leading to children accepting it as normal and not coming forward to report it.
- The pupils in our school should recognise and report any form of sexual harassment and abuse.
- We have a dedicated email address where pupils can report any form of sexual abuse or harassment from inside or outside the school. This email is sent directly to our designated safeguarding lead who will respond appropriately.

Examples of sexual harassment include:

- Sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance, and calling someone sexualised names
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting
- Physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone's clothes
- Displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature
- Up skirting

Online sexual harassment

This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence.

It may include:

- Consensual and non-consensual sharing of nude and semi-nude images and/or videos
- Taking and sharing nude photographs of U18s which is a criminal offence
- Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people provides detailed advice for schools and colleges
- Sharing of unwanted explicit content or sexualised online bullying
- Unwanted sexual comments and messages, including on social media
- Sexual exploitation; coercion and threats
- Coercing others into sharing images of themselves or performing acts they are not comfortable with online

Any form of sexual harassment and abuse will more than likely affect a pupil's mental well-being and academic attainment.

Whilst statistically sexual harassment happens more to girls, boys can also be the subjects of sexual harassment and abuse. Any form of harassment or abuse will be treated in the same manner of seriousness and will never be tolerated.

10.   Measuring and monitoring progress

The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Governors.

11. Help organisations

If required below are links to other external organisations that may support a pupil or their parents or carers when they have suffered incidents of bullying. These include:

Family Lives (previously Parentline Plus) 0808 800 2222 - gives support and advice for parents on any aspect of parenting and family life, including bullying.

Contact has a helpline for families with disabled children - they can give advice on bullying issues. You can contact them on 0808 808 3555 and visit their website for more information

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) Provides help and advice on cyberbullying, the Centre maintains a website called Think U Know for children and young people, and parents and carers about staying safe online.

Internet Matters Provides regularly refreshed content to support parents and carers with all aspects of e-safety. Includes lots of advice on technology that can help you to protect your child online and helpful content relating to cyberbullying.

Kidscape Provide workshops for children that need support with bullying issues as well as a helpline for parents and carers

NSPCC and O2 have a free online safety helpline for parents and carers - 0808 800 5000

Red Balloon Learner Centres Red Balloon provide intensive, full-time education for children aged between 9 and 18 who feel unable to return to school because they have been severely bullied. There are Red Balloon Centres all over England, and they also have a programme of online support.

Welldoing is an independent, UK-wide directory of therapists and counsellors who are all members of reputable professional organisations. There is a separate search function for children and adolescents in need of therapists and counsellors. It also supplies information and advice in the areas of mental health, wellbeing and development.

Counselling Directory provides a huge support network of counsellors, enabling visitors to find a counsellor close to them and appropriate for their needs.

Stop It Now. Confidential helpline about child sexual exploitation https://www.stopitnow.org/

YoungMinds parent helpline: https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/

PACE (Parents Against Child Exploitation) have a parent helpline that can provide advice about online safety https://paceuk.info/for-parents/telephone-support/

Report Harmful Content Online (provided by the UK Safer Internet Centre and South West Grid for Learning) have a website which has support about reporting content: https://reportharmfulcontent.com/

Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (FFLAG) Offers support to parents, friends and family members of those who identify as LGBT+. **fflag.org.uk**

Being Gay is OK - Provides advice and information for LGBTQ+ people under 25. **bgiok.org.uk**

Mermaids **0808 801 0400** - Supports gender-diverse young people aged 19 and under, and their families and carers. Offers a helpline and and webchat. **mermaidsuk.org.uk**