



St Lawrence Catholic School

Anti Bullying Policy

Our school mission and motto

#KIND

"Our school is a place where we all come together as one community to learn, have fun and make lasting friendships all under God's love and care"

Our anti-bullying commitment is rooted in this mission. Every person is made in the image and likeness of God and deserves dignity, respect and safety. Bullying is never acceptable. We listen, act promptly, support everyone affected and help children learn how to repair harm and build healthy relationships.

This policy explains how St Lawrence's School prevents bullying, responds to concerns and works with pupils and families. It should be read with the Behaviour Policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Approved by	Leo Duggan
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Review date	October 2028, or earlier if guidance changes

Parent and pupil quick guide

Tell an adult if something has happened to you, you have seen it happen, or you are worried about someone else. You will be listened to. You do not need to prove that it is bullying before asking for help.

What is bullying

Bullying is usually	Bullying is not usually
Behaviour by an individual or group that is repeated over time and intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally. It often involves an imbalance of power.	A one-off disagreement, friendship difficulty or accidental hurt. These still matter and the school will respond, but they may be managed through the Behaviour Policy rather than recorded as bullying.

How to report a concern

Who can report	How to report	What happens next
A pupil, parent, carer, member of staff or witness.	Tell the class teacher or any trusted adult. Parents can contact the class teacher or school office. Urgent safety concerns should be reported immediately.	The school checks safety, listens separately to those involved, records the concern, informs the safeguarding lead and agrees action and support.

What parents can expect

- The concern will be taken seriously and assessed promptly.
- The school will explain the process and keep parents informed, while respecting the privacy of other children.
- Action will focus on safety, stopping the behaviour, supporting those affected and preventing recurrence.
- The school cannot share another child's personal information, sanction or safeguarding details.
- If there is immediate danger, serious violence, a sexual image or message, a threat, suspected crime, or a child may be at risk of harm, safeguarding procedures take priority.

1 Purpose and Catholic ethos

Our Catholic faith teaches that every person has God-given dignity and that we are called to love our neighbour, seek justice and build peace. We want every child to belong, learn and flourish in a community shaped by compassion, truth, respect and reconciliation.

This means that we:

- do not tolerate bullying, prejudice, harassment or humiliation;
- listen to children and take their experiences seriously;
- protect those who are harmed and hold pupils who bully to account;
- teach children to recognise harm, make safer choices and repair relationships where appropriate; and
- do not use forgiveness or reconciliation to pressure a child to meet, speak with or accept an apology from someone who has harmed them.

2 Aims

- Give pupils, parents, staff and governors a shared understanding of bullying.
- Make it easy and safe to report concerns.
- Respond consistently, promptly and proportionately.
- Support the pupil who has been bullied, witnesses and the pupil who has bullied.
- Prevent bullying through curriculum, culture, supervision and pupil voice.
- Identify patterns, address discrimination and improve practice.

3 Definition of bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. Bullying may be obvious or subtle and may happen face to face or through technology. It often involves an imbalance of power. Power may come from physical strength, popularity, numbers, access to information or images, status, confidence, age, or another person's vulnerability.

The school considers the behaviour, its impact, repetition, intent and power imbalance. A single serious incident may not meet the definition of bullying, but it will still be addressed. A series of apparently small incidents may amount to bullying when viewed together.

Bullying is never dismissed as banter, a joke, part of growing up or something the child should manage alone.

4 Forms of bullying

Form	Examples
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging belongings, taking possessions or blocking someone's movement.
Verbal	Name-calling, threats, taunting, mocking, offensive comments or repeated unkind remarks.
Social and relational	Deliberate exclusion, controlling friendships, humiliation, gossip, rumours or encouraging others to reject someone.
Online	Hurtful messages or posts, group-chat exclusion, impersonation, sharing images or information without consent, abusive gaming behaviour, fake or manipulated content, or repeated contact through apps and devices.
Prejudice based	Behaviour connected to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sex, disability, SEND, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, appearance, health, family circumstances or another perceived difference.
Sexual or sexist	Sexual comments, rumours, unwanted attention, sexualised name-calling, image-based abuse or conduct that demeans someone because of sex. These concerns are managed under safeguarding procedures.
Property and extortion	Taking, hiding or damaging property, demanding money or possessions, or using threats to obtain something.

Children may be bullied because of an actual characteristic, a perceived characteristic, or their association with someone else. Bullying can happen to any child; some pupils, including pupils with SEND, young carers, children in care and children experiencing family difficulty, may be especially vulnerable or may find reporting harder.

5 Where this policy applies

The school responds to bullying on school premises, during school activities and visits and while pupils travel to or from school. It may also respond to bullying outside school or online where it affects a pupil's safety, wellbeing, attendance, relationships or learning, or disrupts the school community. School action will be lawful, reasonable and consistent with the Behaviour Policy.

6 Preventing bullying

Prevention is part of everyday school life, not only a response to incidents. The school will:

- teach kindness, respectful relationships, consent, boundaries, online safety and safe help-seeking through the curriculum, including PSHE, Relationships Education, computing, religious education and Life to the Full;
- teach the difference between conflict, unkind behaviour and bullying in age-appropriate language;
- challenge discriminatory language, stereotypes, sexual harassment and harmful banter;
- provide clear supervision and review locations or times where pupils feel less safe;
- teach pupils how to be an active bystander: do not join in, offer support, save evidence where safe and tell an adult;
- use assemblies, prayer, liturgy, stories, Anti-Bullying Week and pupil leadership to reinforce belonging and dignity throughout the year;
- ensure staff, including lunchtime and support staff, can recognise, record and respond to bullying;
- provide accessible reporting routes and adjustments for pupils with communication or SEND needs; and
- work with families and other agencies when concerns extend beyond school.

7 Reporting bullying

Pupils can report bullying to any trusted adult. They may speak, write a note, use an agreed communication method or ask a friend or parent to help them. Reports from witnesses are welcomed. Anonymous information will be considered, although it may limit what the school can establish.

Parents and carers should normally contact the class teacher. They should share what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, any witnesses, the impact on the child and any relevant screenshots or messages. Parents should not question other children, confront another family or circulate allegations online, as this may increase harm or compromise an investigation.

A child will not be promised secrecy. Information is shared only with people who need it to keep children safe and manage the concern.

8 How the school responds

When bullying is suspected or reported, the school will use the following process. The precise response depends on age, needs, seriousness, risk and available evidence.

Step	School action
1 Make safe	Check immediate safety and wellbeing. Separate pupils if needed, provide a trusted adult and take urgent safeguarding or medical action.
2 Listen	Speak with the pupil reporting harm, the pupil whose behaviour is causing concern and witnesses, usually separately. Use open questions and avoid requiring repeated accounts.
3 Record and assess	Create a clear record on the school system. Consider repetition, intent, impact, power imbalance, protected characteristics, online evidence and safeguarding risk.

4 Inform	Tell the designated safeguarding lead. Inform parents or carers as appropriate, unless doing so could increase safeguarding risk.
5 Act	Agree proportionate action under the Behaviour Policy, remove harmful online content where possible, protect the pupil affected and address the behaviour and its causes.
6 Review	Set a review point, check that the behaviour has stopped, monitor wellbeing and attendance, and take further action if concerns continue.

The school aims to establish what is more likely than not to have happened using available information. A report made in good faith is not treated as malicious simply because it cannot be substantiated.

9 Safeguarding and serious incidents

Bullying may be a form of child-on-child abuse. The designated safeguarding lead assesses whether a concern involves significant harm, sexual harassment or violence, exploitation, coercion, hate-related abuse, self-harm risk, a serious threat, a suspected crime, or another safeguarding issue. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy then takes priority, alongside this policy where appropriate.

- Sexual images, videos or messages are not copied, forwarded or viewed unnecessarily. They are reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead.
- Staff preserve relevant evidence without asking a child to repeatedly retell their experience.
- The school may seek advice or make referrals to children's social care, the police or other agencies.
- Support will continue even when another agency is involved.

10 Supporting the pupil who has been bullied

Support is agreed with the child and reviewed. It may include:

- reassurance that reporting was the right thing to do and that the bullying is not their fault;
- a named trusted adult and a clear way to seek help;
- a safety plan, increased supervision or changes to routines that do not unfairly restrict the child who was harmed;
- pastoral or SEND support, help rebuilding confidence and friendships, or referral for specialist help;
- support to report or remove online material and strengthen privacy settings; and
- regular check-ins until the school and child are satisfied that the behaviour has stopped.

The pupil will not be required to take part in a restorative meeting, face-to-face apology or mediation. These approaches are used only when safe, suitable and freely agreed. Mediation is not appropriate where there is coercion, significant fear or a clear power imbalance.

11 Responding to the pupil who has bullied

The pupil is held accountable while being supported to change. The response may include:

- a proportionate consequence under the Behaviour Policy;
- clear teaching about the harm caused, boundaries, consent, prejudice or online conduct;
- work to understand triggers, peer dynamics or unmet SEND, communication or pastoral needs;
- an individual behaviour or support plan and closer supervision;
- repairing harm where safe and agreed, without placing responsibility on the pupil who was bullied;
- parental involvement and, where necessary, external support; and
- escalation where behaviour continues or is serious.

An additional need may affect how a consequence or intervention is delivered, but it does not mean that harmful behaviour is ignored. Reasonable adjustments and safeguarding measures are made case by case.

12 Witnesses and bystanders

Pupils who witness bullying may feel frightened, guilty or pressured to join in. Staff will listen to and support them. Pupils are taught to:

- not join in, like, share, forward or comment on harmful content;
- move away and seek adult help rather than physically intervening;
- support the pupil privately and include them where it is safe; and
- save or show evidence without redistributing harmful or sexual content.

13 Online bullying

Online bullying can happen at any time, spread quickly, reach a large audience and make it difficult for a child to feel safe at home. It may be repeated through sharing, forwarding or continued access even when the original post was made once.

The school may ask for screenshots, usernames, dates, links or device information. Parents should preserve relevant evidence, use in-app reporting and blocking tools, and avoid replying publicly. The school may request removal, report content to a platform, apply school consequences, provide online-safety education and involve safeguarding or police services where necessary.

The school does not require unrestricted access to a child's personal account. Any search or examination of a device is carried out only where lawful and under the school's searching and safeguarding procedures.

14 Working with parents and carers

The school will work with the parents or carers of all pupils involved. It will share information about their own child, the process, safety measures and next steps. It cannot disclose confidential information about another child, including specific sanctions or personal circumstances.

Parents and carers are asked to:

- listen calmly, reassure their child and record key facts;
- report concerns promptly rather than encouraging retaliation;
- keep evidence but not forward harmful or sexual content;
- work with agreed safety and support plans;
- model respectful communication, including online; and
- tell the school if concerns continue or new information emerges.

15 Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

- Review and approve the policy, monitor its effectiveness and challenge leaders about patterns, protected characteristics and outcomes.

Headteacher and senior leaders

- Maintain an anti-bullying culture, ensure consistent action and training, communicate the policy and oversee serious or persistent cases.

Designated safeguarding lead

- Assess safeguarding risk, advise staff, coordinate referrals and ensure child-on-child abuse is managed under current safeguarding guidance.

All staff

- Model respect, act on concerns, protect pupils, record accurately, avoid promising secrecy and follow reporting procedures.

Pupils

- Treat others with dignity, do not join in bullying, report concerns and cooperate honestly with support and investigations.

Parents and carers

- Report concerns, work with the school, support safe behaviour and use the complaints route if a concern is not resolved.

16 Recording monitoring and review

Reports, decisions, actions and reviews are recorded on the school's agreed system. Leaders examine records over time to identify repetition that may not be visible in a single incident. Monitoring includes locations, times, online elements, outcomes, recurrence and patterns connected to SEND or protected characteristics. Information is handled in line with data-protection and safeguarding requirements.

The headteacher reports appropriate anonymised information to governors. Pupil and parent feedback informs improvement. This policy is reviewed at least annually and sooner following a serious incident, a pattern of concerns or a change in law or guidance.

17 Related policies

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policies
- PSHE and Relationships Education Policy
- SEND Policy

18 Legislation guidance and support

The policy is informed by current law and guidance, including:

- Preventing and tackling bullying: advice for schools (Department for Education)
- Keeping children safe in education 2026
- Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988 and Communications Act 2003
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years
- Online Safety Act 2023

Official guidance is available at www.gov.uk The school applies the current version in force if guidance changes before the next policy review.

Independent information and support

Organisation	Support
Childline	Confidential support for children at childline.org.uk or 0800 1111
NSPCC	Advice for adults concerned about a child at nspcc.org.uk
Anti-Bullying Alliance	Information for families and schools at anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk
Childnet	Online-safety information for children and families at childnet.com
The Diana Award	Anti-bullying resources at diana-award.org.uk