School Motto
'God shines within our hearts.
Jesus walks by our side.
The Holy Spirit gives us strength.'

To be reviewed December 2027

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy 2026–2027

Part of St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust

Policy status: School Policy
Academic year: 2026–2027
Date approved: September 2026
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Policy owner: Headteacher
Governor/Trust oversight: Governing Body / St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust

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1. Statement of Intent

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we are committed to providing a warm, caring, inclusive and safe environment where every child is valued as a unique and precious individual created in the image and likeness of God.

Our Catholic mission calls us to recognise the dignity of every person and to treat others with respect, compassion, kindness and justice. We are committed to ensuring that every child can learn, play, worship and develop in a relaxed, secure and supportive environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and abuse.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

We recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on a child's emotional health, mental health, confidence, attendance, learning and sense of belonging. We therefore take all concerns about bullying seriously and respond promptly, consistently and proportionately.

Bullying can happen in any school and no school can claim that bullying never occurs. What matters is that pupils, parents, staff and governors know that concerns will be listened to, investigated appropriately and acted upon.

At St Mary's CVA, we aim to create a culture in which:

- everyone is treated with dignity and respect;
- children feel safe to report concerns;
- children know that adults will listen to them;
- discriminatory and prejudicial behaviour is challenged;
- harmful behaviour is not dismissed as 'banter', 'just a joke' or 'children being children';
- safeguarding concerns are identified and escalated promptly;
- children who experience harm are supported;
- children who have caused harm are supported to understand and change their behaviour;
- positive relationships are actively taught and modelled;
- pupil voice is valued; and
- every member of our school community understands their responsibility for maintaining a safe and inclusive environment.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, RSHE Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND Policy, Attendance Policy and Complaints Policy.

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2. Catholic Ethos and Mission

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy is committed to the mission of the Catholic Church and to the dignity and worth of every child.

Our approach to bullying is rooted in the Gospel message of love, forgiveness, compassion, justice and reconciliation.

We seek to develop a community in which pupils understand that:

- every person is created and loved by God;
- everyone deserves to be treated with dignity;
- we have a responsibility to care for one another;
- our words and actions can cause harm;
- forgiveness does not mean ignoring harmful behaviour;
- reconciliation must only take place when it is safe and appropriate;
- we should stand up for what is right;
- we should seek help when someone is being harmed; and
- we have a responsibility to be people who bring hope, kindness and justice to others.

Our Catholic Social Teaching principles, including human dignity, solidarity, the common good and preferential concern for those who are vulnerable, underpin our approach.

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3. Aims and Objectives

The aims of this policy are to:

1. prevent bullying wherever possible;

2. ensure that all pupils feel safe, valued and respected;
3. ensure that all allegations and concerns are taken seriously;
4. ensure that staff recognise the difference between bullying, relational conflict, unacceptable behaviour and safeguarding concerns;
5. ensure that child-on-child abuse is identified and responded to appropriately;
6. ensure that sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour are never dismissed as bullying or 'banter';
7. challenge prejudice-based and discriminatory behaviour;
8. provide clear procedures for reporting concerns;
9. ensure that safeguarding concerns are referred to the DSL without delay;
10. provide appropriate support to children who experience bullying or other harmful behaviour;
11. support children who have caused harm to understand and change their behaviour;
12. work constructively with parents and carers;
13. monitor patterns and trends in bullying and harmful behaviour;
14. use pupil voice to evaluate the effectiveness of this policy; and
15. create a positive, respectful and inclusive school culture.

All governors, leaders, teaching staff, support staff, lunchtime staff, volunteers and other adults working in school have a responsibility to contribute to this culture.

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4. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy has been developed with regard to relevant legislation and current statutory and non-statutory guidance, including:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying;
- Behaviour in Schools;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Children Act 1989;
- Children Act 2004;
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR;
- relevant local safeguarding partnership procedures; and
- relevant St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust policies and procedures.

KCSIE 2026 confirms that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and that staff must act immediately when they have a concern, reporting concerns to the DSL or deputy without delay.

The law requires state schools to have a behaviour policy that includes measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils. Schools must also comply with equality and anti-discrimination duties.

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5. What is Bullying?

At St Mary's CVA, bullying is understood as behaviour that intentionally hurts, harms, humiliates, intimidates or threatens another person and involves an imbalance of power or perceived power.

Bullying may be:

- physical;
- verbal;
- emotional;
- relational;
- psychological;
- social;
- racist;
- religious or faith-based;
- sexist;
- misogynistic;
- homophobic or biphobic;
- disability-related;
- discriminatory;
- sexual in nature;
- online or cyberbullying; or
- related to another characteristic or aspect of a child's identity or perceived identity.

Bullying may be carried out by an individual or group.

It may happen:

- face-to-face;
- online;
- in school;
- outside school;
- on the journey to and from school;
- in the local community;
- through social media;
- through gaming platforms;
- through messaging applications; or
- through other digital technologies.

Bullying is often repeated or sustained over time.

However, **a single incident may still be a serious safeguarding concern** where the behaviour is sufficiently harmful or abusive. This includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, serious threats, discriminatory abuse, serious physical violence, exploitation or significant online harm.

The school will therefore consider the circumstances and impact of each incident rather than relying solely on whether behaviour has happened repeatedly.

6. What Bullying is Not

It is important to distinguish bullying from other forms of behaviour.

Not every disagreement, argument or friendship difficulty is bullying.

Children may:

- fall out with friends;
- disagree;
- say something unkind;
- make mistakes;
- misunderstand one another;
- experience friendship breakdown;
- become angry;
- make an inappropriate comment; or
- behave impulsively.

These incidents still require an appropriate response and may constitute unacceptable behaviour.

However, where behaviour is repeated, targeted, harmful, discriminatory, threatening or involves an imbalance of power, staff must consider whether it constitutes bullying or a safeguarding concern.

A single incident involving serious harm must never be dismissed simply because it does not meet a traditional definition of bullying.

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7. Types of Bullying

7.1 Physical bullying

This may include:

- hitting;
- kicking;
- pushing;
- punching;
- pinching;
- biting;
- spitting;
- tripping;
- throwing objects;
- deliberately causing injury;
- damaging or taking possessions; or
- other physical intimidation or violence.

Physical violence may constitute a safeguarding concern or criminal offence and must be dealt with accordingly.

7.2 Verbal bullying

This may include:

- name-calling;
- insults;
- threats;
- intimidation;
- teasing;
- humiliating comments;
- repeated criticism;
- mocking;
- spreading rumours; or
- deliberately using hurtful language.

7.3 Emotional and relational bullying

This may include:

- deliberately excluding someone;
- encouraging others to exclude someone;
- threatening gestures;
- humiliation;
- manipulation;
- spreading rumours;
- controlling friendships;
- deliberately isolating someone;
- encouraging others to turn against a child; or
- repeatedly undermining someone's confidence.

7.4 Cyberbullying and online bullying

Online bullying can include:

- abusive messages;
- group-chat bullying;
- online exclusion;
- harmful posts;
- fake accounts;
- impersonation;
- sharing photographs or videos to humiliate someone;
- threats;
- online harassment;
- discriminatory or hateful comments;
- sharing personal information;
- encouraging others to target a child;

- harmful content on gaming platforms;
- livestreaming harmful behaviour;
- inappropriate use of artificial intelligence or digitally generated content; and
- other online behaviour that causes harm.

The school may take action where online behaviour takes place outside school but affects pupils, staff or the school community.

Schools may sanction pupils for online behaviour where it is threatening, causes harm or affects the school environment.

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8. Prejudice-Based and Discriminatory Bullying

St Mary's CVA is committed to ensuring that every child is treated with dignity and respect.

Prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying may relate to:

- race;
- ethnicity;
- nationality;
- culture;
- religion or belief;
- disability;
- special educational needs;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender identity;
- appearance;
- language;
- family circumstances;
- care experience;
- social or economic circumstances;
- medical needs; or
- another characteristic or perceived characteristic.

Discriminatory language will be challenged even where a child says that they were 'only joking'.

The school will consider the impact on the child and the wider school community.

Where behaviour may constitute a hate incident, hate crime or another criminal offence, appropriate advice will be sought and the matter may be referred to the police.

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9. Racist Bullying

Racist bullying includes behaviour directed towards a child because of their race, ethnicity, nationality, culture, language or perceived racial identity.

This may include:

- racial insults;
- racist name-calling;
- racist jokes;
- racist stereotypes;
- mocking accents;
- racist gestures;
- racist images;
- racist graffiti;
- exclusion based on race or culture;
- online racist abuse; or
- encouraging others to participate in racist behaviour.

All racist incidents will be taken seriously and recorded appropriately.

The school will respond in accordance with its safeguarding, behaviour and equality procedures.

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10. Religion and Faith-Based Bullying

As a Catholic school, St Mary's CVA recognises the importance of religious identity and freedom of belief.

Faith-based bullying may include:

- mocking someone's religion;
- insulting religious beliefs;
- deliberately misusing religious symbols;
- mocking religious practices;
- targeting a child because of their faith;
- pressuring a child to reject their beliefs; or
- online abuse related to religion or belief.

We expect all members of the school community to show respect for people of different faiths and beliefs.

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11. Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence and Harmful Sexual Behaviour

St Mary's CVA has a zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Sexual harassment and sexual violence are never acceptable.

They must never be dismissed as:

- 'banter';
- 'just a joke';
- 'just playing';
- 'boys being boys';
- 'part of growing up'; or
- something that children should simply resolve themselves.

Sexualised behaviour may include:

- sexual comments;
- sexual jokes;
- sexualised name-calling;
- unwanted touching;
- comments about someone's body;
- sexualised gestures;
- sharing or requesting sexual images;
- sharing sexualised content;
- online sexual harassment;
- coercion;
- unwanted sexual contact;
- exposing intimate body parts;
- sexual threats; or
- other harmful sexual behaviour.

All concerns must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

The school will follow its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant procedures for responding to sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour and sharing of nude or semi-nude images.

The needs and safety of the child who has experienced harm will be prioritised. Appropriate support will also be provided to children who have caused harm.

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12. Child-on-Child Abuse

Children can abuse other children.

This is known as child-on-child abuse and can happen in school, outside school and online.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying;
- cyberbullying;
- physical abuse;

- threats;
- intimidation;
- coercion;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- sharing or requesting sexual images;
- discriminatory abuse;
- racist abuse;
- homophobic or other identity-based abuse;
- initiation or hazing-type behaviour;
- exploitation;
- abuse within friendships or relationships; and
- other harmful behaviour.

Staff must maintain an attitude of **'it could happen here'**.

The absence of previous reports does not mean that harmful behaviour is not taking place.

All concerns will be taken seriously.

Staff must report concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

The DSL will determine whether the incident should be managed through this policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, or more than one policy.

The school will consider:

- the nature of the behaviour;
- the seriousness of the incident;
- the impact on the child;
- age and developmental stage;
- vulnerability;
- SEND;
- power imbalance;
- repetition;
- coercion;
- threats;
- online factors;
- the child's wishes and feelings;
- wider safeguarding concerns; and
- whether external agency involvement is required.

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13. Children Who May Be Particularly Vulnerable

All children can experience bullying.

However, some children may be particularly vulnerable, including children with:

- SEND;
- communication difficulties;
- social communication needs;
- disabilities;
- mental health difficulties;
- additional medical needs;
- attendance difficulties;
- social isolation;
- care experience;
- family difficulties;
- other safeguarding vulnerabilities.

Children with SEND may experience difficulties communicating what has happened to them or may have behaviour or communication differences that make them particularly vulnerable.

Staff will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made so that every child can report concerns and access support.

High-attaining pupils and pupils with particular strengths may also experience bullying and will receive the same protection and support.

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14. Where Bullying Can Happen

Bullying can happen anywhere.

This includes:

- classrooms;
- corridors;
- toilets;
- playgrounds;
- dining areas;
- school trips;
- clubs;
- sports activities;
- online;
- social media;
- gaming platforms;
- group chats;
- the journey to and from school;
- local community settings; and
- other places where children's welfare may be affected.

Where appropriate, the school may respond to incidents occurring outside school where the behaviour:

- affects the school community;
- affects the welfare or safety of a pupil;

- involves pupils from the school;
- impacts on school behaviour or relationships; or
- creates a safeguarding concern.

The school may work with parents, other schools, the police, the local authority, the Trust and other agencies where appropriate.

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15. Contextual Safeguarding

The school recognises that children may experience harm outside the family and school environment.

Staff will consider the wider context in which bullying or harmful behaviour occurs.

This may include:

- peer groups;
- friendship groups;
- neighbourhoods;
- online communities;
- social media;
- gaming platforms;
- routes to and from school;
- community spaces; and
- other environments in which children spend time.

Patterns of behaviour will be considered rather than treating incidents in isolation.

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16. Signs and Indicators

A child may communicate that they are experiencing bullying directly or through changes in their behaviour.

Possible indicators include:

- reluctance to attend school;
- changes in attendance;
- changes in friendship groups;
- withdrawal;
- anxiety;
- low mood;
- loss of confidence;
- changes in sleep;
- changes in eating;
- unexplained injuries;

- damaged belongings;
- missing possessions;
- asking for money;
- loss of concentration;
- decline in attainment;
- increased aggression;
- unusual behaviour;
- reluctance to use devices;
- distress after using devices;
- avoiding particular places or people;
- nightmares;
- emotional outbursts;
- self-harming behaviour;
- expressing hopelessness;
- talking about suicide;
- running away; or
- appearing unusually fearful.

These signs may have other causes.

However, bullying must be considered as a possibility and concerns must be taken seriously.

Any indication of significant safeguarding risk must be reported to the DSL without delay.

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17. What Can You Do if You Are Being Bullied?

Wherever you are in school, you have the right to feel safe.

If someone is bullying you:

- remember that it is not your fault;
- tell an adult you trust;
- tell your teacher;
- tell a teaching assistant;
- tell a lunchtime supervisor;
- tell a parent or carer;
- speak to the DSL or another trusted adult;
- use the school's worry box or other reporting system;
- ask a friend to support you when reporting the concern;
- write down what has happened if this helps you explain it;
- keep evidence of online bullying where it is safe to do so; and
- keep telling an adult until someone listens and helps.

Children should never be expected to deal with bullying alone.

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18. What Can You Do If You See Someone Else Being Bullied?

Children who witness bullying can make an important difference.

If it is safe to do so:

- do not join in;
- do not laugh or encourage the behaviour;
- do not share harmful messages, photographs or videos;
- do not forward harmful content;
- do not confront someone if doing so may put you at risk;
- support the child who may be experiencing harm;
- tell an adult;
- encourage the child to seek help;
- use the school's reporting systems; and
- keep yourself safe.

Being a bystander does not mean that you have to put yourself in danger.

Telling an adult is not 'telling tales'. It is helping to keep someone safe.

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19. Reporting Concerns

Children can report bullying or harmful behaviour to:

- their class teacher;
- another teacher;
- teaching assistant;
- lunchtime supervisor;
- Headteacher;
- Head of School;
- member of the Senior Leadership Team;
- DSL;
- Deputy DSL;
- parent or carer; or
- another trusted adult.

Parents and carers should contact the school as soon as possible if they are concerned about bullying.

Concerns should be reported through the school rather than parents directly approaching or confronting another child or family.

This enables the school to investigate concerns fairly, safeguard all children involved and maintain appropriate confidentiality.

20. Staff Responsibilities

All staff must:

- take concerns seriously;
- listen carefully;
- remain calm;
- avoid making assumptions;
- avoid promising confidentiality;
- record concerns accurately;
- report safeguarding concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay;
- follow the Behaviour Policy;
- follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- consider SEND and other vulnerabilities;
- listen to children's wishes and feelings;
- challenge discriminatory and prejudicial language;
- challenge sexualised behaviour;
- avoid dismissing harmful behaviour as 'banter';
- monitor children following incidents; and
- contribute to identifying patterns and trends.

KCSIE 2026 states that staff should act immediately on concerns and report concerns to the DSL or deputy without delay.

21. Responding to an Allegation or Incident

All allegations and incidents will be responded to calmly, consistently, sensitively and proportionately.

The following process will normally be followed:

Step 1 – Listen

The adult will listen carefully to the child and provide reassurance.

Step 2 – Make the child safe

Immediate steps will be taken to ensure the child is safe.

Step 3 – Establish the initial facts

Staff will establish enough information to determine the appropriate next step.

They will not conduct an unnecessary or intrusive investigation where the matter may require a safeguarding referral.

Step 4 – Consider safeguarding

The staff member will consider whether the concern may constitute:

- child-on-child abuse;
- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- discriminatory abuse;
- physical abuse;
- exploitation;
- online harm; or
- another safeguarding concern.

If so, the concern must be reported to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

Step 5 – Record

The concern will be recorded appropriately on MyConcern or through the school's designated recording system.

Step 6 – Investigate appropriately

The school will gather information proportionately and speak to relevant children separately where appropriate.

Step 7 – Determine the response

The school will determine whether the incident is:

- bullying;
- unacceptable behaviour;
- a friendship or relationship difficulty;
- a safeguarding concern;
- child-on-child abuse; or
- a combination of these.

Step 8 – Support

Appropriate support will be provided to all children involved.

Step 9 – Consequences

Where appropriate, proportionate consequences will be applied in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Step 10 – Monitor

The situation will be monitored to ensure that harmful behaviour has stopped and that children remain safe.

22. Safeguarding Escalation

Any concern that may involve significant harm, abuse, exploitation or child-on-child abuse must be referred to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

The DSL will consider whether advice or referral is required from:

- Children's Social Care;
- the police;
- health services;
- the local safeguarding partnership;
- the local authority;
- the Trust;
- specialist safeguarding services; or
- another appropriate agency.

If a child is in immediate danger, emergency services will be contacted.

The school will follow the relevant safeguarding procedures and will not allow data protection considerations to prevent appropriate information-sharing for safeguarding purposes. KCSIE 2026 specifically states that data protection is not a barrier to sharing and recording information where necessary to protect a child.

23. Recording on CPOMS

All bullying incidents and relevant concerns will be recorded appropriately.

Records should include, where relevant:

- the date and time;
- the children involved;
- what was reported;
- the child's account;
- relevant witness information;
- actions taken;
- decisions made;
- the rationale for decisions;
- safeguarding referrals;
- advice received;
- support provided;
- consequences;
- follow-up actions; and
- outcomes.

Records will be used to identify:

- repeat incidents;
- patterns;
- locations;
- times;
- individuals or groups;
- discriminatory patterns;
- online trends;
- safeguarding concerns; and
- emerging vulnerabilities.

KCSIE 2026 states that safeguarding records should include a summary, actions taken, decisions made, the rationale for decisions and outcomes.

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24. Supporting the Child Experiencing Harm

The school will provide appropriate support to children experiencing bullying or other harmful behaviour.

Support may include:

- a trusted adult;
- regular check-ins;
- pastoral support;
- friendship support;
- nurture support;
- emotional wellbeing support;
- adjustments to routines;
- additional supervision;
- support at playtimes and lunchtimes;
- support with online safety;
- work with parents and carers;
- referral to specialist services; and
- other appropriate interventions.

The child's wishes and feelings will be considered.

Support will continue after the immediate incident where necessary.

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25. Supporting the Child Who Has Caused Harm

The school recognises that children who cause harm may themselves have additional needs or vulnerabilities.

The school will:

- hold children accountable for their behaviour;
- make clear that harmful behaviour is unacceptable;
- explore the reasons for the behaviour;
- consider safeguarding concerns;
- consider SEND and developmental needs;
- provide appropriate education and support;
- teach alternative ways of behaving;
- involve parents and carers where appropriate;
- monitor behaviour; and
- seek specialist support where necessary.

Being a child who has caused harm does not remove the need for safeguarding support.

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26. Reconciliation and Restorative Approaches

Restorative and relational approaches may be used where they are appropriate and safe.

However, reconciliation will **never be automatic**.

The school will not require children to:

- apologise;
- meet face-to-face;
- forgive another child; or
- participate in mediation

where doing so may cause further harm, create pressure or be inappropriate because of the seriousness or nature of the incident.

In particular, restorative approaches will be carefully considered where there has been:

- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- coercion;
- significant power imbalance;
- serious physical violence;
- exploitation;
- threats; or
- significant trauma.

The safety and wellbeing of the child who has experienced harm will remain the priority.

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27. Consequences and Sanctions

Consequences will be proportionate, reasonable and consistent with the school's Behaviour Policy.

The school may consider:

- restorative work;
- loss of appropriate privileges;
- behaviour targets;
- increased supervision;
- pastoral intervention;
- nurture or small-group work;
- parental involvement;
- individual support plans;
- removal from activities where necessary;
- suspension;
- permanent exclusion in the most serious circumstances; or
- other appropriate sanctions.

The school will consider:

- seriousness;
- frequency;
- impact;
- age;
- developmental stage;
- SEND;
- vulnerability;
- safeguarding considerations;
- intent;
- previous behaviour; and
- the child's response to intervention.

Sanctions will not be applied automatically and will not replace safeguarding action where safeguarding concerns exist.

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28. Bullying Outside School

The school recognises that bullying may occur outside school.

This may include:

- the journey to or from school;
- local parks;
- community settings;
- social media;
- gaming;
- group chats; or
- other online environments.

Where such behaviour affects pupils or the school community, the school may take appropriate action.

This may include working with:

- parents and carers;
- other schools;
- the police;
- the local authority;
- the Trust;
- children's services; and
- other agencies.

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29. Online Safety

Online safety is a shared responsibility.

The school will teach pupils to:

- communicate respectfully online;
- recognise harmful behaviour;
- report abuse;
- block and report users where appropriate;
- protect personal information;
- understand the risks of sharing images;
- understand that online actions can have real-world consequences;
- seek help when online behaviour causes concern; and
- recognise manipulation, coercion and exploitation.

The school will use its filtering and monitoring arrangements to help identify online safeguarding concerns.

Online bullying concerns will be considered alongside the school's Online Safety Policy.

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30. Prevention

Prevention is central to this policy.

The school will use:

- RSHE;
- PSHE;
- assemblies;
- collective worship;
- Catholic Social Teaching;
- class discussions;
- stories and literature;
- drama and role play;

- circle time;
- pastoral work;
- pupil leadership;
- school council;
- anti-bullying activities;
- online safety education;
- friendship and relationship education;
- emotional wellbeing work;
- staff training;
- parent information;
- pupil voice; and
- whole-school initiatives.

The school will promote:

- kindness;
- respect;
- empathy;
- courage;
- forgiveness;
- justice;
- compassion;
- inclusion;
- equality; and
- responsibility.

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31. Pupil Voice

Children will be given opportunities to contribute to the development and evaluation of this policy.

This may include:

- pupil questionnaires;
- school council;
- class discussions;
- worry boxes;
- pupil voice interviews;
- assemblies;
- focus groups; and
- other appropriate methods.

Pupil feedback will be considered alongside behaviour and safeguarding data.

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32. Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are important partners in preventing and responding to bullying.

Parents are encouraged to:

- listen to their child;
- report concerns promptly;
- retain relevant online evidence where appropriate;
- encourage their child to speak to school;
- avoid contacting or confronting another child;
- avoid contacting another child's parents directly about school incidents;
- work with school staff;
- follow the school's complaints procedure where necessary; and
- support school expectations around respectful behaviour.

The school will communicate with parents and carers appropriately while maintaining confidentiality and safeguarding considerations.

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33. Staff Bullying and Harassment

St Mary's CVA is committed to ensuring that staff are treated with dignity and respect.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation and abusive behaviour towards staff are unacceptable.

Concerns involving staff will be managed through the appropriate school, Trust, employment, complaints, safeguarding or grievance procedures.

The DfE published specific guidance on preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff in July 2026. This emphasises the importance of a positive whole-school culture and effective reporting and recording systems.

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34. Roles and Responsibilities

Governors / Trust

Governors and the Trust will:

- ensure appropriate policies are in place;
- monitor behaviour and safeguarding arrangements;
- provide appropriate challenge and support;
- ensure the policy is reviewed;
- monitor trends and patterns; and
- ensure the school meets its statutory duties.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- lead implementation of the policy;
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities;
- ensure concerns are appropriately investigated;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are referred;
- monitor bullying and behaviour data;
- report relevant information to governors and the Trust; and
- ensure the policy is reviewed annually.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- provide safeguarding advice;
- assess safeguarding concerns;
- coordinate appropriate referrals;
- ensure safeguarding records are maintained;
- identify patterns and trends;
- liaise with external agencies; and
- ensure child-on-child abuse concerns are appropriately managed.

All staff

All staff must:

- model respectful behaviour;
- challenge harmful behaviour;
- listen to pupils;
- act on concerns;
- report safeguarding concerns without delay;
- record concerns appropriately;
- follow this policy;
- follow the Behaviour Policy; and
- follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils

Pupils should:

- treat others with respect;
- follow school expectations;
- report bullying and harmful behaviour;
- support others safely;
- avoid joining in with harmful behaviour; and
- seek adult help when necessary.

Parents and carers

Parents and carers should:

- support the school's expectations;
- communicate concerns appropriately;
- work with school staff;
- encourage respectful behaviour;
- avoid confrontation with other children or families; and
- support their child's safe use of technology.

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35. Monitoring and Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- CPOMS records;
- behaviour records;
- safeguarding records;
- pupil voice;
- parent feedback;
- staff feedback;
- attendance data;
- exclusion/suspension data;
- analysis of discriminatory incidents;
- analysis of online incidents;
- analysis by year group;
- analysis by location;
- analysis by time of day;
- analysis involving SEND and vulnerable groups; and
- governor monitoring.

Leaders will consider whether:

- bullying is reducing;
- pupils feel safe;
- pupils know how to report concerns;
- staff respond consistently;
- parents know how to raise concerns;
- repeat incidents are identified;
- vulnerable pupils are appropriately supported;
- discriminatory behaviour is challenged;
- online harms are identified; and
- interventions are effective.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner where changes in legislation, guidance, safeguarding practice or school circumstances require it.

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36. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

St Mary's CVA is committed to equality, inclusion and respect for diversity.

The school will actively challenge:

- racism;
- religious prejudice;
- sexism;
- misogyny;
- homophobia;
- biphobia;
- disability discrimination;
- prejudice relating to SEND;
- discriminatory language;
- stereotyping; and
- other forms of prejudice.

The school recognises that children may experience bullying because of a characteristic that they have, are perceived to have, or are associated with.

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37. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

The school will respect confidentiality but will never promise absolute confidentiality where a safeguarding concern has been raised.

Information will be shared appropriately where this is necessary to safeguard a child.

Staff should seek advice from the DSL where they are unsure about information-sharing.

KCSIE 2026 makes clear that data protection is not a barrier to appropriate safeguarding information-sharing.

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38. Related Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- RSHE Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Attendance Policy;
- Equality Policy;

- Complaints Policy;
- Staff Code of Conduct;
- Whistleblowing Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy; and
- relevant St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust policies.

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39. Sources of Support

The school can signpost pupils and families to appropriate sources of support.

These may include:

- Childline;
- NSPCC;
- CEOP;
- Internet Matters;
- Childnet;
- Anti-Bullying Alliance;
- local safeguarding services;
- Children's Social Care;
- the police; and
- appropriate health or specialist services.

Parents and carers should contact the school in the first instance where they have concerns about bullying involving St Mary's pupils.

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40. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where required.

The review will take account of:

- changes to legislation;
- changes to KCSIE;
- DfE guidance;
- safeguarding learning;
- local safeguarding partnership guidance;
- Trust requirements;
- pupil voice;
- parent feedback;
- staff feedback;
- behaviour data;
- safeguarding data; and
- emerging online and contextual safeguarding risks.

Next scheduled review: September 2027

Appendix 1 – Child-Friendly Anti-Bullying Message

At St Mary's, we believe:

Be kind.

Everyone deserves to be treated with kindness.

Be respectful.

Everyone is unique and special.

Be brave.

Tell an adult if something is wrong.

Be a good friend.

Do not join in when someone is being hurt.

Be a safe bystander.

Get help rather than putting yourself at risk.

Be honest.

Tell an adult what has happened.

Be responsible online.

Think before you post, send, share or comment.

Be yourself.

You should never have to change who you are to make someone else happy.

Remember:

Bullying is never your fault.

You deserve to feel safe.

Keep telling someone until you get help.

Appendix 2 – What Should I Do If I See Bullying?

STOP

S – Speak up safely

If it is safe, tell the person that their behaviour is not okay.

T – Tell an adult

Tell a teacher, teaching assistant, lunchtime supervisor, parent or another trusted adult.

O – Offer support

Let the child know that they are not alone.

P – Protect yourself

Never put yourself in danger.

Appendix 3 – Staff Safeguarding Reminder

If you are concerned:

1. Listen.

Listen carefully and calmly.

2. Reassure.

Tell the child that they have done the right thing by telling you.

3. Do not promise secrecy.

Explain that you may need to share information to keep them safe.

4. Record.

Make an accurate record of the concern.

5. Report.

Report safeguarding concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL without delay.

6. Do not investigate unnecessarily.

Allow the DSL to determine the appropriate safeguarding response.

7. Monitor.

Continue to support and monitor the child.

Remember:

It could happen here.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Act immediately.

Appendix 4 – Anti-Bullying and Safeguarding Decision-Making Guide

Concern	Initial response
Friendship disagreement	Behaviour/pastoral response
One-off unkind comment	Behaviour/pastoral response; consider prejudice
Repeated targeted behaviour	Consider bullying
Physical assault	Behaviour and consider safeguarding
Racist abuse	Record, challenge and consider safeguarding/equality response
Religious/faith-based abuse	Record, challenge and consider safeguarding/equality response
Disability/SEND-related bullying	Record, challenge and consider safeguarding/equality response
Sexualised comment	Record and consider safeguarding
Sexual harassment	DSL referral without delay
Sexual violence	DSL referral without delay; follow safeguarding procedures
Harmful sexual behaviour	DSL referral without delay
Online threats/abuse	Record, safeguard and consider online safety response
Sharing sexual images	DSL referral without delay
Threat of serious harm	DSL referral without delay
Exploitation concerns	DSL referral without delay
Immediate danger	Contact emergency services as appropriate
Repeated incidents	Review patterns and safeguarding context

Appendix 5 – Policy Review Checklist

At the annual review, leaders should ask:

Prevention

- Do pupils understand what bullying is?
- Do pupils know how to report concerns?
- Do pupils feel safe?
- Are preventative lessons effective?
- Is the Catholic ethos reflected in practice?

Response

- Are concerns acted upon quickly?
- Are staff consistent?
- Are safeguarding concerns referred appropriately?
- Are children supported?
- Are children who cause harm supported to change?

Equality

- Are discriminatory incidents identified?
- Are racist incidents recorded?
- Are sexualised and misogynistic behaviours challenged?
- Are vulnerable pupils appropriately protected?

Online safety

- Are online bullying concerns identified?
- Are pupils receiving appropriate online safety education?
- Are filtering and monitoring arrangements effective?

Leadership

- Are leaders analysing patterns?
- Are governors appropriately informed?
- Is CPOMS being used effectively?
- Is pupil voice informing improvement?
- Are parents confident about reporting concerns?

Policy adopted for the 2026–2027 academic year.

St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy
St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust