St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy

Child-Friendly Anti-Bullying Policy

Our promise to you

At St Mary's, every child has the right to feel **safe, happy, respected and included**.

We want our school to be a place where everyone can be themselves, learn, make friends and enjoy coming to school.

We follow the example of Jesus by treating other people with **love, kindness, dignity and respect**.

We do not accept bullying or behaviour that makes another person feel frightened, unsafe, hurt, humiliated or left out.

If something is worrying you, you can always tell us.

You will not be in trouble for asking for help.



1. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that **hurts, frightens, humiliates or leaves someone out**.

Bullying can happen:

- face to face;
- online;
- through phones, tablets, computers or games;
- in school;
- outside school;
- on the way to or from school;
- or anywhere else.

Bullying can be:

- **physical** – such as hitting, kicking, pushing or hurting someone;
- **verbal** – such as name-calling, threatening or repeatedly saying unkind things;
- **emotional** – such as deliberately leaving someone out, frightening them or making them feel that they do not belong;
- **online** – such as sending nasty messages, sharing hurtful pictures or videos, or deliberately leaving someone out of an online group;
- **prejudice-based** – hurting or excluding someone because of who they are or something about them.

Bullying is often repeated and deliberate and can involve one person having more power than another.

But remember:

You do not have to wait for something to happen more than once before telling us.

Sometimes something very serious happens only once.

It might not be bullying, but it could still be unsafe or harmful behaviour and we still need to know about it.

You never have to decide whether something is "bullying" before you tell an adult.

2. What does STOP mean?

You may have heard adults use the word **STOP** to help explain bullying.

S – Several
T – Times
O – On
P – Purpose

This helps us remember that bullying is often behaviour that happens more than once and is done deliberately.

However:

You do not have to wait for "several times" before telling us.

If something hurts, frightens, worries or upsets you, **tell a trusted adult straight away**.

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3. Bullying can happen for lots of reasons

Sometimes people are bullied because of something about who they are.

This could include their:

- race or skin colour;
- religion or beliefs;
- disability or special educational needs;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- appearance;
- family or background;
- culture or language;
- or another part of who they are.

Everyone is different, and our differences are something to respect and celebrate.

At St Mary's:

We do not accept racist, discriminatory or prejudiced behaviour.

If someone says or does something that makes you feel uncomfortable because of who you are, **tell an adult**.

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4. What about falling out with friends?

Friends sometimes disagree.

You might:

- have an argument;
- disagree about a game;
- fall out with a friend;
- feel left out;
- say something unkind and then be sorry.

These things are not always bullying.

However, **unkind or unsafe behaviour still needs to be dealt with**.

You can always tell an adult if you are worried.

You do not need to work out whether something is:

a disagreement, unkind behaviour, bullying or a safeguarding concern.

That is the adults' job.

Your job is to tell someone.

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5. Sometimes children hurt other children

Sometimes one child or group of children may behave towards another child in a way that is unsafe, harmful or abusive.

This is sometimes called **child-on-child abuse**.

It can include:

- bullying;
- physical violence;
- threatening behaviour;

- discriminatory or racist behaviour;
- sexual harassment;
- inappropriate sexual behaviour;
- sharing pictures or messages that should not be shared;
- deliberately frightening or humiliating another child;
- or other behaviour that makes someone feel unsafe.

This can happen:

- in school;
- outside school;
- online;
- or through a mixture of online and face-to-face behaviour.

You should always tell an adult if another child does something that makes you feel unsafe.

You will not be in trouble for telling us.

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6. Online bullying

Bullying can happen online too.

It might include:

- sending nasty or threatening messages;
- deliberately leaving someone out of an online group;
- making fun of someone online;
- sharing an embarrassing picture or video;
- pretending to be someone else to hurt somebody;
- encouraging other people to join in;
- sending hurtful comments during an online game;
- using technology or AI to create or change pictures or messages about someone to hurt, embarrass or frighten them.

If something online worries you:

Tell an adult.

If you can, show the adult what has happened.

You do not need to reply to the person or try to sort it out yourself.

If replying could make things worse, **do not reply. Get help instead.**

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7. What should I do if I am being bullied or something is worrying me?

Tell someone.

You can tell:

- your class teacher;
- another teacher;
- a teaching assistant;
- a midday supervisor;
- the Headteacher;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL);
- another member of staff you trust;
- your parent or carer;
- or another trusted adult.

You can tell us by:

- talking to someone;
- writing it down;
- drawing a picture;
- asking someone else to tell us for you;
- or using another way of communicating that works for you.

You do not have to:

- confront the person;
- deal with it by yourself;
- prove what happened;
- know the right words;
- or know whether it is bullying.

Just tell us what has happened.

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8. You do not have to confront someone who is hurting you

Sometimes it may be safe to say:

> **"Stop. I don't like that."**

But you do **not** have to do this.

You should never put yourself in danger.

If you are frightened, threatened or unsafe:

Get away if you can and find an adult.

Adults are responsible for helping to keep you safe.

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9. What if I see someone else being bullied?

If you see someone being bullied or treated badly:

Don't join in.

Don't laugh, encourage it or share it online.

Help if it is safe.

You could stay with the person or help them find an adult.

Tell an adult.

You do not have to confront the person who is bullying.

Never put yourself in danger to try to stop something.

Telling an adult is a brave thing to do.

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10. What if I am worried about something but I'm not sure?

You can still tell us.

Sometimes you might think:

> "Maybe it isn't important."

Or:

> "Maybe I will get someone into trouble."

Or:

> "Maybe nobody will believe me."

Or:

> "It only happened once."

Please tell us anyway.

You do not have to investigate what happened.

You do not have to prove anything.

You do not have to decide whether it is bullying.

Tell an adult and let us help.

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11. What happens when I tell an adult?

When you tell us something is worrying you, we will:

1. **Listen to you.**
2. **Take you seriously.**
3. **Help you feel safe.**
4. **Find out what has happened.**
5. **Decide what needs to happen next.**
6. **Give you support.**

Sometimes we may need to tell another adult who has a responsibility for keeping children safe.

We will explain what we can and help you understand what is happening.

You will not be blamed for telling us.

You have done the right thing by asking for help.

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12. What if the first person I tell doesn't help?

Sometimes the first person you tell may not understand what you mean or may not realise how serious something is.

Don't give up.

Tell another trusted adult.

You can keep telling adults until someone listens and helps.

Your voice matters.

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13. What if I find it difficult to tell someone?

Some children find talking about worries difficult.

You might feel:

- embarrassed;
- frightened;
- angry;
- worried about what might happen;
- worried about getting someone into trouble;
- or unsure how to explain what has happened.

That's okay.

You can find another way to tell us.

For example, you could:

- write it down;
- draw it;
- use a trusted friend to help you;
- ask your parent or carer to contact school;
- use a communication aid;
- or tell an adult who knows how you communicate best.

We will help you find a way to be heard.

This is especially important if you have a disability, special educational need, communication difficulty or another reason that makes it harder to explain what is happening.

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14. What if someone tells me something worrying?

If another child tells you that they are being bullied or hurt:

Listen to them.

Let them know that you are glad they told you.

Don't promise to keep it a secret.

You may need to tell an adult who can help keep them safe.

Tell a trusted adult as soon as possible.

You won't be getting your friend into trouble.

You are helping them to get help.

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15. What if I have done something unkind?

Everyone makes mistakes.

If you have hurt or upset someone:

- tell an adult;
- say sorry;
- listen to how the other person feels;
- take responsibility for what you have done;
- and learn how to make a better choice next time.

At St Mary's, we believe in **forgiveness, reconciliation and making things right**.

But saying sorry does not mean that unsafe or harmful behaviour will simply be ignored.

Adults will decide what support and action is needed.

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16. What if someone says it was "just a joke"?

Sometimes people say:

> "I was only joking."

But something is not okay just because someone says it was a joke.

If a joke hurts, frightens, humiliates or embarrasses someone, it needs to stop.

We think about how the other person feels.

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17. What if something happens outside school?

You can tell us about bullying or unsafe behaviour even if it happens:

- on the way to or from school;
- in the local community;
- at a club or activity;
- at a friend's house;
- online;
- on a phone or games console;
- or somewhere else.

If something is affecting your safety, wellbeing or ability to learn, **we want to know about it.**

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18. Remember these important messages

It is not your fault.

Nobody deserves to be bullied or hurt.

You are not alone.

There are adults who can help you.

You do not have to deal with it yourself.

Tell someone.

You don't have to know what to call it.

Tell us what happened.

You won't be in trouble for asking for help.

Speaking up is a brave thing to do.

Keep telling until someone listens.

Your voice matters.

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19. Who can help me at St Mary's?

You can talk to **any adult you trust**.

This might be:

My class teacher

A teaching assistant

A midday supervisor

Another teacher

The Headteacher

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

My parent or carer

Another trusted adult

If you don't know who to talk to, **start with any adult in school**.

They will help you find the right person.

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20. Our promise

At St Mary's Catholic Voluntary Academy, we promise to:

- listen to children;
- take worries seriously;
- treat everyone with dignity and respect;
- challenge bullying and discrimination;
- help children who are affected by bullying or other harmful behaviour;
- help children understand how to stay safe online and offline;
- work with parents and carers when appropriate;
- follow our safeguarding and behaviour procedures;
- and do everything we reasonably can to keep children safe.

We will always try to make our school a place where everyone feels that they **belong**.

Remember

BE KIND.

BE BRAVE.

SPEAK UP.

ASK FOR HELP.

You matter.

Your voice matters.

We will listen.

Related school policies:
This child-friendly guide should be read alongside the school's **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND Policy, Equality and Diversity arrangements and other relevant school policies**.

Policy reviewed: December 2026
Next review: December 2027
Reviewed against: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and current Department for Education guidance on preventing bullying.

