

# St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School

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## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### Our Mission Statement

“Serving with Love, Striving for Excellence” sets the foundation for the ethos in which this policy is rooted.

At St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary School, we believe that every child is a unique individual, created in the image of God, and deserves the opportunity to achieve their fullest potential, whatever their needs or abilities.

Our values are built upon mutual trust, respect, and compassion for all. Both our Anti-Bullying Policy and Behaviour Policy reflect these principles, guiding the way in which all members of our school family can learn, grow, and work together in a supportive and nurturing environment. It is essential that every child and adult in our community feels valued, respected, treated fairly, and above all, happy and safe.

This policy seeks to promote positive relationships and foster a culture of kindness and responsibility, so that together we can build a school community where everyone feels a true sense of belonging and care for one another.

### Aims and Expectations

We aim to provide a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment in which all children can learn without fear. Our school actively fosters an ethos where bullying in any form is considered unacceptable. We promote positive attitudes towards diversity and equip children to act responsibly and empathetically in our diverse society.

This policy ensures a clear, consistent response to all bullying incidents and reflects the school’s statutory responsibilities under:

- Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which requires schools to implement measures to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying.
- The Equality Act 2010, reinforcing our duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and encourage good relations among individuals with protected characteristics.
- Statutory Relationships and Health Education (RSHE), which requires schools to teach about bullying, respectful relationships, equality, and online safety.

We follow the Department for Education's 2017 guidance, "Preventing and Tackling Bullying," which remains the principal reference for anti-bullying practice in schools.

## **What Bullying Is—and Isn't**

Following DfE guidance, we define bullying as:

*"Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally."*

As a school, we do not label a child as a 'bully', but rather recognise the behaviour as 'bullying behaviour'.

To support children's understanding, we use the acronym **S.T.O.P. – Several Times On Purpose.**

Bullying occurs when the same child is repeatedly and deliberately harmed, and finds it difficult to defend themselves.

The purpose of bullying is to hurt, harm, and cause distress. Children who are perceived as different—for example, because of their race, culture, faith, sexuality, appearance, ability, or circumstances—may be particularly vulnerable.

**It is important to note that not all conflict between children is bullying.**

A disagreement, fight, or falling out between children of equal strength and status is not considered bullying and will be addressed in line with our Behaviour Policy.

## **What We Know About Bullying**

Bullying harms children and is not a 'rite of passage'. Research shows that bullying in childhood can have long-lasting effects on wellbeing and resilience. For this reason, we take extensive measures to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

Bullying may occur for many reasons, including:

- Age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion or culture
- Ability, special educational needs or disability
- Appearance or health

- Circumstances (e.g., young carers, social background)
- Sexual orientation or gender identity
- Sexual harassment or sexism
- Online behaviour and social media misuse

Bullying can take many forms:

- Physical (hitting, kicking, pinching, theft)
- Verbal (name-calling, racist, sexist or homophobic remarks)
- Material (theft, extortion)
- Indirect (spreading rumours, tormenting messages, malicious use of social media)
- Social exclusion
- Cyberbullying (using digital platforms, gaming, text or social media to cause harm)

## **Prevention**

At St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary, we use the KiVa Anti-Bullying Prevention Programme, supported by our Catholic values, to help prevent all forms of bullying.

The programme has been shown in large-scale studies to be highly effective in reducing bullying in schools. We teach children about the different roles in bullying, including bystanders, and emphasise the responsibility everyone has to act.

The KiVa curriculum is taught to all classes in Key Stage 2, with lessons focusing on respect, inclusion, empathy, and strategies to support others. These are complemented by computer-based activities that allow children to practise anti-bullying responses in safe, virtual scenarios.

In Key Stage 1, we introduce children to the same values and strategies through age-appropriate lessons on friendships, kindness, and respect.

Through RSHE lessons, collective worship, assemblies, and the wider curriculum, children are also taught about:

- Respectful relationships and diversity
- The importance of empathy, kindness, and forgiveness

- The impact of bullying and online behaviour
- The Catholic values of love, reconciliation, and responsibility

## **Tackling Bullying Incidents**

St Vincent de Paul Catholic Primary has a dedicated approach to tackling bullying through the KiVa programme.

All staff in school are trained in the KiVa approach and use this to respond to bullying incidents. When a parent or child reports a concern, the Nurture Lead and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) give the matter careful consideration to determine whether the situation is bullying or a conflict between children. This decision is never taken lightly and is based on clear criteria, with the wellbeing of all children at the centre.

Our approach is rooted in Catholic values and the teachings of Jesus Christ, recognising the God-given dignity of every child and the Gospel call to “love one another” (John 13:34).

It is fully in line with our school mission: “Serving with Love, Striving for Excellence.”

All cases that fulfil the criteria for bullying are dealt with in a systematic and structured way using the KiVa approach. Each child involved is spoken to individually, and then those who were identified as having engaged in bullying behaviour meet together as a group to agree on how they will change their behaviour. Importantly, the school’s approach focuses on addressing the behaviour rather than labelling the child.

Children are guided to reflect on their actions, to understand why the behaviour is unacceptable, and to make better choices in the future. This process reflects our Catholic ethos of forgiveness, reconciliation, and growth, encouraging children to build positive, respectful relationships that reflect Gospel values.

Support for the victim is also carefully planned during their meeting, ensuring that their voice is heard, that they feel safe, and that they are treated with compassion and respect.

Follow-up discussions with all children take place after an agreed period of time to make sure that positive changes are happening and that the victim continues to feel supported.

All adults at the school have received awareness training about bullying and will report any concerns.

Parents of those involved in a bullying situation are kept informed throughout, and while most discussions are held directly with the children, we ensure parents are aware that

every decision and step taken is thought through with care, professionalism, and in line with our Catholic mission.

Yearly KiVa workshops are also held to inform parents of the process and resources currently in use.

### **Reporting to Governors**

Bullying incidents will be reported to Governors through the Headteacher's termly report.

Governors have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of this policy and ensuring the school meets its statutory duties under the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010, and RSHE requirements.

### **Use of Reasonable Force**

All staff are aware of the statutory guidance Use of Reasonable Force (DfE, 2013).

Staff will only intervene physically when necessary to prevent injury to a child, to protect others, or to prevent serious damage to property or good order.

Any intervention must always be reasonable, proportionate, and in line with safeguarding expectations.