ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL BRAMLEY

SENIOR SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

'Believe… Achieve… Succeed'

Policy Holder	Tracy Evans
Date Approved	June 2026
Approver	Pastoral and Wellbeing Committee
Date for next review	June 2027

This policy is reviewed annually or following significant changes in statutory guidance.

The Policy

We believe that all pupils and all members of the School staff are entitled to be in a safe and happy environment in school in which bullying is not tolerated. Our aim is to prevent bullying by being proactive in encouraging awareness of this stance and that everyone should work to prevent bullying from happening. Should an incident of bullying or a concern be raised, every effort is made to deal with such concerns or incidents immediately.

Bullying incidents are treated as safeguarding and child protection concern where the School has good reason to believe that the child is or may be at risk of significant harm.

This policy takes account of the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE, 2026)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017) non-statutory DfE advice
- The Equality Act 2010
- Behaviour in Schools: Advice for Headteachers and School Staff (DfE, 2024)
- RSHE Statutory Guidance (2025)
- Teaching Online Safety in Schools (2023)
- Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes Guidance (2024)

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Behaviour Policy
- SEND and Inclusive Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- ICT Policy - Guidelines for Use of Digital Technology

Understanding Friendship Issues, Unkindness and Bullying

St Catherine's School is a member of the Anti-Bullying Alliance and is committed to promoting best practice in preventing, identifying and responding to bullying. Our approach reflects the School's values of Kindness, Connection, Responsibility and Forward Thinking, which underpin all relationships within our community. We recognise that not all friendship difficulties constitute bullying. Learning how to manage disagreements, misunderstandings and changing friendships is an important part of growing up and pupils will be supported in developing these skills.

Friendship Issues and Conflict

A friendship issue or conflict occurs when there is a disagreement, misunderstanding, argument or fall-out between pupils where there is no sustained intention to cause harm and no significant imbalance of power. These incidents may be upsetting and will always be taken seriously. Staff will support pupils through restorative conversations, relationship repair and appropriate pastoral intervention. Such concerns may be recorded and monitored as friendship issues and may be logged within the School's conduct system as a neutral concern requiring support.

Unkind Behaviour

At times, pupils may behave in a way that falls below the standards expected within our community. This might include a one off incidents of unkind comments, exclusion, rumour spreading, inappropriate online behaviour or behaviour that demonstrates a lack of respect for others.

Such incidents may result in a negative conduct point and corresponding sanction and will be addressed through restorative conversations and behavioural support in line with the Behaviour Policy. A single incident of unkind behaviour would not normally be classified as bullying, but it will be monitored carefully. Where concerns begin as friendship difficulties or incidents of unkindness but become repeated, targeted or persistent, they may be reclassified as bullying and dealt with under the formal procedures outlined in this policy. This graduated approach enables the School to intervene early, identify patterns of behaviour and prevent bullying from escalating.

Bullying

The School adopts the Anti-Bullying Alliance definition of bullying:
"The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can happen face-to-face or online."

For behaviour to be classified as bullying there will normally be evidence that the behaviour is:

- Deliberate and intended to cause harm.
- Repeated or part of an ongoing pattern.

- Involves an imbalance of power.
- Having a negative impact on the targeted pupil.

The School recognises that bullying may be motivated by prejudice or discrimination and that some groups of pupils may be particularly vulnerable to bullying. The School is committed to promoting an inclusive culture based upon its values of Kindness, Connection, Responsibility and Forward Thinking, where diversity is respected and all members of the community are treated with dignity and respect.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms and may be experienced by pupils in person or online. The School recognises that bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, relational or psychological and may be perpetrated by an individual or a group.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place through technology, including social media, messaging platforms, online gaming, websites, email or the sharing of images and videos. Cyberbullying can cause significant harm and often extends beyond the school day.

Examples may include:

- Sending threatening, unkind or offensive messages.
- Sharing images or information without consent.
- Excluding individuals from online groups or conversations.
- Impersonating another person online.
- Spreading rumours through digital platforms.
- Creating or sharing content intended to embarrass, humiliate or distress another person.

The School expects the same standards of behaviour online as offline. Incidents of cyberbullying will be investigated and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with this policy and the Behaviour Policy.

Prejudice-Based Bullying

Some bullying is motivated by prejudice or negative attitudes towards particular characteristics or groups. The School takes such incidents extremely seriously.

Bullying may relate to a person's:

- Race, ethnicity or nationality.
- Religion or belief.
- Sex.
- Disability or additional needs.
- Sexual orientation.
- Gender identity.
- Family circumstances or caring responsibilities.
- Any other protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Prejudice-based language, discriminatory behaviour or harassment may constitute bullying and may also be treated as a safeguarding concern. Such incidents will be recorded, investigated and responded to appropriately.

Child-on-Child Abuse

Bullying may, in some circumstances, constitute child-on-child abuse. This can include physical abuse, emotional abuse, harmful online behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, prejudice-based behaviour and other conduct that causes significant harm to another pupil. Where appropriate, incidents will be managed in conjunction with the School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and advice from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Bullying Beyond the School Environment

The School's expectations regarding behaviour apply both within and beyond the school environment. Bullying does not become acceptable simply because it takes place outside the School day or away from School premises.

The School may investigate and take action in relation to bullying that:

- Takes place on educational visits, sports fixtures, activities or school trips.
- Occurs whilst pupils are travelling to and from School.
- Takes place in boarding houses or during boarding activities.
- Occurs online, including through social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, group chats, websites, or other digital communication.
- Takes place outside school where there is an identifiable impact on a member of the School community or on the orderly running of the School.

The School recognises that online behaviour can have a significant impact on pupils' wellbeing and relationships within School. The same standards of kindness, respect, and responsibility are expected online as offline. Behaviour that causes harm to another member of the School community, brings the School into disrepute, or undermines the safety and wellbeing of pupils may therefore be investigated and addressed under this policy and the Behaviour Policy, regardless of where or when it occurred.

If a Pupil Feels They Are Being Bullied

Pupils should never feel that they have to deal with bullying alone.

Any pupil who feels they are being bullied, or who is worried about the behaviour of others, should report the concern as soon as possible.

Pupils should always report concerns about bullying, unkindness or friendship difficulties to their Tutor in the first instance. If they do not feel comfortable speaking to their Tutor, or feel that additional support is needed, they should speak to another trusted member of staff, such as their Head of House, Boarding Staff or another member of the pastoral team. Where a pupil finds it difficult to raise a concern in person, they can use the School's anonymous reporting system, Whisper. Whilst Whisper allows pupils to share concerns anonymously, pupils should be aware that anonymity can sometimes limit the School's ability to investigate fully and provide direct support.

Pupils are encouraged to save evidence of online bullying, such as screenshots, messages or images, wherever possible. All reports will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and treated sensitively.
The School also encourages pupils not to be passive bystanders. Any pupil who witnesses bullying, or suspects that another pupil may be experiencing bullying, should report their concerns to a member of staff.

What Parents Should Do

The School values the support of parents in creating a culture where bullying is not tolerated.

When concerns are first raised, the School will seek to establish the facts before determining whether an incident constitutes a friendship issue, an act of unkindness or bullying. Pupils and parents are encouraged to describe behaviours and their impact rather than applying labels prematurely, allowing the School to conduct a fair and thorough investigation.

If a parent is concerned that their child may be experiencing bullying, they should contact their daughter's Tutor as soon as possible. Early communication enables concerns to be investigated promptly and prevents situations from escalating unnecessarily.

Parents should encourage their child to tell a member of staff about any concerns and should avoid advising pupils to address serious concerns through social media or friendship groups. Where online behaviour is involved, parents should retain any relevant evidence, including screenshots or messages, and share this with the School where appropriate.

The School will always take parental concerns seriously and will keep parents informed, where appropriate, during investigations and subsequent support processes.

The School's Response to Bullying

All reports of bullying, unkind behaviour or friendship difficulties will be taken seriously and investigated promptly. The School will seek to establish the facts, listen to all parties involved and consider any available evidence. Throughout the process, the welfare of all pupils involved will remain paramount.

The School's response will be proportionate to the nature, severity and frequency of the behaviour. The primary aims are to:

- Stop the behaviour.
- Protect and support the targeted pupil.
- Help pupils understand the impact of their actions.
- Repair relationships where appropriate.
- Prevent recurrence.

Parents of pupils involved will normally be informed and may be invited to participate in discussions regarding support and next steps.

Where concerns are substantiated, the School may implement a range of measures, including:

- Restorative conversations and mediation.
- Increased monitoring and pastoral support.
- Behaviour targets or support plans.
- Negative conduct points.
- Lunchtime or after-school detentions.
- Restrictions on access to devices or online platforms.
- Internal suspension.
- Suspension.
- Permanent exclusion in the most serious cases.

Where appropriate, support may also be provided to pupils displaying bullying behaviour to help them develop more positive ways of interacting with others and to address any underlying concerns contributing to their behaviour.

The School recognises that bullying behaviour exists on a spectrum. Consequently, sanctions will be determined according to the individual circumstances of each case rather than applied automatically.