Charitable Objects of St. Catherine's School- *The Objects for which the Company is established are to promote and provide for the advancement of education by providing, conducting, governing, carrying on and maintaining in the United Kingdom, or elsewhere, a boarding or day School or Schools for girls in which the teaching shall be in accordance with the principles of the Church of England.*

ST CATHERINE'S BRAMLEY

PREP SCHOOL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

'Believe… Achieve… Succeed'

Policy Holder	Denise Irons
Date Approved	September 2026
Approval	Pastoral and Wellbeing Committee
Date for next review	September 2027

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 a Child Protection/Safeguarding 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;
- 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, and
- ICT Policy - Guidelines for Use of Digital Technology

A Note of Reassurance

Bullying is a rare occurrence at school but any incident runs counter to the aims, mission and values of St Catherine's School. We champion every girl to belong, to grow, and to shape her future.

We do this by:

- Creating a culture of belonging and connection.
- Delivering exceptional teaching and expert coaching.
- Developing character, confidence and leadership.
- Equipping every girl with the skills to shape her future with purpose.

The values of St Catherine's School – Kindness, Connection, Responsibility and Forward Thinking are embedded in our ethos. In the Prep School, we also focus on Courage, Curiosity and Compassion as core elements of our character education. These are linked to our Prep school Houses (Pankhurst, Teresa and Curie) and are shared with girls as they join the school, providing points of reference in form discussions, assemblies and referred to within the Prep Pupil Planners.

We ask all girls to remember three simple rules: **Be Ready - Be Respectful - Be Safe.**

Experience has shown that any episode of bullying or concern dealt with quickly and in line with our policy has led to a positive outcome. Sensitive handling by staff using a restorative justice approach in the first instance is necessary, of course, as is the support of parents in the process.

We believe that all members of the school community, governors, staff and pupils alike are entitled to a safe and happy environment in which to work. **Our aim** is to prevent bullying by being proactive in encouraging tolerance and understanding amongst staff and pupils alike. We use opportunities such as Kindness Awards, House Points, assemblies and form times to reward and recognise good behaviour and to promote successful role models.

Should an incident of bullying occur or a concern be raised, every effort is made to deal with such concerns or incidents immediately. This will be recorded and actions/meetings noted.

Where bullying concerns raise safeguarding issues, constitute child-on-child abuse, involve prejudice-based harm, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online abuse or present a risk of significant harm, the matter will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

We have a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse. Child-on-child abuse may include bullying, prejudice-based behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, online abuse, image-based abuse, initiation or hazing behaviour, coercion, exploitation and harmful sexual behaviour. It should never be passed off as

'banter' or 'just having a laugh' as this can lead to unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for children. The School also recognises that prejudice-based harm, including racism, faith-based prejudice and other discriminatory behaviour, may constitute child-on-child abuse and a safeguarding concern. Bullying relating to a pupil's medical condition, including food allergies, will be treated seriously and may constitute a safeguarding concern where there is risk of physical harm. The School recognises that pupils with SEND, pupils who are adopted, young carers and pupils with protected characteristics may be more vulnerable to bullying and abuse.

We define bullying (child-on-child abuse) as any form of persistent behaviour which is cruel or overbearing, threatens or hurts another. It is a form of abuse that comprises repeated acts over time that involve a real or perceived imbalance of power and in circumstances where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. It can be **physical** which includes such actions as hitting, pushing or damaging possessions, **verbal/emotional** which involves using any insulting form of behaviour, such as comments relating to discrimination (e.g. on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities) or incessant teasing, **hostile gestures** which include such actions as ignoring or rejecting another person. Particular attention will be paid to bullying related to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, including disability, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation and gender reassignment.

Child-on-child abuse can occur in intimate personal relationships between peers. This may include sexual violence and sexual harassment or causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent. Being a bystander and doing nothing is an example of **passive bullying. Indirect verbal bullying** includes spreading rumours, malicious notes or **cyber bullying.**

Cyberbullying may take place through direct messages, social media platforms, online gaming, messaging services, livestreaming platforms, digital communities and emerging technologies. This includes AI-generated content, deepfake images or videos, manipulated images, nudification apps, image-based abuse and the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images and videos.

For specific guidance on responsible use of new technologies, please see the ICT Policy – Guidelines for the use of Digital Technology. We recognise that such behaviour could in extreme circumstances lead to psychological damage and even suicide. The School recognises that bullying behaviours may be linked to **harmful attitudes** including sexism, misogyny, sexual harassment and violence against women and girls (VAWG). Such behaviour will never be regarded as acceptable, inevitable or part of growing up.

Bullying Experienced Outside School

There are occasions when the school may impose a sanction due to a pupil's behaviour outside the School premises, including online activity. For example, bullying which occurs off the school premises or online and which is witnessed by a staff member or reported to the school would be fully investigated and may result in a sanction.

Other examples include:

- when pupils are taking part in any school-organised or school-related activity;
- when travelling to or from school on our coaches or by public transport;
- when wearing school uniform;
- when in some other way identifiable as a pupil at the school;
- or when a pupil's behaviour could adversely affect the reputation of the school.

Pupils at St Catherine's School are encouraged to take pride in themselves and in their school community. There is a strong emphasis on girls developing self-belief, achieving and enjoying rounded success. This is encapsulated in our branding *Believe, Achieve, Succeed*.

As part of our Life Matters (PSED/PSHE and RSE) Curriculum we ensure that girls are given advice on how to deal with **any** experiences they have of bullying outside school perpetrated by those inside or outside the St. Catherine's School community. This includes talking to the local police about problems in the locality or offering guidance on how to handle situations they may encounter and who to talk to.

Countering Bullying in School – Our Strategies

We follow a restorative justice approach. It moves away from the idea of bully/ies and victim/s to the individual/s and replaces punishment with conciliatory parties to find a solution. The philosophy behind this is that the child experiencing bullying would rather the child displaying bullying behaviour stopped than someone be punished. It also develops mutual understanding and empathy between the parties. We recognise that in extreme cases a restorative justice approach may not be the most appropriate method for dealing with severe persistent bullying. Restorative approaches do not replace appropriate disciplinary action where required.

In the Prep School we interpret the restorative justice approach as follows:

- We listen sincerely and with patience to every child and take their concerns seriously.
- When incidents or concerns emerge which indicate a pattern of behaviour which may be interpreted as bullying (i.e. persistent and targeted at a specific individual) we will record each child's account, wherever possible in their own words.
- We do not consider punishment as necessarily the most appropriate way of dealing with any such incident as children experiencing bullying can often then be more reluctant to share their concerns.
- We aim for open and understanding communication between all parties.
- We aim to facilitate a reconciliation and greater understanding between the pupils involved and we do not expect the behaviour to be repeated.
- We recognise that at this young age pupils need guidance and reassurance. They also need to build an understanding of the possible consequences of their actions and words.
- The process of bringing girls together to resolve issues is normally conducted by the Form Teacher/s of the girls involved but it may also be appropriate to involve a member of the Prep Senior Leadership Team (SLT).
- Parents will be kept informed should concerns be raised or bullying behaviour identified.
- Incidents or concerns will be raised and discussed at Prep Staff Meetings under 'Girls of Concern' and the Prep Head will be kept informed at each stage.
- Records of bullying will be held in a confidential record maintained by the Prep Head or Head of Pre-Prep and relevant notes filed within CPOMS.

Staff Awareness

It is essential that teaching and non-teaching staff should be aware of what to look for, and staff and girls should be familiar with the procedure to follow when incidents of bullying occur. The school endeavours to reduce the instances of bullying in likely places by using 'buddy pairs' which change weekly, ensuring staff patrols during lunchbreaks on the playing fields and in changing rooms and by providing a wide range of supervised extra-curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school.

Regular safeguarding and pastoral training addresses bullying, child-on-child abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, online safety, AI-enabled risks, misogyny, discrimination, mental health and emerging safeguarding concerns.

There are opportunities for staff to discuss their concerns under the item 'Girls of Concern,' at weekly staff meetings or to talk through strategies with a member of the Prep SLT. Regular discussion ensures that the principles of the school policy are understood, legal responsibilities are known, action is defined to resolve and prevent problems and sources of support are available. Where needed, specialised skills will be sought to understand the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, those questioning their sexuality and gender questioning young people. Staff recognise that even if there are no reported cases of child-on-child abuse, such abuse may still be taking place but not reported.

Pupil Awareness

At the start of each term Form Teachers discuss the Guidance for Girls: Staying Safe poster with their classes. This poster is also included in the girls' Student Planner for FI-LII (Years 3-6). Form Teachers should also explain the 'procedure for girls' detailed below. This outlines what girls should do if they feel that they or others are experiencing bullying. Pupils are expected to show respect and understanding of others and encouraged to share their concerns with a member of staff.

The girls are taught to express how they feel to each other using the **TAG** (**T**alk to each other, **A**sk what you need, **G**et help from an adult) system to enable them to resolve minor conflict.

The topic, bullying, is addressed through 'Life Matters' (PSED/PSHE and RSE), Tutor Group sessions, activities within Anti Bullying Week, form times, assemblies and drama. Expectations of behaviour are made clear, and pupils are made aware of the part that they can play to prevent bullying, including when they may find themselves as bystanders. Pupils are encouraged to safely challenge inappropriate behaviour where appropriate and to report concerns when they witness bullying, harassment or discriminatory behaviour.

Pupils are introduced to a 'Thought Box,' at the beginning of each academic year which enables them to share their concerns in confidence.

Thought Boxes are placed in every form room in Pre-Prep III (Year 2) upwards and are checked regularly by Form Teachers. This approach is adapted for younger pupils in Pre-Prep.

Signs of Bullying

It is essential that teaching and non-teaching staff should be aware of what to look for, and staff and girls should be familiar with the procedure to follow when incidents of bullying occur.

Signs that a girl is being bullied may include:

- change of behaviour;
- reluctance to attend school;
- a pattern of minor illnesses;
- missing property;
- withdrawn behaviour;
- signs of distress and anxiety;
- excuses for work not done;

- excuses for poor/strange behaviour;
- exclusion from groups.

Factors that may Contribute to Bullying Behaviour (but beware of stereotyping)

They may:

- feel inadequate and lack self-esteem;
- lack social skills and make demands in a non-aggressive way;
- lack ability to empathise with child experiencing bullying;
- feel insecure;
- experience bullying themselves;
- experience abuse;
- be affected by issues at home.

Bullying Incidents are Minimised when:

- Everyone is aware that bullying is a potential problem.
- There is a climate of mutual respect for all.
- There is a positive climate through all areas of school life including relationships with parents.
- There are opportunities at school to practise social skills.
- Pupils are encouraged to 'tell' and that it is acceptable and responsible to do so.
- Staff are encouraged to treat bullying as a priority.
- There is adequate supervision of the children.
- Pupils follow school guidelines on safe use of the digital technologies.

Procedure for Staff Following a Complaint of Bullying

Investigations should be carried out in line with the following procedure which follows a restorative justice approach. The following stages may or may not be followed consecutively dependent on the severity of the situation.

After receiving an initial complaint of bullying or having observed concerning behaviour:

1. Refer immediately to the Form Teacher who should then inform the Deputy Head (Pre-Prep and Head of Pre-Prep) or Deputy Head (Pastoral and Wellbeing) (depending on the age of the pupil) and /or Prep Head.
2. The Form Teacher should speak to the girls concerned. Any investigations should take into account pupils with special educational needs or disabilities. Written records of these interviews should be kept on CPOMS and a copy given to the Prep Head and Deputy Head (Prep and Head of Pre-Prep) for EYFS pupils. Whenever possible the girls' own words should be used in any such reports. It can be useful to ask each the girl involved to write a statement about the incident(s). They should be given enough time to write the statement fully and carefully and be guided through the process. Each case will be addressed according to the individual circumstances and the Form Teacher will liaise with the parents concerned where appropriate.
3. Reassurance and continuing support must be given to the child experiencing bullying and the child displaying bullying behaviour without, for the latter, condoning the action.
4. Bring situation to the attention of other staff during staff meetings under item: Girls of Concern.

Should matters not be resolved:

1. Notes of relevant observations from all staff who come into contact with all the girls concerned should be kept and collated by the Form Teacher.
2. Parents of all of the girls concerned should be contacted by the Form Teacher and seen separately to discuss the situation.

Should concerns regarding the bullying persist or the severity of a situation warrant:

1. The Prep Head / Deputy Head (Prep and Head of Pre-Prep) for EYFS pupils, will interview the child displaying bullying behaviour and the child experiencing bullying once she has been presented with all of the relevant file notes by the Form Teacher/s.
2. The Prep Head / Deputy Head (Prep and Head of Pre-Prep) for EYFS pupils, will invite both the parents of the child displaying bullying behaviour and the child experiencing bullying to a meeting where the matter will be discussed with all parties present. The case will be recorded as a formal case of bullying in the Prep Head Record of Bullying/Deputy Head (Prep and Head of Pre-Prep) Record of Bullying for EYFS pupils.

In very extreme situations the Prep Head may decide it is necessary to suspend a pupil. In which case the pupil's parents would meet with the Prep Head and the reasons for, and the length of the suspension would be explained plus the support to be put in place when the pupil returns to School. (to date no such action has been needed in the Prep School.) In the event of an unsuccessful outcome and with regard to the severity and/or level of persistence the school would also consider exclusion in the most extreme circumstances (to date no such action has been needed in the Prep School.) See Prep School Behaviour Policy for further details.

Procedure for girls either observing or being bullied

A girl who feels that she is being bullied should report it to her Form Teacher, Tutor Group teacher, DDSL, support staff or any member of staff they feel comfortable to talk with. If that person is unavailable, she should speak to any teacher she feels she can approach. A pupil observing an incident should report the matter to her Form Teacher or the Deputy Head (Prep, Head of Pre-Prep) or Deputy Head (Pastoral and Wellbeing) (if at break or lunch time, the member of staff on duty) who will then take the appropriate action. Every form room contains a Thought Box where girls may wish to post any comments and concerns they may have for themselves or others. This can be done anonymously. Girls should also refer to the **Guidance for Girls: Staying Safe** poster which is displayed in every classroom.

Procedure for parents who feel their daughter is being bullied

Parents are informed in the Parents' Handbook that they can access the School's Anti-Bullying Policy via the school website. They or their daughters are asked to notify school immediately if they are concerned that she is being bullied. They should report the incident to their daughter's Form Teacher. The appropriate measures will then be taken.

Bullying incidents are treated as a child protection concern where the school has reason to believe that the child is, or may be, at risk of significant harm.

The guiding principles of all the adults involved must be to resolve conflict or misunderstanding, amend behaviour patterns appropriately, and help the girls involved to move on successfully.

Monitoring and Review

The School will record all incidents of reported bullying in accordance with this policy.

The Prep Head will review all incidents of reported bullying to help identify patterns, trends, protected characteristic incidents, online safety concerns and areas requiring additional preventative education or intervention. They will direct any appropriate steps necessary to address bullying behaviours within the Prep School. Records of bullying incidents will also be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the Prep School's anti-bullying procedures, and to highlight any necessary amendments.

The School reviews filtering and monitoring arrangements annually to support the identification and prevention of bullying, online abuse and emerging safeguarding risks.

Further advice and information

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- **Childline:** https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/
- **NSPCC:** https://www.nspcc.org.uk/ **NSPCC Helpline: 0800 800 5000**
- **Kidscape:** https://www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/advice-for-young-people/what-should-i-do-if-im-being-bullied/
- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/advice-and-support/advice-parents-and-carers
- **ACT Against Bullying:** https://actagainstbullying.org/bullying-advice/
- **RSE statutory guidance:**

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education

- **Online safety:** Teaching Online Safety in School", DfE, January 2023
- **Sexting:** Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people", DfE, February 2024 (updated March 2024)
- **Behaviour:** "Behaviour in Schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff" DfE February
- **Samaritans:**https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/talk-us-phone/