Anti-Bullying Strategy

A safe, inclusive and caring school community

Status: Draft for school and Trust approval | Review: Annually, and sooner following significant guidance changes

1. Our commitment

At St Stephen's CE Primary School, every child has the right to feel safe, respected, included and able to learn. Guided by our Christian ethos and our values of Respect, Kindness, Perseverance, Self-control and Honesty, we work together to prevent bullying, listen carefully to concerns and respond promptly and fairly. Bullying is unacceptable in any form. We take all reports seriously, including those that do not ultimately meet the definition of bullying.

2. What we mean by bullying

In line with our Behaviour Policy, bullying is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying is therefore deliberately hurtful; repeated, often over a period of time; and difficult to defend against.

An imbalance of power may arise from physical strength, social influence, group dynamics, access to information, age or vulnerability. Repetition can include persistent online targeting or repeated sharing of harmful content. A one-off incident is not automatically bullying, but may still be serious, discriminatory or a safeguarding concern and will be addressed.

3. Forms of bullying

Type	Examples
Emotional / relational	Excluding, isolating, tormenting, manipulating friendships or deliberately humiliating.
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or taking belongings, or other violence.
Verbal / indirect	Name-calling, threats, sarcasm, teasing, spreading rumours or encouraging others to target a pupil.
Racist and other prejudice-based	Racial taunts, graffiti or gestures; bullying related to religion, disability, SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other perceived differences.
Sexual	Sexual comments or gestures, unwanted sexual attention, sharing sexual material, or inappropriate touching. These may require immediate safeguarding action.
Online / cyberbullying	Harm through messaging, gaming, social platforms, group chats, images or other

digital communication, including conduct outside school affecting pupils in school.

4. Preventing bullying

- Teach respectful relationships, empathy, diversity, consent, online safety and safe reporting through PSHE/RSHE, computing, RE, assemblies and age-appropriate discussions.
- Make expectations explicit through consistent routines, adult modelling, supervision and positive recognition of kindness and inclusion.
- Use pupil voice, school council opportunities, surveys and informal check-ins to identify places or times where children feel less safe.
- Provide accessible reporting routes for pupils with SEND, communication differences or additional vulnerabilities; ensure adults do not dismiss concerns as friendship difficulties without exploring them.
- Work with parents and carers, reinforce safe online behaviour and respond to emerging patterns, including incidents involving groups or discriminatory language.
- Use anti-bullying awareness activities across the year without relying on a single themed week as the main prevention measure.

5. How pupils and families can report concerns

Pupils can tell their class teacher, another trusted adult, a member of the senior leadership team or the designated safeguarding lead (DSL). They may speak, write, draw or use a supported communication method. Parents and carers should contact the class teacher in the first instance, or the headteacher/DSL where the concern is serious or remains unresolved. Staff who witness or receive a report must act; pupils are not expected to resolve bullying alone.

We will listen without blame, avoid promising secrecy, explain what happens next in child-friendly language and share information only with those who need to know. We will not require pupils to confront each other or take part in mediation where this would be unsafe or inappropriate.

6. Our response: clear steps

1. Make safe

Address any immediate harm; separate pupils if necessary; provide reassurance and seek medical or safeguarding support where required.

2. Listen and establish facts

Speak separately with those involved and witnesses; consider context, frequency, intent, power imbalance, impact, any online evidence and the views of pupils with communication needs.

3. Record and escalate

Record significant concerns, actions and follow-up on CPOMS in line with the school's recording protocol. Inform the DSL immediately where safeguarding, child-on-child abuse, sexual violence/harassment or other serious harm is suspected.

4. Decide and act

Determine whether the behaviour meets the bullying definition; address all harmful behaviour regardless. Apply proportionate consequences under the Behaviour Policy and suitable protective and educational measures.

5. Inform families

Contact relevant parents/carers promptly and sensitively, balancing confidentiality and safeguarding requirements. Explain support and next steps without disclosing another child's private information.

6. Review and check

Agree a named adult and review date; check with the affected pupil that behaviour has stopped and that they feel safe; monitor for retaliation or recurrence. Escalate and adapt the plan if concerns continue.

7. Support for everyone involved

For a pupil experiencing bullying, support may include a trusted adult, planned check-ins, adjustments to supervision or seating, peer support where appropriate, emotional wellbeing support and a clear safety plan. The child should not carry the burden of avoiding bullying.

For a pupil displaying bullying behaviour, staff will set clear boundaries, apply appropriate consequences, explore contributing needs without excusing harm, teach alternative behaviours and monitor sustained improvement. Support will be adapted where SEND or additional needs affect understanding, communication or regulation. Bystanders will be encouraged to report concerns safely and avoid reinforcing harmful behaviour.

8. Safeguarding and serious incidents

Bullying can be a safeguarding issue. Concerns about child-on-child abuse, sexual violence or harassment, coercion, threats, exploitation, discriminatory abuse or significant online harm must be referred promptly to the DSL and managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and current statutory guidance. Staff must not treat sexual harassment as ordinary banter or assume it is harmless. The DSL will consider risk assessment, support, referrals and external agency involvement as appropriate. Allegations involving adults follow the relevant safeguarding/allegations procedures.

9. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher and senior leaders: Lead a positive culture; ensure consistent implementation, staff training, family communication and review of patterns and outcomes.

DSL / Inclusion Lead: Advise on safeguarding and vulnerability; oversee escalation, appropriate records and support planning.

All staff: Model respectful conduct; supervise actively; notice early signs; listen, intervene, record and follow up.

Pupils: Treat others respectfully, seek help and report bullying or unsafe behaviour, including when they witness it.

Parents and carers: Share concerns promptly, support respectful behaviour and work with the school on agreed actions.

Governors / Trust: Provide oversight, challenge and assurance that the strategy is effective and aligned with relevant policies.

10. Recording, monitoring and evaluation

Leaders will review relevant CPOMS records and other appropriate evidence at least termly to identify repeated incidents, locations, times, types of bullying, discriminatory patterns, pupils requiring support and whether follow-up actions were effective. Individual cases will be checked sooner according to risk. Pupil and parent feedback, staff observations and safeguarding information will inform improvements. Information reported to governors/Trust will be appropriately anonymised.

We will judge success by whether pupils report feeling safe and heard, concerns are recorded and addressed consistently, repeat incidents reduce, agreed actions are completed and pupils affected confirm that bullying has stopped. A rise in reports may initially indicate greater trust in reporting rather than increased prevalence.

11. Related policies and review

Read alongside: Behaviour Policy; Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Online Safety Policy; Equality information/objectives; SEND Policy; Complaints Policy; and relevant Trust procedures. This strategy supplements rather than replaces statutory safeguarding processes. The headteacher will review it annually, consulting pupils, staff and families as appropriate, and submit it through the school/Trust approval process.

Child-friendly message: STOP, TELL, GET HELP

Everyone belongs at St Stephen's. If someone keeps hurting, frightening or leaving you out, tell an adult you trust. You can tell us in words, in writing or with help. If you see it happening to someone else, tell an adult too. We will listen, help keep you safe and check that things get better.