



# Management of Bullying, Harassment and Hate Policy

## Statement of intent

At Ainsdale St. John's CE Primary School, we have developed our mission statement known as the 'ASJ Way'.

- With God's help we can achieve anything, and we **aspire** to be the best that we can be.
- We **shine** like a beacon of light within our community with an open door so that all feel welcome.
- Our special family (school, church and community) follow in the footsteps of **Jesus**.

In short, we all...**Aspire to Shine for Jesus!**

Our aspirational vision is anchored by a bible passage which encompasses our mission for each member of our Christian community, young and old, to find and develop their talents:

Let your light shine.

*Matthew 5:16*

To accompany our vision, we now focus on 3 core Christian values:

- **Courage**
- **Community**
- **Compassion**

At Ainsdale St. John's, we are committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment where all members of our school community can flourish for all members of our school community. We believe that every individual has the right to learn, work and live free from bullying, harassment or hate. This policy sets out our approach to preventing and addressing incidents of bullying, harassment, and hate, in line with statutory expectations and best practice research.

Bullying is defined as the intentional and repeated use of power, aggression, or threat to intimidate, harm, or control another person physically or emotionally. Harassment is any unwanted behaviour that hinders an individual's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment. Hate incidents involve any prejudice, discrimination, or hostility directed towards an individual or group based on their perceived identity or characteristics.

## 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Positive Relationships and Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

## 2. Definitions of Bullying

Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:

- Pupils who are adopted or looked after.
- Pupils suffering from a health problem.
- Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Pupils from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Pupils with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- Pupils who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- Black, Asian and minority ethnic pupils.
- Pupils with SEND.

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.

Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- Verbal
- Physical
- Emotional
- Online (cyberbullying)

**Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

**Homophobic and biphobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.

**Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

**Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

**Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

**Ableist bullying:** Bullying behaviour that focusses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

**Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

**Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

**Socioeconomic bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any pupils on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- The overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- Ensuring that all governors are appropriately trained regarding safeguarding and child protection at induction.
- Ensuring that the school adopts a tolerant and open-minded policy towards difference.
- Ensuring the school is inclusive.
- Analysing any behaviour data to establish patterns and reviewing this policy in light of these.
- Ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the school to carry out the duties of the role.
- Appointing a safeguarding link governor who will work with the DSL to ensure the policies and practices relating to safeguarding, including the prevention of cyberbullying, are being implemented effectively.
- Ensuring that pupils are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online.

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- Analysing the data in the records at termly intervals to identify trends, so that appropriate measures to tackle them can be implemented.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Being alert to social dynamics in their class.
- Being available for pupils who wish to report bullying.
- Providing follow-up support after bullying incidents.
- Being alert to possible bullying situations, particularly exclusion from friendship groups, and informing the pupil's heads of year of such observations.
- Refraining from stereotyping when dealing with bullying.
- Understanding the composition of pupil groups, showing sensitivity to those who have been the victims of bullying.
- Reporting any instances of bullying once they have been approached by a pupil for support

Parents are responsible for:

- Informing their child's teacher if they have any concerns that their child is the victim of bullying or involving in bullying in anyway.

- Being watchful of their child's behaviour, attitude and characteristics and informing the relevant staff members of any changes.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- Not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- Walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other pupils in incidents.
- Keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

#### **4. Statutory implications**

The school understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

The school understands that, under the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998, it could have charges brought against it if it allows the rights of pupils to be breached by failing to take bullying seriously. The Senior Leadership Team will ensure that this policy complies with the HRA; they understand that they cannot do this without fully involving their teaching staff.

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation, and hate crimes.

## **5. Prevention**

The school will clearly communicate a whole-school commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards which will be regularly promoted across the whole school.

All members of the school will be made aware of this policy and their responsibilities in relation to it. All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

All types of bullying will be discussed as part of the relationships and health education curriculum, in line with the Primary Relationships and Health Education guidance.

This curriculum will explore and discuss issues at age-appropriate stages such as:

- Healthy and respectful relationships.
- Boundaries and consent.
- Stereotyping, prejudice and equality.
- Body confidence and self-esteem.
- How to recognise abusive relationships and coercive control.
- Harmful sexual behaviour, the concepts involved and why they are always unacceptable, and the laws relating to it.

The school will also be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst pupils, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

## **6. Signs of bullying**

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil could potentially be experiencing bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
- Unwillingness to attend school
- Repeated or persistent absence from school
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
- Saying that they feel ill repeatedly
- Decreased involvement in school work
- Leaving school with torn clothes or damaged possessions
- Missing possessions
- Missing dinner money
- Asking for extra money or stealing
- Cuts or bruises
- Lack of appetite
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
- Lack of eye contact
- Becoming short tempered
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home

Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating. Pupils who display a significant number of these signs will be highlighted to the Safeguarding team for monitoring.

## **7. Staff principles**

The school will ensure that education as a preventative measure is a prominent aspect of its antibullying approaches.

Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one pupil towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

Staff will always respect pupils' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others, unless the pupil has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a pupil is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.

Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped.

## **8. Child-on-child abuse**

The school has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the school will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and Parish Spirit lessons, in line with the Prevention section of this policy.

All staff will:

- Be aware that pupils of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- Be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of school settings.
- Be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- Take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- Never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up", and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as "boys being boys", as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such as inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.



- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children’s social care services and potentially the police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that pupils may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Pupils being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

The school’s Child Protection Policy outlines the school’s stance on addressing child-on- child abuse, including sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances are uncovered or disclosed. More information on the school’s approach to preventing and managing instances of child-on-child abuse can be found within this policy and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## **9. Cyberbullying**

### **What is cyberbullying?**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place over digital devices like mobile phones, computers, and tablets. Cyberbullying can occur through SMS, Text, and apps, or online in social media, forums, or gaming where people can view, participate in, or share content. Cyberbullying includes sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else. It can include sharing personal or private information and/or pictures about someone else causing embarrassment or humiliation. Some cyberbullying crosses the line into unlawful or criminal behaviour, which is why children need to understand the implications of their actions.

The most common places where cyberbullying occurs are:

- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Tik Tok (Please note there are age restrictions for these apps. Most apps start at 13 years old).
- Text messaging and messaging apps on mobile or tablet devices
- Instant messaging, direct messaging, and online chatting over the internet
- Online forums, chat rooms, and message boards, such as Reddit
- Email
- Online gaming communities

School staff, parents and pupils need to work together to prevent this and to tackle it whenever it occurs.

## **10. Racial Harassment**

This can include:

1. Physical assault
2. Derogatory name-calling, insults and racist jokes
3. Racist graffiti
4. Wearing racist badges

5. Carrying or distributing racist material such as leaflet comics or magazines
6. Verbal and non-verbal abuse and threats
7. Incitement of others to behave in a racist manner
8. Racist comments in the course of discussion in lessons\*
9. Attempts to recruit for racial organisations or groups
10. Ridicule an individual for cultural differences
11. Refusal to co-operate with others because of their colour, ethnicity or language
12. Written derogatory remarks
13. Accessing racist material on the Internet\*

\*unless part of a study of racism within curriculum

### **Racist Bullying**

All racist incidents, including those which could be deemed to be racist bullying must be recorded. Where there is evidence that a number of individual racist incidents have been perpetrated against the same child/young person, staff should be vigilant to the possibility that the individual could be experiencing the effect of bullying (i.e. a sense of powerlessness, isolation and distress). The steps taken to resolve alleged racist and bullying incidents are the same i.e. reviewing the situation and providing support to, and challenging the behaviour of those involved.

### **Racist Incidents Involving Staff**

Racist incidents can sometimes involve members of staff as perpetrators or victims. When a member of staff is implicated in a racist incident (either as a victim or perpetrator) the headteacher will seek advice from Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust.

### **Incidents Occurring in the Local Community**

When racist incidents occur outside school and are brought to the attention of staff via a third party the Headteacher may consider discussing such situations with the police.

### **Involving Parents of Alleged Victims or Perpetrators**

Parents of alleged victims and perpetrators will be informed at the earliest opportunity. Parents will be given regular progress reports when an alleged incident is being reviewed and will be informed of the outcomes.

### **Supporting Pupils through Positive Intervention**

Pupils and parents should understand that all allegations of racist incidents will be treated with the utmost seriousness. The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for deciding how to respond to particular incidents and should seek understanding of;

- the age of the individuals
- the nature of the incident
- whether there are any behavioural needs which could affect an individual's behaviour towards others
- whether there have been any previous racist incidents involving those individuals
- what action should be taken
- their duty of care to all pupils involved (both victim(s) and perpetrator(s))
- Consider signposting to external agency support e.g. Anthony Walker Foundation

## 11. LGBTQ+ Bullying

LGBT+ bullying is designed to intimidate, humiliate, ridicule or undermines the confidence of another pupil by reason of the pupil's sexuality, gender identity whether by established fact or assumption. This could be any hostile or offensive action against lesbians, gay males, bisexuals, transgender persons or in relation to gender identity or those perceived to be. This hostility may be directed towards them personally or member of their family.

These actions might be:

- Verbal, physical, or emotional (social exclusion) harassment, insulting or degrading comments, name calling, gestures, taunts, insults, jokes or banter.
- Offensive graffiti.
- Humiliating, excluding, tormenting, ridiculing or threatening refusing to work or cooperate with others because of their sexual orientation or identity.

Any reported incidents should be taken to the safeguarding team and documented on CPOMS under the correct categories.

## 12. Procedures

Minor incidents will be reported to class teachers, who will investigate the incident, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator and update SLT via CPOMS.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- The victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately
- Members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the pupils being interviewed, including electronic communication
- If a pupil is injured, members of staff take the pupil immediately for a medical opinion from a first aider on the extent of their injuries
- A room is used that allows for privacy during interviews
- A witness is used for serious incidents
- If appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture
- Members of staff listen carefully to all accounts, being non-confrontational and not assigning blame until the investigation is complete
- All pupils involved are informed that they must not discuss the matter with other pupils

Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for safeguarding processes to be implemented.

## **13. Sanctions**

If the Senior Leadership Team is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. They will inform the perpetrator of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. missed playtimes and lunchtimes, internal referral (either to another class or SLT), suspension etc. (see Positive Relationships and Behaviour policy for more detail about tailored sanctions).

If possible, a member of the senior leadership team will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim, and/or witnesses if appropriate, or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken. This may take place via telephone or face to face meeting. School will always encourage family members to not attend meetings alone (i.e. bring an advocate) as we recognise that these meetings may be emotionally charged.

The school's focus at all times when dealing with issues surrounding bullying, harassment or hate will be supporting pupils to develop more positive behaviours and attitudes, to understand the impact of their actions and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The senior leadership team informally monitors the pupils involved over the next half-term.

The school will remain cognisant of the fact that continued access to school can be important for rehabilitation of harmful behaviour, and will not suspend or exclude pupils unless as a last resort – where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, the school will act in line with the Suspension and Exclusion Policy.

## **14. Support**

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- Emotional support and reassurance
- Reassurance that it was right to report the incident, and that appropriate action will be taken
- Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online
- Discussion with their parent on whether police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the police may be contacted without discussion with parents)

The Senior Leadership Team will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them sharing spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary. Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.

Staff, particularly the DSL and Pastoral Team, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

## **15. Bullying outside of school**

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of school, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside school in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside of the school premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, e.g. on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip.

The Senior Leadership Team is responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the police of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be informed.

## **16. Record keeping**

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying – this includes recording where decisions have been made, e.g. sanctions, support, escalation of a situation and resolutions. This will be recorded on CPOMS. The Senior Leadership and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- Identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain pupils that may need to be handled, e.g. with pastoral support.
- Reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- Considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play within the school, e.g. whether school culture facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- Considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- Responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.