



Anti-bullying strategy

Independent school standards	Paragraphs 10 and 34.
Last updated by senior leaders	September 2026
Last reviewed by advisory board	September 2026
Next review due	September 2027

Introduction

St. John's is committed to facilitating an effective anti-bullying strategy. We do all we can to prevent bullying, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is properly understood and regarded as wholly unacceptable.

This policy aims to produce a consistent, age-appropriate response to any bullying incidents that may occur at St. John's. We aim to make all those connected with our school communities aware of our opposition to bullying; it is everyone's collective responsibility to support and uphold a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination.

Staff, parents and pupils work together to create a happy, caring, safe learning environment where all can learn without anxiety, and measures are in place to reduce the likelihood of bullying. When bullying does occur, it is never tolerated and dealt with swiftly; it is everyone's responsibility to aim to prevent occurrences of bullying and to deal with any incidents effectively.

This policy, along with all other related policies including our behaviour policy, is written and reviewed in light of the Equality Act 2010 and ensures all those with protected characteristics are protected from bullying, discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

Defining bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying can take many forms (including online/cyber bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video) and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, and/or those with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010. For example, on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), or because a pupil is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between pupils, or perceived differences.

Bullying can range from ostracising, name-calling, teasing, threats and extortion, through to physical assault on persons and/or their property. It can be an unresolved single frightening incident, which casts a shadow over a pupil's life, or a series of such incidents. Bullying may include one or more of the following:

- being hit, kicked, pinched, punched, spat at or threatened with violence
- being insulted and/or called derogatory names
- humiliation
- teasing or sending unpleasant notes or messages
- spreading rumours or malicious gossip
- stealing or deliberately destroying another person's property
- repeatedly excluding another pupil by not talking to them, or not letting them join in.

Online/cyber bullying

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown location, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Online bullying is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be severe. Online bullying may include one or more of the following:

- email/text/WhatsApp/instant messaging/chatroom/social media messages (including 'sexting') - that are threatening, offensive, derogatory and/or cause discomfort
- photographs/video clips - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
- phonecalls – silent or abusive calls or voicemails; or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe that the victim is responsible.

Actions to prevent bullying

- Through the curriculum, assemblies and events, we ensure that all pupils know that bullying is entirely unacceptable.
- PSHE education, including RSE, lessons explore bullying and healthy / negative relationships. Teachers use a range of methods to help prevent bullying and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. They use drama, role-play, stories and workshops within the formal curriculum, to help pupils understand the impacts of bullying.
- Ongoing staff training, including regular equality training, is provided to ensure staff recognise and deal with bullying, including on specific areas such as homophobia, transphobia, biphobia, religious diversity, anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism and SEND discrimination.
- A counsellor is available to pupils on request, as per the school's counselling policy.
- Anti-bullying week is calendared annually.
- Online safety and cyber-bullying are part of the computing curriculum from KS2 onwards and parents are regularly reminded of their responsibility to keep their children safe from the dangers of the internet by supervising access.

The role of parents and carers

Parents and carers have a responsibility to support this anti-bullying strategy. Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class/form teacher immediately in the first instance, who will, in turn, contact the relevant senior leader, Principal or Headteacher, in following the below strategy.

Strategy for dealing with and recording incidents of bullying

The following robust, but flexible, procedure will always be followed.

The emphasis is always on a caring, listening approach as bullies are often victims too. Staff do all they can to support the pupil who is being bullied.

If staff, pupils or parents are informed about, or witness, an act of bullying, they must refer it to the relevant class/form teacher and senior leader, including the Principal or Headteacher, as necessary.

1. Incidents of reported bullying need to be reported to the relevant senior leader and/or the Principal or relevant Headteacher.
2. Depending on the incident, an appropriate member of staff will speak to all pupils involved about the incident separately or if appropriate as a group. If this member of staff is not the Principal or Headteacher, the findings must be reported to them.
3. The problem will be identified and possible age-appropriate solutions suggested, which may include, depending on the age of the pupil(s) involved:
 - mediation
 - circle time
 - asking the bully/bullies to genuinely apologise
 - supporting the bully/bullies, through use of our counsellor, to understand and change their behaviour
 - sanctions, including internal or external suspension, or in exceptional cases, permanent exclusion.
4. In the unlikely event the bullying continues, or in more serious cases of bullying, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the problem.

A record of all bullying incidents and actions taken are kept on our online system.

The role of pupils

Pupils are encouraged to tell anybody they trust if they are being bullied, and if the bullying continues, they must keep on letting people know. If they are being bullied online, they are advised to keep screenshots, text messages and/or emails as evidence.

Allegations of a safeguarding nature from pupils against other pupils

In most instances, negative conduct of pupils towards each other will be covered by this policy (and our behaviour policy). However, some allegations may be of a more serious nature and raise safeguarding concerns.

Allegations made against another pupil may include physical abuse (e.g. violence, particularly pre-planned; forcing the use of drugs or alcohol), emotional abuse (e.g.

bullying, blackmail, extortion, threats, intimidation), sexual abuse (e.g. indecent exposure, touching, sexual violence and sexual harassment, sexting, forcing the watching of pornography or upskirting, which is a criminal offence and typically involves someone taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing (e.g. photographing or videoing indecent acts)).

If any devices need to be seized and passed onto the police, then the device(s) will be confiscated, and the parents and police will be contacted. The device will be turned off and placed in a School office safe until the police are able to come and retrieve it.

Monitoring and reviewing incidents of bullying

Our online management system, detailing all incidents of bullying, is monitored regularly by the Principal, Headteacher and Advisory Board. Leaders analyse records held to identify any patterns involving people, places or groups. They look out in particular for incidents of bullying related to difference or perceived difference, for example, racist bullying, homophobic/biphobic/transphobic bullying or bullying directed at pupils with SEND.