

St. John the Baptist V.A. School



Challenging Bullying Policy

“Working together with kindness, respect and encouragement to achieve our best in a caring Christian school.”

Introduction:

All children have the right to be safe from bullying, harm and abuse. At St John's we will ensure that the victims of bullying are supported and looked after. Our school aims to offer a positive, supportive and safe learning environment for our community, in which everyone has an equal right to be treated with dignity and respect. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all pupils and adults should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. St John's is a 'telling school'. This policy adheres to the Rights of the Child and Article 19 where every child is protected from all forms of violence and abuse. It also reflects the latest WG guidance on "Rights, respect" (Nov 2009).

Aims

- The School Community (pupils, staff, parents, governors) should work in co-operation towards building and maintaining an anti-bullying ethos in the school.
- Pupils and adults should realise that bullying behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.
- Pupils and adults should feel willing to report bullying behaviour, confident that they will be listened to and action taken to remedy the situation.

Objectives

This policy is intended to:

- Raise the awareness of the school community about the school's stance towards bullying behaviour.
- Provide strategies for preventing and dealing with bullying promptly and consistently.
- Provide understanding and support for bullied pupils.
- Help build an anti-bullying ethos in the school.

What Is Bullying?

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

Bullying is expressed through a range of hurtful behaviours: it can happen face-to-face or in the digital environment. It can be carried out by an individual or group but is generally executed in front of an audience to assert power or popularity. It may involve an element of secrecy so that adults are not aware of it.

There are several distinctive elements associated with bullying. These include, but are not limited to:

- **Intention to harm:** bullying is deliberate with the intention to cause harm. Those who bully others are often skilled at knowing exactly how to humiliate or hurt their target, picking on key aspects of their appearance, personality or identity that produces the effect wanted. They seek out the area in which they have power over their target.

- **Harmful outcome:** someone or a group is hurt physically or emotionally. They can be isolated, humiliated or made fearful. Their sense of self-worth is reduced.
- **Direct or indirect acts:** bullying can involve direct aggression such as hitting, as well as indirect acts such as spreading rumours, revealing private information about someone, or sharing intimate images with people for whom the information/images were not intended.
- **Repetition:** bullying usually involves repeated acts of negative behaviour or acts of aggression. An isolated aggressive act, such as a fight, is not usually considered bullying. Yet any incident can be the start of a pattern of bullying behaviour which develops subsequently. That is why incident records are kept and maintained at St John's.
- **Unequal power:** bullying involves the abuse of power by one person or a group who are (perceived as) more powerful, often due to their age, physical strength, popularity or psychological resilience.

Bullying may be linked to protected characteristics, broadly categorised into:

- Bullying connected with age.
- Bullying involving learners with disabilities, which include ALN.
- Homophobic, biphobic and or transphobic bullying.
- Bullying connected with race, religion and/or culture.
- Sexist and/or sexual bullying.

Bullying results in **pain and distress to the victim.**

How is bullying expressed?

Bullying can take many forms, including:

- **Physical:** kicking, tripping someone up or shoving, injuring someone, damaging their belongings or gestures of intimidation.
- **Verbal:** taunts and name-calling, insults, threats, humiliation or intimidation.
- **Emotional:** behaviour intended to isolate, hurt or humiliate someone.
- **Indirect:** sly or underhand actions carried out behind the target's back or rumour-spreading.
- **Online:** using any form of technological means, mobile phones, social networks, gaming, chat rooms, forums or apps to bully via text, messaging, images or video.
- **Relational aggression:** bullying that tries to harm the target's relationships or social status, drawing their friends away, exploiting a person's additional learning needs (ALN) or long-term illness, targeting their family's social status, isolating or humiliating someone or deliberately getting someone into trouble.
- **Sexual:** unwanted touching, threats, suggestions, comments and joke or innuendo. This can also include sextortion, so called 'revenge porn' and any misuse of intimate, explicit images of the learner targeted.
- **Prejudice-related:** bullying of a learner or a group of learners because of prejudice. This could be linked to stereotypes or presumption about identity. Prejudice related bullying includes the protected characteristics. Prejudice can and does also extend beyond the protected characteristics and can lead to bullying for a variety of their reasons such as social status and background.

Dealing with homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (LGBTQIA+) bullying

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic (LGBTQIA+) bullying are specific forms of bullying motivated by prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people, someone with a (LGBTQIA+) relative or simply because a learner is different in some way. It is not characterised by specific acts but by the negative attitudes and beliefs towards (LGBTQIA+) people that underlie these.

Name-calling should always be challenged in the same way that racist or sexist behaviour is. Normal anti-bullying strategies should be used when reacting to incidents and these strategies must have a clear place within the context of our whole school preventative policy.

The most important thing teachers can do is to strive to create a positive, open, tolerant ethos in which matters of concern to young people are discussed calmly. If the response to homophobic, biphobic or transphobic (LGBTQIA+) bullying is purely reactive and short-term this may only serve to marginalise victims.

If a pupil uses **homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language**, staff need to point out the effect that their language may be having on other people. This could include asking the pupil to explain why we think homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language is unacceptable in school. Make clear to the pupil this language is offensive and a form of bullying and disrespectful.

In the questioning, determine if there is a motivating factor for the language and try to establish if homophobic bullying played a part. If members of staff feel the comment was made in ignorance, then they should be warned and have the reasons explained why it is not to be used. Where staff feel the pupil understands the context of what was said, the child's behaviour should be logged onto CPOMs.

If the pupil continues to engage in homophobic bullying, they should be spoken to by a senior member of staff. When missing break, a restorative behaviour plan must be filled in which encourages the pupil to reflect on their behaviour, why it is important to follow that rule and how they will behave differently in the future. The Senior teacher will talk in more detail of the effects of homophobic bullying and make clear it is a form of discrimination, similar to racist comments. *A Senior Teacher will make the decision whether it is necessary to speak with the child's parents.*

If the problem persists, Senior Leaders will directly contact **parents or carers** to discuss the issue and reminding them about the school's anti-bullying policy. In doing so it may also be necessary to explain to the parents or carers why **homophobic, biphobic or transphobic language** is unacceptable.

When supporting pupils who are the victim of homophobic bullying, teachers can refer Appendix 1 of this document, taken from the Stonewall report guidance.

Sexist and sexual bullying

Sexist bullying is based on sexist attitudes repeatedly expressed in ways that demean, intimidate and/or harm another person because of their sex or gender. It may sometimes be characterised by repeated inappropriate sexual behaviours including harassment, groping, 'upskirting' and use of humiliating sexist languages. In rare cases, violence may be used.

Sexual bullying may be physical, verbal or psychological. Behaviours may involve suggestive sexual comments or innuendo including offensive comments about sexual reputation or using sexual language that is designed to subordinate, humiliate or intimidate. It may involve sharing of explicit images online, sometimes by multiple people, coercion or unwanted sexual touching.

It is also commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes. Sexual bullying and sexual harassment are terms which are often used interchangeably in schools.

Our Jigsaw health and wellbeing scheme and whole-school ethos promotes equal gender opportunities, tolerance and empathy towards each other.

Bullying involving learners with disabilities

Learners with a disability and/or ALN learners may be more vulnerable to bullying because:

- of negative attitudes towards disability or perceived disability.
- of a lack of understanding of different disabilities and conditions.
- they may not recognise they are being bullied.
- they may be doing different work or have additional support at school.
- they may be more isolated than others due to their disability or condition.
- they may find it harder to make friends as a result of their disability or condition.
- they may exhibit perceived bullying behaviour due their disability or condition.
- they experience lots of change.

Bullying linked to race, religion and culture

This form of bullying describes a range of hurtful behaviour, both physical and psychological, that makes a person feel unwelcome, marginalised, excluded or powerless because of their colour, ethnicity, culture, faith (including lack of faith), national origin or national status.

At St John's, we identify racism as, "Conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin." And a racist incident as, "Any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person." As defined in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry in 1999.

Forms of racism

Historically, the term 'racism' has been used in situations where colour and physical appearance are considered to be significant markers of difference. However, there has almost always been a cultural element as well. Racism around skin colour continues to be prevalent. However, there are other forms of racism which are primarily to do with culture, customs, religion and heritage for example:

- Anti-gypsyism
- Anti-refugee prejudice
- Anti-Semitism
- Islamophobia.

The school's curriculum promotes tolerance, empathy, respect and compassion towards others. The headteacher provides a strong moral leadership alongside other senior leaders and the governing body,

all staff model values and high expectations, thereby 'leading by example' by valuing health and wellbeing. St John's operates a zero tolerance on all forms of racism and any incidents will be dealt with in accordance with our anti-bullying procedures. Furthermore, where incidents do occur, they will be reported to the Local Authority via their Workspace platform.

Online Bullying

Online bullying behaviour can take different forms including:

- **Profile:** people do not have to be physically stronger, older or more popular than the person they are bullying online.
- **Location:** online bullying is not confined to a physical location and it can take place at any time. Incidents can take place in a learner's own home, intruding into spaces previously regarded as safe and private.
- **Audience:** online content can be hard to remove and recirculated and reposted. The potential numbers of people who can see content posted online is very large. Single incidents of online abuse can quickly escalate into bullying, e.g. by reposting, sharing and through comments.
- **Anonymity:** the person being targeted by bullying may not necessarily know the identity of the perpetrators of bullying behaviour. The target also will not know who has seen the abusive content. If the perpetrator actively hides their identity from the target this may be considered a form of passive aggression and if repeated, this could constitute bullying
- **Motivation:** online bullying is typically carried out on purpose. However, initial incidents may have unintended consequences and can escalate through the involvement of others. An individual may not feel that by endorsing or reposting someone else's post that they are actively participating in bullying. The instigator may not have intended an offensive or hurtful comment to be repeated. A single incident – one upsetting post or message – may escalate into bullying involving a number of people over time.

To promote positive online behaviour the appropriate use of the internet (within each class and whilst at home) is taught and discussed regularly through discrete lessons and is integrated across the curriculum through the DCF. Pupils, staff, visitors and parents are expected to sign and follow our Acceptable Use Agreements.

What is not bullying?

The following examples are cases which would not normally be considered bullying:

- **Friendship fallouts:** a friendship feud may however deteriorate into bullying behaviour that is enabled by the fact that former friends have an intimate knowledge of the fears and insecurities of one another. Children and young people who are targeted by former friends feel the betrayal deeply and are frequently isolated from their former friendship group.
- **A one-off fight:** this will be dealt with in accordance with our consequence procedures.
- **An argument or disagreement:** between two children is not generally regarded as bullying. Nevertheless, they may require assistance to learn to respect others' views.
- **A one-off physical assault:** St John's expects it to be stopped and addressed immediately. Police involvement in cases where physical assault has happened may also be appropriate.
- **Insults and banter:** children will often protest that an incident was a joke or banter. If two friends of equal power are in the habit of bantering with one another it is not deemed to be bullying. If one learner uses banter to humiliate or threaten another who is powerless to stop it and made fearful by the act, the border between banter and bullying is likely to be crossed.

- **A one-off instance of hate crime:** unless this behaviour is repeated it would not usually be regarded as bullying, but it would be criminal behaviour, which the school would deal with in accordance with our "Preventing Extremisms and Radicalisation Policy." If considered necessary, the school would also involve the police.

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school.
- doesn't want to go on the school / public bus.
- begs to be driven to school.
- changes their usual routine.
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic).
- begins to truant.
- becomes withdrawn anxious or lacking in confidence.
- starts stammering.
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- feels ill in the morning.
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork.
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing."
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully.
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost."
- has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen.
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- is bullying other children or siblings.
- stops eating.
- is frightened to say what's wrong.
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- is nervous & jumpy when a cyber message is received.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

School Procedure for dealing with a disclosure:

When a disclosure is made, it should always be treated seriously, with appropriate discretion and carefully investigated. The procedure for dealing with bullying is set out in the Appendix together with a copy of the incident form.

- We ensure that the whole school understands what bullying means, what a victim is, what bullying behaviour is, and what a bystander is.

- Make clear that a zero-tolerance approach to bullying is in place in school, including LGBTQIA+ phobic language which is not tolerated within the school.
- Encourage children to report incidents without feeling they are telling tales.
- Stress the role of the bystander – the person who can intervene and help the situation. We encourage the bystander to get involved as opposed to watching and colluding with any bullying they witness.
- Take incidents seriously, investigating and if necessary, acting upon them quickly and fairly.
- Have a behaviour policy for pupils and staff setting out clear guidelines for managing pupil behaviour both in the playground and in the classroom.
- Reward positive behaviour and relationships as outlined in our Behaviour Policy.
- Provide opportunities to raise awareness of bullying issues and providing a whole school focus for anti-bullying activities. This will be through whole school events (such as Anti-bullying week), through Whole School Assemblies and through our Jigsaw programme.
- Develop children's own resilience through the Health and Wellbeing curriculum. This may involve exploring feelings through role play and viewing bullying situations from both sides through a quality text.
- Provide a structured, well-staffed playground environment with a variety of activities/equipment for pupils to play with during school breaks.

Reporting bullying

All members of the St John's community have a duty and responsibility to report bullying, whether they witness it, know of it or suffer from it. St John's is a 'Telling School'. Bullying concerns should be reported to school in the first instance.

If a pupil is being bullied it is important to tell someone they trust:

They can:

- Tell an adult or friends, either at school or at home. If they have already told an adult about bullying, they can still tell them again.

They can also:

- Tell a teacher – their class teacher or any other teacher.
- Tell any other adult staff in school – such as lunchtime assistants, teaching assistants or in the school office.
- Tell an adult at home.
- They can also write a note about the bullying to your class teacher.
- They can also call ChildLine at any time for free on 0800 1111. ChildLine will not tell anyone else about what you have said.

Concerns raised by parents can be passed onto any member of staff. All members of staff have a duty of care to ensure the Challenging-bullying policy is adhered to when a report is made.

When dealing with bullying, staff will:

- Respond sensitively.
- Investigate the incident ensuring any bullying has stopped.
- Record all incidents of bullying on CPOMS and pass on to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher.

- In the first instance meet with the victims and bullies individually, using restorative language as a way of facilitating the conversation.
- If appropriate facilitate a restorative meeting between the victim and bully as an opportunity for the bully to understand how their actions have affected the life of the victim.
- Contact the parents of both the victim and bully to discuss the problem where serious accusations or repeat accusations have been made.
- In more serious cases, or if a pupil is repeatedly bullying, involve the Senior Leadership Team.
- Where appropriate liaise with other members of staff to consider the options available to support the victim and/or the bully.

Procedures we follow:

Stage 1 actions include:

- Incident is reported to victim's class teacher, intervention in first instance is through the class teacher. If the allegation is of a serious nature, then the teacher may deem it necessary to move to stage 2 immediately.
- After individual meetings, children are brought together by a class teacher or senior teacher to discuss the concern and the solution strategy.
- All referrals are passed on to the Headteacher and noted on CPOMs.

Stage 2 actions include:

- Parents are notified of serious accusations or repeat accusations. Headteacher will ensure that action is taken and communicate this to all parents.
- The school takes the needs of the victim seriously and support is offered for as long as the victim feels the need.
- Meetings between victim and bully using restorative approaches to achieve resolution and justice as the goal for the session, where appropriate.
- Meetings between victim/parents/bully using restorative approaches to achieve resolution and justice as the goal for the session, where appropriate Intervention programme for individuals are set up with key monitoring targets.
- Development of self-esteem or social intervention work for children who are trapped in the bullying cycle e.g., through Lego therapy or another similar programme.
- Parents of the child accused of bullying work with the Headteacher and go through the log of incidents and rule breaks and draw up a contract of Behaviour, relating to the St John's School rules and document what they expect to see from the child in the future.

Stage 3 actions include:

- Parents of the bully are asked to visit the school and review Behaviour contract and discuss ways forward.
- Temporary exclusion if necessary.

Consequences of Bullying

- St John's staff are available to ensure the victim is supported in rebuilding their confidence. Support for the bully may include anger management, circle of friends, liaising with parents or referrals to outside agencies (Early Help Hub, CAHMS).
- Punishing bullies does not end bullying. At St John's School we emphasise that it is the bullying behaviour, rather than the person doing the bullying, that is not acceptable.
- The bully will be encouraged to understand how their actions have caused distress and anxiety.
- Bullies are to be disciplined in line with the school's behaviour policy; this may involve the following sanctions: verbal rule reminder, loss of play, senior teacher involvement, behaviour contract, internal/external exclusion (at the discretion of the Head teacher).
- We will ensure all actions are fully communicated to the relevant parties and recorded using school record-keeping procedures (CPOMS).

Monitoring and Review

All safeguarding policies are reviewed every year to assess their effectiveness. Input from relevant stakeholders: parents, pupils (via school council/pupil surveys and Health and Wellbeing lessons and assemblies), staff and governors are actively sought.

- The number of bullying incidents is monitored each term by the Headteacher and broken down into race, gender, homophobic and disability strands and reported to the Governors.
- St John's Challenging Bullying Policy supports other policies such as our Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Further Guidance for Children (Pupil Voice, School Council 26.02.24):

- Do not bully other people – it is not kind.
- You should be kind to everyone.
- If you are being bullied, ignore them, walk away and tell either a met gret or a trusted adult.
- If you see someone being bullied- help them, do not try to get involved and tell an adult.
- If you are being bullied, TELL SOMEONE! Talk to a friend, a met gret or a teacher!
- Speak to your teacher or senior teacher – don't exaggerate, be honest and stick to the facts. Write it down or draw a picture if it helps you explain. If it does not stop – tell the teacher again.
- Do not say something which you know will upset someone.
- You can phone 0800 1111 and speak to someone at Child Line if you need to.

Further Guidance for Parents:

A useful document for parents which supplements this policy can be found following the link below:

[Anti-bullying Guidance parents and carers \(gov.wales\)](#)

Top tips for talking to your child about bullying can be found following the link below:

[View - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

The above document also highlights support which parents can access from outside charities, some of which are listed below:

www.bulliesout.com

www.anit-bullyingalliance.org.uk

www.kidscape.org.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.wales.mencap.org.uk/cy

www.ceop.police.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk

Or you may find the following telephone numbers useful:-

KIDSCAPE Parents: Helpline 0300 1024481

Childline: 0800 1111

Family lives: 0808 8002222

APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1 Frequently asked questions and responses on homophobic bullying, as identified in the Stonewall report (2017).

1. Sexuality is a private matter. Why is it relevant to school?

There is no obligation for any person to disclose their sexual orientation. However **homophobic bullying** is something which schools have a **statutory** obligation to address. Addressing homophobic bullying does not mean discussing sex. It means taking decisive and assertive action to prevent bullying. It is important to remember that homophobic bullying does not just affect lesbian, gay or bisexual people, or those perceived to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. It can also be targeted towards those who are seen to be “different” in some other way, for example, because they do not wear the “right” sort of clothes.

2. Some parents/carers do not want us to respond to homophobic bullying. What do we do?

No **parent/carers** want their child to be bullied.

Nor do they want to hear that their child is a bully. Regardless of their views on gay people, or sexual orientation, parents and carers have to understand that schools have a responsibility to keep pupils safe. **Preventing** and **responding** to homophobic bullying is essential if schools are going to fulfil their **responsibilities**. It is important to **consult** parents/ carer about any steps to prevent homophobic bullying. Parents/carers also need to **understand** that homophobic bullying can affect anyone, regardless of whether or not they are gay.

3. We have to respect cultural and religious difference. Does this mean pupils can be homophobic?

Some religions or cultures believe that homosexuality is wrong and lesbian and gay people are not entitled to the same rights as heterosexual people. However, **no religion** or culture believes that bullying, including homophobic bullying, is ever acceptable. There can therefore be no justification for homophobic bullying.

All young people can experience homophobic bullying, regardless of their sexual orientation, religion, or views, and they deserve to be protected. Tolerance and kindness should be integral to any school. A person can hold whatever views they want, but expressing views that denigrate others is unacceptable.

4. Primary school pupils are too young to understand. Surely we should not mention gay people?

Primary school pupils may be too young to understand their own sexual but some pupils may well becoming more aware of their own sexuality and it is also likely that some primary school pupils will know someone who is gay. This might be a member of their family, godparents, or family friends. Homophobic language is used in primary schools without the pupils necessarily realising what it is that they are saying. Primary schools should respond to homophobic bullying in an age-appropriate way, whilst demonstrating that it is not acceptable in school. The same strategies can be used to tackle all forms of inappropriate language.

5. What about transgender people?

Gender identity and sexual orientation are two different things. Gender identity describes a person's gender. Sexual orientation describes whether a person is heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual. The description of someone as transgender refers to their gender identity.

Some young people come to realise that their biological gender is not the same as the gender with which they identify, that is, they are born a girl but feel like a boy, or a born a boy and feel like a girl. Some Trans young people can be heterosexual, lesbian, gay or bisexual, but like all pupils can experience homophobic bullying and should be protected from it.

Trans pupils may not conform to accepted gender norms and roles and therefore may experience homophobic bullying as a result. It is therefore important to be alert to the unique sort of bullying they may experience and protect them accordingly. Also, as teachers we must not be gender specific in our approach to the curriculum.

6. Is it ok to tell gay pupils to be more discreet to avoid bullying?

No. The fundamental principle of *Every Child Matters* is that children and young people should be able to grow up and discover their identities. Telling a pupil to be more discreet undermines that identity, and suggests that the young person is responsible for the bullying they are experiencing. It is important to **respond to the bullying**, rather than removing the target. For secondary age pupils schools may wish to encourage the young person to attend a local **youth group** if they are gay, or find friends and activities where they are able to be themselves.

It is important to work with children and young people who are being bullied to offer them the **support** they need and to equip them with the skills to assess their own safety. For more information on strategies to tackle bullying, including Restorative Justice and conflict resolution.

7. I'm a gay teacher and pupils talk to me about my sexual orientation. What can I say and not say?

School culture and ethos determines how open staff are about their **private lives**, and you should therefore seek advice and guidance from the Head. The key is consistency between all staff regardless of sexual orientation.

Pupils, especially **gay pupils**, can benefit from knowing positive lesbian and gay role models. Staff should however, remain professional and ensure that they provide advice and guidance in a way that is appropriate.

8. I think a pupil may be gay. What should I do?

It is important that you do not ask pupils about their sexual orientation, or assume that they are necessarily troubled by it. If a person does come out to you, it is important to be **supportive**. That way, they will be more likely to tell you if they are experiencing bullying.

Creating a **school ethos** where all pupils feel respected is central to giving pupils the confidence to talk to staff if they need to. Use group discussion and **classes** to reiterate the school's anti-homophobic bullying **policy** and in secondary schools ensure appropriate information about local groups and useful websites is made available in an appropriate place (and in line with school policy), and reiterate the school's commitment to inclusivity.

9. We do not have any gay pupils at this school. Why would this be relevant?

Homophobic bullying can affect **anyone** regardless of sexual orientation. Anyone who is thought to be gay, or just thought to be "different" can be called "gay" or experience homophobic abuse. It is highly likely that your school will have gay pupils, even if they have not yet "come out". Even if you do not have any gay pupils, it is likely that pupils may have gay friends or **family** and therefore it is relevant to them. Finally, there are gay people in the world (and in the **workplace**) and therefore tackling homophobic bullying is essential to a pupil's wider education.

10. How do schools with a religious character respond to homophobic bullying?

Along with all schools, schools with a religious character condemn and will not tolerate any form of bullying, including homophobic bullying, for at the heart of a successful school is the respect for the dignity of the individual and bullying can have no place in such communities.

See also:

11. Everything is "gay" these days. Do I have to challenge every word?

Homophobic language is common and its use is often casual, but it is very difficult to respond to more serious forms of homophobic bullying if certain words and usage are allowed. Homophobic language also contributes to a culture of intolerance and may have an impact on how young people feel about themselves. It is therefore necessary for us to have a "**zero tolerance**" approach to homophobic language, regardless of how it is used. Staff should make it clear that homophobic language is not tolerated by our school and that a '**hierarchy of sanctions**' will be followed if it continues.

12. How should I treat the non-biological parent of a pupil?

Like any other **parent**. Non-biological parents have the same rights and responsibilities as a step parent. It is important that schools treat non-biological parents in the same way as biological parents, and they feel able to be involved in school life and activities. Some non-biological parents may apply to adopt a child. Some others may apply for a parental responsibility order; this enables them to sign official forms from school for example.

13. How do I respond to homophobic bullying in PSHE?

Providing an opportunity for pupils to **talk** about sexual orientation and their views of lesbian and gay people is a good thing. You may not always like what they say but if the issue is up for discussion, it is not going to be ignored. There is, however, a crucial difference between expressing views about lesbian and gay issues (which may not be positive) and expressing hatred (homophobic bullying). Before the **lesson** begins, reiterate the importance of respecting other people's views and circumstances. Pupils should be able to present their viewpoints in a way that respects others. If a pupil expresses views which cause particular concern, consider whether it is necessary to speak to them after class and provide additional **support**.

14. What about section 28?

Section 28 was an often-misinterpreted piece of legislation that prompted some schools to think they could not tackle homophobic bullying. Section 28 has now been **abolished**. This means that schools can and should respond to homophobic bullying without worrying about Section 28.

15. What about homophobic bullying outside school?

A school is not legally responsible for bullying that takes place outside school, but can take steps to tackle any bullying inside school, and be responsive to incidents that happen outside school. Under the Education and Inspection Act 2006 a school's behaviour policy can include, as far as is reasonable, measures to regulate behaviour outside school premises when pupils are not in the charge or control of members of staff (which is particularly pertinent to cyberbullying). See section 3.4 of School Discipline and Pupil Behaviour Policies: Guidance for Schools for more detail.

16. Our child is about to start primary school. Should we tell his teacher that we are a same-sex couple?

You do not have to tell the school that you are a same-sex couple, but telling them will enable them to ensure that your child is included and supported. Telling the school will also enable them to keep an eye on your child and intervene swiftly and effectively if there is any homophobic bullying. Schools' primary concern is the children in their care, not their views on their family arrangements.

17. I have pupils in my school who believe their faith condones homophobic bullying. Do I treat them differently?

All faiths fully support the declaration that all forms of bullying are wrong. No pupil has the right to bully another and it is likely that such an assumption is based on a misunderstanding of religious teachings. As well as working with the bully to acknowledge the harm that they have done it is important to look for wider opportunities to discuss attitudes around difference and respect, for example within the curriculum or tutor group sessions. Demonstrating a whole-school ethos based on celebrating difference is also critical. Where the bullying is persistent it may also be appropriate to contact the child's parents or carers to alert them to the situation and to remind them about the school's policies on bullying.

Appendix 2: Procedure Flow Chart for dealing with bullying disclosure

1. Once the behaviour is identified as bullying the incident should be reported to the Head Teacher or senior member of staff.
2. The victim and bully should be interviewed separately.
3. The victim's story should be listened to and the pupil reassured that s/he has done the right thing by reporting the situation. Victims of bullying often feel powerless and vulnerable. They may end up believing that they deserve to be bullied. Everything should be done to re-establish the victim's self-esteem and self-confidence.
4. The bully should be spoken to and the reasons why s/he has bullied identified. The bully should be helped to recognise his/her unsociable behaviour and given support.
5. On some occasions it may be possible to sit the victim and bully down together to discuss their feelings and the reasons why the situation has developed. The problem could then be resolved amicably and/or a compromise reached.
6. On other occasions the bully should be told firmly to stop his/her anti-social behaviour immediately and to stay away from the victim.
7. In all instances, the parents of both parties should be contacted and informed of the situation and the action taken. If appropriate, they should be invited into the school to discuss the matter.
8. Follow up meetings with the victim should be arranged to find out whether the solution has been effective or not, and the situation should be monitored.
9. Serious or prolonged bullying could result in one or more of the following sanctions:
 - writing an explanation or apology for the incident.
 - withdrawal of break or lunch time privileges.
 - lunchtime detention.
 - behaviour contract with pupil and parents.
 - withholding participation in school trips or sports events that are not an essential part of the curriculum.
 - removal from a particular lesson or peer group.
 - temporary removal from the class.
 - interview with the head teacher or deputy head.
 - fixed term exclusion.
 - permanent exclusion.
10. A written record should be made of every incident of bullying using CPOMs. If appropriate, the head teacher will then escalate it up onto the Flintshire workspace database.

Monitoring and Review

Author	Adapted by Mrs Stephens from the North Wales Safer Communities Board and North Wales CONTEST Board
Approved by	Curriculum Sub-Committee
Approved on	V4 26.02.24
Head teacher's signature and date	Mrs A Stephens
Chair of Governor's signature and date	Mrs H Dalrymple