

St Richard's Catholic College

FRIENDSHIP & ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



The Policy was approved by the Governing Body: February 2026

Chair of Governors: K Eydmann

The Governing Body will review the policy: February 2027

It is the entitlement of every pupil in St Richard's Catholic College to enjoy an environment free of prejudice and any form of bullying behaviour, either inside or outside the classroom and on the way to and from school. Founded on Catholic Social Teaching, our school seeks to promote equality of opportunity as we work together to form a community in which all are expected to show 'respect for a person and respect for a person's property'.

Our Aims

At St Richard's we take all forms of conflict, friendship problems, and bullying behaviour seriously. Our aims are:

- To provide a safe and secure environment for all pupils in our care.
- To create a happy atmosphere in which parents/carers and staff work together for the welfare of the pupils.
- To ensure everyone is mutually valued and respected.
- To encourage pupils to adopt agreed standards of behaviour and values in order to develop a sense of self-discipline and to take responsibility for their own actions.

Our Code which is displayed in every classroom stipulates the following:

We support each other by ensuring that no-one is insulted, offended or harmed in any way.

We recognise that everyone has the right to happiness, free from injury or intimidation.

We wish ours to be a listening, ordered environment with open channels of communication between all staff and pupils.

Pupils will be reminded of the Code regularly and will be encouraged to adhere to it for the good of the whole community.

Underpinned by the foundation from John 10:10 "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Definition of Bullying Behaviour

We acknowledge that both friendship problems and bullying behaviour can be upsetting and unpleasant but it is important to distinguish between the two, as the responses to friendship problems will be different to the strategies used to address bullying behaviour.

Friendship problems may be an occasional incident where both pupils disagree and find it difficult to resolve the disagreement without adult help. It is unlikely to be repeated behaviour and may even be accidental, but both pupils make an effort to resolve the problem. However, we recognise that repeated friendship problems can sometimes lead to bullying behaviour.

Bullying behaviour is defined as "behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."..."Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim." (Taken from the Department for Education advice July 2017, 'Preventing and Tackling Bullying').

Bullying can take many forms:

- **Physical** bullying (hitting, punching, finger jabbing, any inappropriate touching, pinching, jostling, breaking or taking property)
- **Verbal** bullying (name calling, put downs, threats, teasing, ridiculing, belittling, name calling, excessive criticism or sarcasm.)

- **Indirect** bullying (rumours or stories, exclusion from a group, shunning, invading privacy, graffiti designed to embarrass, withholding friendship or affection.)
- **Online** bullying or Cyber-bullying (sending nasty phone calls, messages, gaming, social media or e-mails, this can include use of images and videos).

Some bullying is done because a pupil is deemed to belong to a certain group. This has been labelled 'prejudice based bullying', and includes but is not limited to homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sexual or gender bullying, and bullying of pupils with learning or other disabilities. Whilst one pupil or group starts bullying another pupil or group, there are often other pupils present (bystanders). These may:

- help the bully by joining in
- help the bully by watching, laughing or shouting encouragement
- remain uninvolved
- help the victim by telling the bully to stop or fetching an adult

All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it.

Child on Child Abuse

St Richard's takes a zero-tolerance to child on child abuse. All staff recognise that children can abuse other children (often referred to as child on child abuse) and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online.

All staff must be alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and firmly against it.

Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children (teenage relationship abuse);
- physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
- sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence)
- sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
- causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
- consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
- up skirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm; and
- initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element)

Strategies for Preventing Bullying Behaviour

Parents, pupils and staff all have an important part to play in the identification and detection of bullying. Prompt communication between all parties involved is essential.

Whole School Approach

All staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are committed to the creation of conditions which discourage bullying through: consequences that are applied fairly, consistently, proportionally and reasonably; vigilant supervision of areas such as toilets, corridors, staircases, the changing rooms, the playground and the back area of the school. Time spent by Form Tutors with their form is especially valuable and is a proactive way of gathering intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict, thus enabling strategies to be developed that prevent bullying occurring in the first place.

- Issues surrounding friendships and bullying behaviour are taught through the Personal, Social, Health & Economic Education Curriculum, Citizenship Curriculum and tutor time. Pupils are taught to explore some of the ups and downs of relationships, including the positive aspects and benefits of friendships and the negative aspects of relationship conflict.
- Whole School Assemblies are also used to discuss bullying and raise pupils' awareness of what bullying looks like, and how they can respond.
- Regular questionnaires are completed and action plans are put in place following them based on young people's perceptions and experiences. Displays providing information are regularly updated.
- Tutor Time/PSHE time provide opportunities for more detailed discussions and role play activities to explore the nature of bullying.
- The School Council, Wellbeing Ambassadors and RAGE group provide a forum for discussing any bullying issues and for the pupils to decide ways of preventing it and supporting those who are bullied.
- Student Listeners, Prefects, Wellbeing Ambassadors and staff aim to enable pupils to resolve friendship problems and low level bullying behaviour without adult intervention.
- Student Listeners, Prefects, Wellbeing Ambassadors and staff promote positive play to reduce potential conflict during break time and lunchtimes.
- St Richard's Code will be upheld at all times. All staff will monitor behaviour and intervene when it becomes inappropriate in order to prevent bullying developing. Staff on playground duty will inform relevant staff of any incidents.
- Provide effective staff training to ensure all staff understand the principles and purpose of the school Friendship and Anti-bullying Policy, their legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to resolve problems and where to seek support.
- The school challenges all behaviours that connect with child on child abuse.
- Staff will handle any disclosures of child on child abuse with sensitivity and care, liaising with the schools' Designated Safeguarding Lead, and following the guidance provided in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding policy and procedure.
- The school ensures pupils are aware of the different ways they can speak to adults outside of the school environment via the Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 signposting posters regularly displayed in school and on all pupils' online Edulink journal.

Intervention Strategies

Strategies for responding to bullying behaviour

Where bullying does occur this will be followed by an immediate and appropriate response, including the use of disciplinary interventions where necessary.

Early identification is the most effective way in minimising bullying behaviour and the effects on the person being bullied. We also acknowledge that the person doing the bullying needs to understand that their behaviour is unacceptable and must stop. They may also need support to change their behaviour and explore the underlying reasons for bullying. We strongly believe in education and support in helping young people to recognise the changes needed in their behaviour.

Pupils are encouraged to report any negative behaviour, even if they are not sure whether it is bullying. They can do this through:

- Speaking to their teacher/TA or any member of support staff.
- Speaking to a parent/other adult who then may contact the school in any of the ways listed.
- Speaking to their School Council Rep or a Student Listener.
- Pass on any concerns to the Pastoral TAs, situated in the Hive (in the PE corridor) or by emailing thehive@strichardscc.com
- Finally, pupils who wish to raise anonymous concerns can do so via the school's designated anonymous reporting tool 'Whisper' found on the pupils' EduLink account or website.

When bullying is known to have happened or be on-going

The Form Tutor or the member of staff identified by the pupil will discuss the incident(s) with the pupil being bullied. It is important that they are listened to and believed.

The incident will then be discussed with the pupil engaging in bullying. Information will be gathered from witnesses to explain what they saw.

The Form Tutor/Class Teacher/Pastoral Leader/SLT/Principal will be informed.

Consequences in line with the school's Pastoral Care and Behaviour Management Policy will be used where appropriate. This might include:

- official warnings to cease offending or withdrawal of certain school privileges
- support from Pastoral Manager or member of the Pastoral Care team to support a change in behaviour.
- detention
- exclusion from certain areas of school premises
- close supervision
- suspension
- permanent exclusion

The purpose is to signal to the pupils that a recurrence of the bullying behaviour will be unacceptable.

- Parents of those involved will be informed of any action taken.
- Records will be kept on pupils' files.
- Support will be sought from East Sussex Inclusion Support Services where appropriate.
- Behavioural support with an appropriate staff member such as the Pastoral Manager, Safeguarding Officer, Pupil Wellbeing Lead, counselling or mentoring will be put into place when appropriate.

Where a pupil or group of pupils deny involvement in bullying behaviour the pupils concerned will be observed and monitored. The pupil being bullied may be asked to record and report any incidents which cause them concern and appropriate support will be offered to enable the child to move forward positively and confidently.

Safeguarding Children and Young People

All stakeholders (pupils, staff, parents and governors) will be expected to promote this policy. Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm'. Where this is the case, staff should report their concerns to the

Designated Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officers in school. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, there may be an identified need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Bullying outside School Premises

Teachers have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises “to such an extent as is reasonable.” Where bullying is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. (DFE Behaviour and Discipline in Schools' Guidance). Parents are also expected to report any anti-social behaviour concerning online incidents to Sussex Police, using 101 for non-emergency or 999 in an emergency.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

In St Richard's, it is our clear intention to minimise the stress caused by bullying. All pupils are aware that we share a caring environment and that those who abuse this in any way will be treated as bullies.

We will review this policy and procedures annually and assess the implementation and effectiveness of various strategies used. The policy will be updated to take account of new Government and local guidance, and the views of the whole school community.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Mission Statement, our Pastoral Care and Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, our Acceptable Use Policy and The Equality Act 2010.

Complaints

The Governing Body has established a formal complaints procedure and this may be used by a parent/carer if necessary.

Please see the Complaints Policy if required.