

St Augustine's Academy



Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by:	Carole Hegley	Date: 12 th February 2025
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'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in Heaven.'

Matthew 5:16

Rationale

“Let all that you do be done in love.” 1 Corinthians 16:14

At St Augustine’s Academy Christian values guide our daily work. Our school has an ethos of welcoming all pupils: *“Love your neighbour as yourself” Mark 12:31*. Through Christian values, a culture of love, care and respect is cultivated, where difference is valued and equality, diversity and dignity are promoted. We commit to ‘Living God’s Love’ and aim to provide a secure, inclusive and harmonious environment where all children, staff and families can flourish. We are all God’s children, made in His image and are loved unconditionally by Him and we strongly believe that no one has the right to harass, insult or cause offence to any other person, for any reason.

Bullying, as defined below, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Where bullying is suspected, or proven, the school will be guided in its work by John 2: 9, (*‘Whoever says, “I am in the light,” while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.’*) seeking to ensure that whilst justice prevails, so too will forgiveness. In this way, peace can be restored, allowing all of those involved to flourish.

Aims and objectives

The ‘St Augustine’s Way’ sees bullying as being unacceptable. Pupils are taught how to protect themselves and to enjoy their own uniqueness and that of others. We want our pupils to flourish without the fear of being bullied. However, we recognise that children are still developing in their attitudes, beliefs and behaviours and that we, as a school, have a role to play in giving children who exhibit bullying behaviours opportunities to be forgiven and to learn from their mistakes.

We aim to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur and to make all members of the school community aware of our opposition to bullying. Parents and carers have a responsibility to support the school’s antibullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

The Governing Body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying (including cyber-bullying) from our school. The Governing Body monitors incidents of bullying that do occur, and reviews the effectiveness of this policy regularly.

What is bullying?

The Department for Education’s ‘Preventing and Tackling Bullying Guidance’ defines bullying as “behaviour by an individual or a group, **repeated** over time that **intentionally** hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”.

Repeated – done or occurring again several times in the same way.

Intentionally – deliberately; on purpose.

Habitually –by way of habit, customarily.

At St Augustine’s Academy, we adopt the above definition, and are also aware bullying is ‘sustained’, involves one party having power over another and is resultant in fear and isolation of a victim.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical: pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- Racist: racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- Sexual: unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic: because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- Verbal: name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- Cyber: all areas of internet, such as email & internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera & video facilities

Bullying can be a form of peer on peer abuse and can be emotionally abusive causing severe and adverse effects on children's emotional development. Bullying can happen to all children and it can affect their social, mental and emotional health. School staff will support all pupils who are bullied and will be alert to the effect any form of bullying can have.

Signs and symptoms of Bullying

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

- is frightened of travelling to or from school
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic)
- begins to truant
- becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence
- 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 school work
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous & jumpy when a text or cyber-message is received

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

We are also committed to working with those students who may act as 'bystanders' or 'spectators' and who believe that by merely watching that they are playing no part in the bullying. We encourage all of our pupils to become courageous advocates. We believe strongly that all students involved in any incident of bullying – whether actively or passively should accept responsibility and be supported in changing their behaviour.

Christian Ethos to Support Anti-Bullying

St Augustine's Academy is underpinned by Christian values which ensures that British Values are upheld, preparing children to live in modern Britain. However, we recognise that bullying can, and does, take place and that bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, our school can help to create a safe, disciplined environment, where all pupils are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

We:

- Monitor and review our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Support staff to promote positive relationships, to help prevent bullying.
- Recognise that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference. Also children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (peer on peer abuse).
- Intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children, young people and adults, in addition to reminding all school members who they can talk to should they need.
- Challenge passionately any practice and language which does not uphold the values of tolerance or respect.
- Encourage the positive and safe use of technology and social media.
- Ensure that all involved with bullying (allegation and/or proven) are aware this will be dealt with sensitively and effectively for all involved;
- Reiterate that everyone should feel safe to learn and to therefore abide by the anti-bullying policy.
- Require all members of the community to work with the school to uphold all aspects of this anti-bullying policy.
- Report back to parents/carers regarding concerns on bullying, dealing promptly with complaints or expressions of concern.
- Seek to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Seek support from the Local Authority, Diocese of Saint Alban's and other organisations when appropriate
- Educate families on 'bullying' – what it is, how it is defined etc.
- Provide additional support for all involved with bullying allegations or incidents – including support with self-esteem, mental health and behaviour.
- Use our behaviour policy to reflect on what went wrong and how we can put it right.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos, including praising those who were identified as bullying where behaviour improves.

- Take appropriate, proportionate and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying brought to the school's attention, which involves or affects pupils, even when they are not on school premises; for example, when using school transport or online.
Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities, such as: through displays, assemblies, peer support, PSHE Education, class circle time etc.
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.
- Involve pupils to ensure that they understand the school's approach and are clear about the part they have to play to prevent bullying.
- Canvas children and young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with the school to role model positive behaviour for pupils, both on and offline.
- Procedures should be known to all staff and parents as appropriate and followed consistently. The 'no-blame' approach should be used, in which the incident itself is addressed. This avoids 'labelling' children.

Responding to Bullying

The following steps guide the process undertaken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to St Augustine's Academy. The below list is neither chronological nor exhaustive, and will be modified in accordance with each individual situation.

- If bullying is suspected, in accordance with the definition above, the initial behaviour incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has witnessed the concern in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy, followed by the below actions. A clear and precise account of the incident will be recorded on MyConcern.
- If bullying is reported (by a child, parent or member of staff), in accordance with the definition above, an investigation process will take place (led by the Family Support Worker) in which all parties involved will be interviewed. A clear and precise account of the report and further actions will be recorded.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed of all bullying issues as this may indicate safeguarding issues.
- The school will provide appropriate and immediate support for the person being bullied and/or for whom bullying is reported/suspected. The risk of immediate harm will be considered and decisions made as appropriate.
- The school will inform other staff members where appropriate of the immediate concern and ongoing actions.
- Where a concern regarding bullying is proven, parents of both children will be informed and this will be minuted.
- Sanctions (as identified within the school behaviour policy and/or in relation to the nature of the bullying) will be implemented. All parties concerned will be informed of all sanctions, except where the child's / families right to anonymity is required to be considered.

- Support for both the identified bully and victim will also be implemented (see supporting pupils' section below). All parties concerned will be informed of all actions of support, except where a child's / family's right to anonymity is required to be considered.

If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as: the police (if a criminal offence has been committed or if their support is considered to be appropriate) or other local services including 'Early Help' or Children's Social Care).

- Where the bullying takes place off school site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), the school will work with families to ensure that their concerns are fully supported and that relevant authorities can support in investigations (as necessary).

Responding to Cyberbullying

In conjunction with the response guidance above, in instances of Cyberbullying, the school will also consider the below procedural guidance and will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the parents of the child being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include: looking at use of the school systems; identifying and interviewing possible witnesses; contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.
- Work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include: Support reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content; Confiscating and searching pupils' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law; Requesting the deletion of locally-held content and content posted online if they contravene school behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the identified bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.
- Inform the police if a criminal offence has been committed.
- Provide information to staff and pupils regarding steps they can take to protect themselves online. This may include: advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply; providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists; helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

Supporting Children, Families and Staff

The support offered will be by members of staff best placed and/or most qualified to support the child or family, as is relevant. This consideration will ensure the process

is effective and supportive for all. The below list may be modified in accordance with each individual situation.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by the following

- Reassuring the pupil and providing continuous support.
Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with their teacher, the Family Support Worker, or a member of staff of their choice.
- Working towards restoring / enhancing self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include: working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents and carers.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this could include support through Early Help or Specialist Children's Services, or support through emotional wellbeing organisations such as CHUMs or CAMHs.

Pupils who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by the following

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change (see appendix 1) considering how the school's Golden Rules have not been followed.
- Discussing events with their parents/carers to ensure family support in changing the attitude, behaviour or choices of the child.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- Sanctioning, in line with the school behaviour policy and/or as suitable to the individual context.
- Provide opportunities to be forgiven.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Specialist Children's Services, or support through emotional wellbeing organisations such as CHUMs or CAMHs.

Supporting Adults of Pupils Involved

- Staff will recognise the emotional impact of reported or identified bullying may have on them as parents and carers.
- Support for parents and carers will be offered at meetings discussing the bullying to ensure all are involved.
- This policy will be shared, and the current stage of its implementation discussed at each meeting. Where points of reference within the policy are required, these will also be shared at meetings.

Supporting Adults Being Bullied

Our school takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among pupils; however, it is equally important to recognise that intimidation, intended or otherwise, and bullying of staff or governors and other parents, whether by pupils, parents or other staff members, will not be tolerated.

Adults who are being bullied or affected by intimidating behaviour will be supported by the following

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the Headteacher.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and the offering of appropriate support.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Where the bullying or intimidating behaviour is suggested by a member of staff or parent, to be from a parent or visitor to the school, following an investigation, the Headteacher will consider the right to ban adults from the school site.

- Where the bullying or intimidating behaviour is suggested by a member of staff or parent to be from a member of the school's staff, following an investigation, the Headteacher will consider the right to implement the procedures outlined in the Staff Code of Conduct and/or the Disciplinary Process.

Adults (staff and parents) who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by the following

- Discussing what happened with the Headteacher to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to the school's official complaints procedures if the conclusion met is not agreed upon.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- By being fully communicated to in any disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

The Resolution to a Bullying Incident

Where a bullying incident is considered by the Headteacher (or Chair of Governors / Governor Panel if the Complaints Policy has been triggered) to have been resolved in accordance with the guidance and procedures detailed above, the Headteacher will inform all parties involved.

This will trigger a request for forgiveness, and an opportunity for all parties to see the matter as being resolved and to allow all involved to move on socially, morally, spiritually, culturally, physically and academically, as appropriate.

Monitoring of future incidences will be considered, and detailed accordingly with all parties involved to ensure the ongoing restoration of self-esteem, confidence and forgiveness of all involved.

The school will ensure that any new complaint / concerns are heard, however, where a complainant tries to re-open the issue with the school after the anti-bullying / complaints procedure has been fully exhausted and the school has done everything it reasonably can in response to the complaint, the Headteacher (or other appropriate person in the case of a complaint about the Headteacher) will inform the complainant that the matter is closed.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's behaviour policy.

Colossians 3:13 – Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Appendix 1

Changing and challenging negative behaviour

It is important to remember that it is the **BEHAVIOUR** and **not** the **individual** that is unacceptable.

When a victim names someone as being a bully **DO NOT** accuse them of bullying straight away; listen to what they have to say.

When bullying has been observed or reported then the following steps can be taken:

Step one – talk to the victim

Find out from the victim how they feel and the details about the bullying incident and who was involved.

Step two - arrange a meeting(s) with the bully(ies) and witness(es)

Arrange to meet individually all those involved. This will include any bystanders or colluders. Always start with the main offender and work down through the hierarchy.

Step three - explain the problem to them and educate them Ask the individuals if they have noticed the victim being upset, or a bit low recently. Keep rephrasing and returning to the question until there is recognition that the victim is not happy. Educate the child so that they understand their negative behaviour.

Step four - share responsibility

State clearly that it is the responsibility of the whole school community to try to make life as good as possible for each other. What can be done to support?

Step five - ask the bully(ies) and witness(es) for their ideas

The individual is then encouraged to suggest a way in which they could help the victim to feel happier. The adult gives positive responses to the suggestions that are most useful.

Step six - hand the responsibility over to them

Pass the responsibility over to the individuals to solve the problem and help the victim. Arrange to meet up again within 7 - 10 days to see how things are going.

Step seven - arrange a future meeting

At the next meeting everyone involved, including the victim, is asked how things have been going. This allows for close monitoring of the process whilst still involving the students in it.

If this approach fails and the evidence is strong enough then the more traditional approach should be adopted where the bully(ies) is challenged directly and relevant sanctions imposed.

Once again, the environment the student is in should be such that they don't want to bully.

At all stages professional judgement should come into play.

References and Further Guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2024

The Equality Act, 2010

Safeguarding Children and Young People – Children Act, 1989

“Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies”, July 2017

The Education and Inspection Act 2006

Education Act 2011

The Children Act 1989

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Malicious Communications Act 1988

Public Order Act 1986

The Computer Misuse Act 1990