The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Approved by:	Governing body	**Date: September 2026**
Last reviewed on:	September 2026	
Next review due by:	September 2027	

Anti-Bullying Policy

The School Ethos

At The Federation of Annunciation Catholic Schools, we aim to provide a supportive environment, free from bullying, in which children are safe and can pursue their learning and personal goals as happy and secure individuals.

The policy reflects the school ethos and the curriculum. Its emphasis is on helping children to take responsibility for their own behaviour and caring for others. Educational elements covering the dangers of bullying and how to prevent it, report it and build resilence are also included in assemblies, projects, drama, stories, literature, historical events, current affairs and discussion of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice-based language. PSHE Lessons, Circle Time and an annual anti-bullying week are also key features of the school's strategy to prevent and tackle bullying. As is our Catholic ethos and the importance of keeping Christ at the centre of all we we do. The school aims to ensure that bullying is prevented in so far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up in this policy, and the implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy. We seek to have effective procedures for dealing with bullying and demonstrate that concerns raised by children or parents will be taken seriously.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Online Safety Policy, the Behaviour Policy, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy (including Prevent), Looked After Children Policy, PSHE Policy and the Staff Code of Conduct.

Aims

- To raise awareness amongst pupils that we must respect all people no matter what their beliefs or persuasions are
- To raise awareness amongst pupils and parents about bullying behaviour and that they should report bullying, including when they find themselves as by-standers (as a by-stander a person has the responsibility to report immediately what he/she has witnessed)
- To raise awareness about the school's attitude to bullying behaviour via the anti-bullying policy
- To challenge attitudes about bullying-type behaviours and help build an anti-bullying ethos in school
- To raise awareness that hurtful behaviour in young children can develop into bullying in older children and that psychological damage can even result in suicide
- To prevent pupils being subjected to radicalisation (as part of the Prevent duty of all schools, following the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 – see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy).
- To foster a positive caring atmosphere
- To ensure good supervision in all areas of the school at all times so far as is reasonably practical, including off-site visits and activities and wraparound provision.
- To raise staff awareness by involving them in training
- To talk openly about bullying with the children so that they can understand the feelings of someone who is being bullied and learn to deal with bullying.

Objectives

- All governors, staff, parents and pupils understand what bullying is
- All governors, teachers and non-teaching staff know what the school policy is on bullying, use it to help prevent bullying and follow it when bullying is reported

- All pupils and parents should know what the school policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises

Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported, and given appropriate counselling, if necessary, when bullying is reported.

Bullying is defined as behaviour, which is:

- Being deliberately hurtful to others (physically, emotionally, mentally or through exclusion)
- Usually repeated over time
- Difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves against. This includes;
    - racist, cultural, sexist and homophobic bullying
    - bullying on the basis of someone being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or gender questioning
    - cyber-bullying, e.g. via mobile phones, social media, text messaging, websites, photographs, gaming chat rooms and e-mail
    - bullying because of a person's special educational need or disability
    - bullying someone because he/she is adopted or a carer
    - bullying someone because he/she is a Looked After or Previously Looked After child.
- Frightening someone into doing something he/she does not want to do
- Invading someone's personal space to make him/her feel uncomfortable or unhappy
- Taking or damaging someone's property
- Spreading rumours about someone or using verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling.

"Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally" (Preventing and Tackling Bullying, Advice for Head Teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies, DfE, July 2017, updated July 2026). Although bullying is noted usually to be repeated over time, the school will, where appropriate, take action in response to a single incident and keep an appropriate record.

Staff are aware that child-on-child abuse, (including sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils, and upskirting), is closely allied with bullying and that initiation ceremonies may also have the effect of causing harm, embarrassment or physical or emotional distress. Staff work to raise the pupils' awareness of the potential damage of such incidences in order to minimise their occurrence. Any such issues will be dealt with in accordance with this policy and the safeguarding and child protection policy.

As noted in the DfE Guidance 'Behaviour in Schools', the headteacher has the authority to take disciplinary action in relation to events which take place away from the school premises. (Refer to the Positive Behaviour Policy for further details). In this respect, the school will take seriously and respond appropriately, in accordance with this policy, to reports of bullying, including cyber-bullying, which take place away from school.

As a statutory requirement, the Anti-Bullying Policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils via the school website. Its content and implications are discussed with pupils, for example, in lessons, assemblies and other relevant occasions.

The Protected Characteristics and Prejudiced-based Bullying

The Equality Act protects people against discrimination in relation to the protected characteristics. In the Equality Act, the nine protected characteristics are defined as:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The school recognises that people who have a protected characteristic may experience an additional vulnerability to being bullied. Throughout the curriculum and co-curriculum and, in particular, through the PSHE programme, staff work to develop a sense of tolerance and respect towards people who have a protected characteristic, in line with the school's promotion of fundamental British values. Any bullying on the basis of a protected characteristic is taken very seriously. As required by the DfE, the school's log of bullying incidents records whether a bullying incident arises out of a protected characteristic, thus enabling any such issues to be identified and characterised to facilitate the monitoring of patterns or trends, the school's success in its anti-bullying strategies and its active promotion of the pupils' well-being.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying is perpetrated via a technological medium, using social media. It can be an extension of 'face-to-face' bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several ways from other kinds of bullying because of the invasion of home and personal space and the size of the audience, and that it can take place at any time of the day. It takes different forms;

- threats and intimidation
- harassment
- cyber stalking, e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts,
- defamation
- exclusion or peer rejection
- impersonation
- circulation of private information or images.

Research into cyber-bullying indicates that it is a feature of many young people's lives. Cyber-bullying can extend into non-school time. We advise parents to contact the police if this is the case. The school should be informed of the details to facilitate an appropriate response in school.

Cyber-bullying, like all other forms of bullying, is taken very seriously. It is never acceptable.

Support for the victim

Support for the victim of any bullying incident is central to the school's approach and the key to its success in its work to prevent and tackle bullying. Staff support all pupils who experience bullying, with particular awareness of those who may have an additional vulnerability to being bullied, as described earlier in this policy. The nature and level of support and provision for children's needs will be dependent on the individual circumstances. It could involve, for example;

- a quiet word from a teacher that knows the pupil well
- asking the pastoral team to provide support
- providing formal counselling
- engaging with parents
- referring to local authority children's services, completing a Common Assessment Framework or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Evidence shows that pupils who are bullied in school are more likely to be bullied out of school, for example, on the journey to and from school or via cyberbullying. Pupils who are vulnerable to being bullied often also need greater support to deal with the impact of being bullied. They may lack the social or communication skills to tell someone what is happening. Staff are aware of the need for support and are briefed, for example, through the sharing of individual education plans and risk assessments, to enable support to be efficiently targeted and effective.

Responsibilities

Schools should edit this section to retain the sections which apply to the school's age range.

Early Years to Year 3

Children are asked to:

- Say "don't do that" / "stop" / "leave me alone" if someone does something they don't like
- Tell an adult, i.e. a teacher, teaching assistant, helper, lunchtime or aftercare supervisor or parent if someone's behaviour is hurtful to them
- To step in to help children in distress or tell an adult (i.e. not to ignore it)

Parents are asked to:

- Tell their child's teacher or another member of staff if their child is telling them about hurtful behaviour in school

Staff will:

- If children hurt other children, having ascertained the full facts, record the incident and report it to the Head
- Ensure that perpetrators make a meaningful apology and help children to plan how they can put things right
- Sanction them by taking them to the Head or member of the Senior Leadership Team
- Monitor the situation to prevent it happening again, by supervising areas and times where incidents could happen covertly

Year 4 and Above

The Anti-Bullying Reporting Chain

The victim should speak to a friend (a pupil volunteer may act as a mediator giving verbal information), who will then inform the Class Teacher. Alternatively, the Class Teacher may be spoken to directly. All incidences are recorded, as hard copy and/or online (on a 'Record of Incidents of Bullying' form, a copy of which will be accessible by the Head for monitoring purposes and to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted, or to enable patterns to be identified. A further copy will be added to the pupil's file.) Both the child being bullied and the bully are spoken to by the appropriate Class Teacher(s) and the Head is informed. It should be made clear that the bully's behaviour is unacceptable and, dependent upon the nature of the event, parents may be informed at a very early stage. The victims must be aware that action has been taken against the bully, and are encouraged to develop strategies if they find themselves in similar situations outside the school. The DfE Guidance requires staff to be aware of the times and places where bullying is most likely to occur; staff are vigilant at all times, especially during movements between buildings and during lunch and break times.

If incidences reoccur the parents will be invited to a meeting with the appropriate Class Teacher and the Head. Strategies for resolution will be discussed and the bully's future within the school will be reviewed.

The DSL and staff have received training as to what constitutes a child protection issue, as far as bullying is concerned, i.e. any bullying , (including verbal abuse, such as persistent criticism, belittling or name-calling) that puts the child at personal, mental or physical risk. The threshold for reporting a bullying issue to external agencies (e.g. police, social care) is known by all staff. This includes all issues where a child is at risk of further bullying, particularly outside the school area, or where the bullying involves a criminal act. A bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern when there is "reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or likely to suffer, significant harm".

Records of any incidents of bullying are kept centrally by the school to evaluate the effectiveness of the approach adopted and to enable patterns to be identified. Training for staff includes how to record and report bullying, the staff's legal responsibilities, and the sources of support that might be available to staff, particularly to facilitate addressing the needs of pupils with protected characteristics.

Staff Guidelines

The Bully:

- Make the bully aware that such behaviour is unacceptable
- Explain clearly and precisely what behaviour is causing distress to the victim
- Discuss the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour
- Make the bully aware of the consequences if bullying continues
- Discuss ways by which the bully must change his/her behaviour
- Always inform the Head
- Monitor the bully's behaviour over the next few weeks

Whatever the cause, bullying is usually a signal that the bully also needs help. The school will give due consideration as to whether an incident of bullying also gives rise to a possible child protection or safeguarding concern for the perpetrator.

Strategies

- Pupils are encouraged to talk to peers and teachers who can then give feedback. Teachers support in a confidential manner.
- All pupils undergo training to develop their resilience to bullying and to understand its effects and how to prevent it.
- Curriculum areas, such as English and Drama, PSHE and History, provide opportunities to explore relationships with bullying as the theme.
- Creating an inclusive environment and a school, which builds on positive self-image and commends good and appropriate behaviour in all areas and ages.
- Ensuring staff are trained on how to watch for signs, react to and deal promptly with instances of bullying or suspected bullying. This needs to include training on the needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities. Training on this policy and the school's anti-bullying strategy is included in the induction training of new staff.
- Having comprehensive Internet security, with the appropriate filters.
- Teaching children how to stay safe in the online and real world.
- Senior Management, teachers and pupil groups regularly present 'Anti-Bullying Assemblies'.

Our key message will always be prevention, by teaching pupils that everyone in our school has the right to feel safe and happy, and that bullying of any kind will not be tolerated. This programme of education is aimed at building resilience, to promote, understand and respect the differences between people, and help pupils avoid prejudice-based language.

Discipline and Exclusion

In deciding on appropriate sanctions in relation to identified incidences of bullying, the school ensures that its action is in line with its positive behaviour policy. Ultimately, the Head may be obliged to implement fixed term suspension or permanent exclusion from the school if, having followed the school's exclusion policy. These sanctions will be imposed in severe or persistent cases of bullying. The school has an obligation to report to its Local Authority if a pupil is permanently excluded from the school. Following a permanent exclusion, the school will assist the parents in finding a future school. However, upon receipt of a request for a reference, if a pupil has been permanently excluded, if asked, the school is obliged to inform the potential future school about the exclusion.

Evaluation and Assessment

The effectiveness with which the school acts to prevent and tackle bullying is evaluated by the governors and also by the Head, Senior Leadership Team and class teachers. The policy has due regard for the DfE guidance document, 'Preventing and Tackling bullying, Advice for Head teachers, Staff and Governing Bodies', (July 2017, as updated July 2026)

Useful Publications / Contacts for Parents:

- The Anti-Bullying Alliance (anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk)
- Kidscape (kidscape.org.uk)
- ChildNet International (childnet.com)
- CEOP Education website (www.ceopeducation.co.uk)
- UK Council for Internet Safety (uk council for internet safety)
- The UK Safer Internet Centre (saferinternet.org.uk)
- DfE Guidance: (The use of social media for on-line radicalisation)

Designated Safeguarding Leads

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is: Daniel McCreadie

The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead(s) is/are: Amber Brennan, Georgina Stanley, Jessica Odoi and Bea Martin

The Prevent Strategy Lead is: Daniel McCreadie

The Safeguarding Governor is: Hugh Rayner