Highfield St. Matthew's Church of England Primary School

As Jesus tells us, 'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:13).

Anti-Bullying Policy

November 2026

Our Christian Vision

'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven' (Matthew 5:13). Our vision inspires and challenges the community we serve to achieve excellence in all they do, and to learn about life in all its fullness, within a welcoming Christian family.

School Aims – How we will Let Our Light Shine

- Every child feels valued, safe and cared for, and makes a positive contribution to their own development and the life of the school, with Christ at its centre
- Our bespoke SHINE curriculum, based on excellence and high expectations, provides rich experiences which motivates, challenges, develops resilience and meets the needs of all children
- Every child achieves their potential and develops their talents and creativity, preparing them for a role in a global society with a lifelong love for learning
- Children & families develop understanding of a faith and Christian values that can guide their lives; knowing Jesus, and putting into action what they are coming to believe and value
- The whole school family flourishes and serves the local Church and community

As a member of the LDST, Christian belief and practice underpin all aspects of school life, developing each child's spirituality and personal faith.

At Highfield St Matthews CE Primary School we aim to provide a welcoming, caring, happy, Christian environment, where everyone is valued equally and achieves his/her full potential. We aim, as a school, to produce a positive, safe and secure environment where all can learn without anxiety. Bullying is wrong and damages individual children. Therefore, at Highfield St Matthews CE Primary School we want to do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which everyone has responsibility to one another and bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

We aim to make all those connected with Highfield St Matthews CE Primary School aware that bullying in any form; will not be tolerated at our school. Bullying will be dealt with seriously and appropriately, as each case merits. Any pupil, who is being bullied, may seek the assistance of a member of staff and we would, naturally, expect any parent, whose child is being bullied, to contact the class teacher or the headteacher.

Rationale

Bullying is present to a greater or lesser extent in all institutions. All members of the school community deserve the right to feel valued, equal and respected and be able to come to school without fear. Bullying has a serious effect on a pupil's self esteem, emotional and mental health. This prevents them from developing their full potential and can seriously affect their life chances.

This policy aims to produce a consistent school response to any bullying incidents that may occur.

Our school uses this definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can happen anywhere – at school, at home or online.

Bullying can be:

- **Physical:** hitting, stealing or hiding belongings, sexual assault.
- **Verbal or written:** name calling, insulting, racist remarks, offensive sexual remarks, taunting, mocking, threatening language, producing offensive graffiti.
- **Indirect/emotional:** spreading nasty stories, excluding from groups, forced joining of groups, graffiti, defacing property, displaying literature or materials of a racist, sexist or pornographic nature.

- **Online:** using web pages, offensive or abusive text or email messages, sending offensive or degrading images by phone or via the internet. Cyber bullying is illegal under the Malicious Communication Act 1988. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) gives support with this.

Bullying takes many forms. It can be related to:

- Race, religion or culture
- Sexual orientation (or alleged orientation) or of a sexual nature
- Disability or SEND
- Appearance or health
- Home circumstances e.g. bereaved
- Criminal behaviour, gang Involvement and exploitation.

Bullying is not:

It is important to understand that bullying is not the odd occasion of falling out with friends, name calling, arguments or when the occasional trick or joke is played on someone. It is bullying if it is done several times on purpose (STOP).

Children sometimes fall out and say things because they are upset. When occasional problems of this kind arise, although unkind, it is not classed as bullying. It is an important part of children's development to learn how to deal with friendship breakdowns or a childish prank. We all have to learn how to deal with these situations and develop skills to repair relationships.

By its very nature, bullying is secretive, and therefore the school relies heavily on the strong links it has with parents and the community. Parents should contact the school should they suspect their child is being bullied or is bullying. However, not all incidents are cases of bullying - much is the general falling out between children. The school will take seriously any complaints of bullying. It will do all it can to ensure that bullying does not take place. It will do this by:

- Ensuring good supervision of the children, thus reducing the possibilities of bullying
- By being vigilant and watching for changes in character and standards of work of the children. Often the work of the victim deteriorates and there is a change in personality.
- Staff being available to listen to complaints of bullying from both parents and children
- By making children aware, through PHSE lessons and through assemblies of the feelings of victims and that such actions are wrong.

The Role of Governors

The Governing Body supports the Headteacher in all attempts to eliminate any bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the Governing Body does not allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

The Governing Body responds to any requests to investigate incidents of bullying. The normal complaints procedure will be used, i.e. firstly to the class teacher, next to the head teacher, then to the Governors; if on investigation at any stage, the parent is still unhappy, they are free to approach the LA.

The Role of the Staff

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.

- All staff have a duty to ensure that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school.
- All staff set the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.
- Teachers in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place.
- If teachers witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support all involved.
- If we become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, we deal with the issue immediately. This may involve counselling and support, consequences and/or sanctions in line with the school's Behaviour & Discipline Policy. Exclusion will be used as an ultimate deterrent.
- Any incident or report of bullying is taken seriously and victim(s) are reassured. They are offered help and given support and advice.
- We spend time talking to the child who has bullied: The bully will be told to stop his/her bullying in front of his/her parents. We explain why the action of the child was wrong, encouraged them to see the victims point of view and we endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future.
- All bullying incidences are logged on CPOMS and both sets of parents are informed by the Head Teacher/ Deputy Headteacher of the situation and the nature of the action taken.
- The school keeps a variety of records of incidents of misbehaviour. The class teacher records minor classroom incidents. The headteacher records those incidents where a child is sent to him/her on account of bad behaviour. We also keep a record of any incidents that occur at break or lunchtimes.
- The school will include work from time to time, as part of its PHSE work on anti-bullying techniques and will continue to teach the need for tolerance and responsibility by all the children.

The Role of Parents

Parents who are concerned that their child might be being bullied or maybe the perpetrator should contact their child's class teacher immediately.

Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

How is the Curriculum at Highfield used to effectively tackle bullying?

The curriculum is designed to:

- Raise awareness about bullying behaviour and about the school's anti-bullying policy, in an age appropriate way.
- Challenge attitudes about bullying behaviour, increase understanding for bullied pupils, and help to build an anti-bullying ethos in the school.
- Develop children's understanding of the diverse world in which we live, encouraging tolerance and acceptance of all.
- Educate children deeply about what is not bullying as at times, it is a difficult concept to understand.
- To create and sustain a caring, co-operative and compassionate ethos throughout the school. With the teachings of Jesus and our school mission statement, 'Jesus said "Come, follow me and live your life the way God wants you to" at the heart of everything we do.

In the curriculum, this will be done through:

- Weekly PHSE lessons with a focus on healthy relationships (see PHSE policy) Jesus said, 'Come follow me, live your lives the way God wants you to.'
- Stories and examples of positive behaviour given in assemblies, whole school worship and story times.

- Theme days with focus such as world religions and challenging stereotypes
- Positive ways of emphasising the anti-bullying message through drama, role-play, discussion.
- RE lessons
- External organisations coming into school e.g. Wigan Athletic, Magistrates in the Community
- Trips and experiences from EYFS to Y6 which open up pupils' eyes to the world around them.

Procedures to be followed (by all staff):

1. At all times, staff will be vigilant for any signs and symptoms of pupils being bullied.

Signs may include:

- Injuries, bruises, etc. which are not adequately explained
- Poor or deteriorating schoolwork
- Erratic attendance or poor attendance
- Child's reluctance to come to school or frequent early morning minor illnesses (often reported by parents)
- Problems with sleeping, bedwetting, nightmares (often reported by parents)
- Possessions often 'lost', dirtied, destroyed
- Reluctance to go into the playground / desire to stay around adults
- Unhappy, withdrawn or isolated behaviour
- Tendency to stammer

2. Any incident will be treated seriously and dealt with as quickly as possible, following school's Behaviour Policy.

3. We will not accept excuses of:

- A joke
- A game
- An accident- when others have reported an obvious intent.

4. Initially, the facts will be established. The victim and the perpetrator of the incident will be interviewed separately, as will any witnesses to the incident.

5. Any incidents of a minor nature will be dealt with by the adults to whom it was reported e.g. lunchtime staff, class teachers, Jesus said, 'Come follow me, live your lives the way God wants you to.' always ensuring necessary communication between appropriate adults.

6. Appropriate action, based upon events and school Behaviour Policy will be taken. This may take the form of:

- A reprimand to deter a pupil from name-calling or teasing.
- An apology to the victim
- Imposition of sanction or punishment as stated in the behaviour policy such as loss of behaviour point and lunchtime reflection.

7. Minor incidents which are recurring, or more serious incidents, will be referred to the Behaviour Lead (Head of school) or another member of the SLT. The behaviour policy will be adhered to and record will be kept (on electronic system – CPOMS).

8. Parents of both the victim and the bully will be informed immediately if an incident of a serious nature has occurred.

9. When accepting reports of bullying, all staff will:

- Attend to what is being said, without displaying shock or disbelief. Be patient; wait during any silences; prompt gently and not pose questions that may be of a guiding nature.

- Accept what is said. 'Believe' is too strong - the allegation may be false; keep an open mind. Remember the accuser may have ulterior motives.
- Make clear and detailed notes. It is vitally important that notes are taken in evidence as it may prove to be of benefit to the victim, school or even the alleged perpetrator at a later date. These notes may be uploaded to internal system: CPOMS.
- Allay fears - reassure the pupil that s/he was right to tell you. Staff will not promise confidentiality, as they may need to refer to others (staff, parents, social services, police), but will assure that it will not be revealed outside of the necessary circles of authority.
- Reassure the pupils that: it is not their fault that s/he was bullied and she/he may not be the only person to have suffered. Staff will also reassure that of the pupil who bullied 'gets into trouble', it is his/ her own responsibility/ fault, never the fault of the pupil who rightly complained.
- Respond appropriately. - Teachers will not use of leading questions or criticise any child - Teacher will remind pupils of school expectations and values - Teachers will explain what they plan to do next - Offer any support that they feel is needed e.g. somebody to talk to 10. Deal with the incident accordingly, based on events and school Behaviour Policy. This may include discussions with the Senior Leadership Team, parents or outside agencies. These discussions will always take place in a sensitive manner with appropriate levels of Jesus said, 'Come follow me, live your lives the way God wants you to.' confidentiality. These discussions may result in an action plan which outlines positive steps forward and will be recorded as necessary (most like on CPOMS).

In dealing with those who bully, there are three positive aims:

1. To stop the bullying behaviour, immediately.

2. To re-educate the pupils' attitudes and behaviour for the future

3. To reconcile the pupils involved, if possible.

Online-Safety

All the children are taught about how to stay safe using computers, mobile phones, tablets and games. They are made aware of how to stay safe including not giving away personal information. Cyber bullying is also studied and children are made aware of its dangers and what to do if they are a victim.

Cyber- Bullying, although in a different form, is still regarded as bullying and the procedures as set out in this Anti-bullying and Behaviour Policy remain the same. See E-safety Policy for more information of how and understanding of cyber bullying is taught across the curriculum.

Staff Training

All staff at Highfield St. Matthews are provided with the appropriate training to recognise and diminish any sort of bullying behaviour. This training may take the form of a staff INSET, individual training based on needs identified in Performance Management meetings; weekly reminders of key points and discussion of recent events, considering any learning or steps for development. All teaching and non-teaching school staff (including teaching assistants, chaplains, church school workers and midday supervisors) are be trained to recognise and understand how to challenge all types of bullying including :homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language and behaviour. Training to enable certain members of staff to offer appropriate pastoral support is in place. All staff understand recommended paths of referral to more specialised support.

Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying

Leaders at Highfield St. Matthew's Primary are committed to ensuring they build a school culture and community where all staff members and all pupils feel confident and supported in challenging homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying can take many forms, such as verbal, physical and cyberbullying. Any form of this type of bullying will not be tolerated as St Thomas and will be dealt with accordingly and as stated in the Anti-bullying policy.

Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic **language** is a common form of bullying. Inappropriate and discriminatory language and abuse can start in primary schools, therefore St Thomas makes it clear to all that use of HBT language is wrong and take a consistent approach in challenging and addressing all such incidents is taken.

See PHSE/ RSE Policy for more information.

Equality and Diversity Statement

The Governing Body and School Staff are committed to ensuring that all members of the School Community are treated fairly and with equality. We will comply with relevant legislation and implement School policy in relation to race equality, disability equality, gender equality and sexual orientation.

British Values Statement

The Governing Body and School Staff are committed to actively promoting the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different beliefs as set out by the Government in the 'Prevent' strategy in 2011.