Policy on Anti-Bullying

St Laurence School Academy Trust

Date of last review:	July 2026	**Review period:**	Annually
Date of next review:	July 2027	**Owner:**	DSL

1. Introduction

St Laurence is fundamentally opposed to bullying in all its forms as it entirely conflicts with the Christian values that underpin our ethos as a Church School. Our anti-bullying practice is informed by the belief that people are a treasure as a gift from God and, as a result, we value all students equally, whatever their background, disability, ethnicity, gender, identity, learning difficulty, nationality, religion, or sexual orientation. We are committed to embedding a school culture that is fully inclusive, encouraging respect for difference and diversity and ensuring that all students learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. We set out to educate students about the issues surrounding bullying and to deal effectively with incidents when and where they arise.

2. Purpose

To enable a consistent approach in the planning and delivery of preventative actions with regards to all forms of bullying and in the school's response to incident(s) of bullying that take place by ensuring that all members of the school community understand what bullying is, how it can affect individuals and how to respond if bullying takes place

3. Aims

- To develop a range of strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place.
- To promote a clear definition of bullying which is understood by all members of the school community.
- To develop greater understanding of the nature of bullying and its impact through a planned and coherent curriculum e.g. PSHE, the tutorial programme, sixth form core programme
- To respond to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way, taking account of all circumstances and particularly considering the needs of children who are at greater risk of bullying. For example, children who are disabled or have an additional need, young carers, children looked after or adopted from care, children who are LGBTQ+ or perceived to be LGBTQ+, children of a faith background, children whose families are in receipt of FSM
- To de-escalate and stop any continuation of bullying behaviour that has been identified.
- To safeguard the student who has experienced bullying, providing support and signposting to other agencies as needed.
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the student causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi- agency or other appropriate support.
- To regulate the behaviour of students in school and where practical when they are off site, (particularly pertinent to cyberbullying) in accordance with the Education Acts of 2006 and 2011 and in line with the July 2017 DFE Advice for Headteachers, Staff and Governing Bodies: Preventing and Tackling Bullying and the January 2023 DFE Guidance for Teaching online safety in schools.
- To ensure that parents are aware of their role in supporting their child at home to ensure that bullying is minimised.

4. Legal duties and additional guidance

St Laurence School recognises its duties to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of students (Education Act 2002 and KCSIE 2024)
- Ensure that children and young people are safe from bullying and discrimination (Children Act 2004)
- Adopt measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst students and communicate these to all students, staff and parents as part of the school's overall behaviour policy (Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006)
- Prevent discrimination, harassment and victimisation within the school by responding effectively to the bullying of students with protected characteristics (Equality Act 2010)
- Ensure that bullying at school is prevented, as far as reasonably practicable, by the drawing up and implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy. (The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014)

In this policy and in our practice, St Laurence School also takes account of the following anti-bullying guidance:

- *Valuing All God's Children (2017),* published by the Church of England Schools' Education Office
- *Preventing and tackling bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies*, published by the DFE in July 2017
- *All Together Programme* developed by the Anti-Bullying Alliance to support schools in developing their anti-bullying

provision

This policy should be read alongside the following policies: Attendance, Behaviour in School, Complaints, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Equalities Statement Objectives, Online Safety, Mobile Device, Social Media, Acceptable Use Policy, SEND, Relationships and Sex Education

The following senior staff act as named advocates for the protected characteristics as outlined in the Equalities Policy:

Protected Characteristic	**Named Advocate**
Disabled[1]	Joanne Newland
Ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status	Chris Dutton
Gender	Rebecca Overfield
Gender Identity	Laura Waters
Religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background	Adam Watkin
Sexual orientation	Tom Hainsworth

5. Bullying and the law

Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and/or communications may be considered criminal offences:

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes (related to the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Policy and noted above).

6. Child-on-child abuse

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms. The statutory guidance for schools and colleges *(Keeping Children Safe in Education: September 2024)* identifies many areas of child-on-child abuse and makes clear that abuse is abuse and should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', part of 'growing up' or 'boys being boys'. (See paragraph 32 of KCSIE 2024).

[1] The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as when a person has "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities"

7. What is bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying. We have chosen to adopt the Anti-Bullying Alliance definition of bullying which is:

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to face or online"

There are three key elements in this definition:

Intentional:	Bullying is not accidental; there is an intent to cause harm and hurt the individual(s) involved.
Repetitive:	In most instances, there will be a pattern of behaviour, rather than a 'one-off' incident
Power imbalance:	Situations where the individual(s) who are the target of the behaviour are, for example, in a smaller group than those experiencing it, are part of a minority group, are of smaller stature of physical strength, are younger, have communication difficulties or a disability

Bullying can be motivated by a lack of tolerance for difference and may include taunts, name-calling, graffiti or gestures as a result of prejudice. For example, in relation to the following: Race or culture, religion or faith background, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, special educational needs and disability (SEND).

8. Forms of bullying

Bullying can take many forms. It can be:

- **Emotional:** including being unfriendly or unkind; engaging in behaviour or actions that exclude people or torment people e.g. hiding books, damaging possessions, threatening gestures
- **Verbal:** including name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing about appearance, taunting, mocking contributions in lessons, making threats or offensive remarks
- **Physical:** including pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence; physically intimidating someone or using unwanted physical contact towards someone
- **Cyber:** including using a mobile device, the internet or other technologies to threaten, tease and embarrass someone else or writing and saying hurtful things about someone e.g. e-mail, text, messaging, social media
- **Sexual:** including unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments or gestures

9. Cyber bullying

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Online Safety Policy. Staff will have regard to both policies when dealing with reported incidents of cyber bullying and bullying through the use of mobile devices. The school does not have the resources to investigate incidents of cyber bullying that take place out of school unless there is a direct impact on the student in school. However, the school will encourage positive online behaviour and ensure that students are taught safe ways to use the internet in accordance with the January 2023 DFE Guidance for Teaching online safety in schools. In addition, the school will offer support and guidance to students and their families who experience online bullying and take any reasonable action to ensure incidents are not repeated. Parents and carers will always be advised to contact the police to report serious online incidents. Ultimately, when students are not at school, the responsibility for their online safety remains with the parent or carer.

9. Roles in bullying

Students may adopt different and changing roles when they engage in bullying behaviour. The Anti-Bullying Alliance identifies the following roles:

- **Ringleader:** Initiates and leads the bullying.
- **Reinforcer:** Supports the bullying, might laugh or encourage what is going on but does not 'do' it.
- **Assistant:** Actively involved in 'doing' the bullying but does not lead it.
- **Defender:** Knows that bullying is wrong and feels confident enough to stands up for someone being bullied.
- **Target:** The person at whom the bullying is aimed.
- **Outsider:** Ignores the bullying or does not see it as bullying and/or does not want to get involved.

10. Preventative strategies

- Articulate and promote our school culture as one that is fully inclusive, encouraging respect for difference and diversity and fostering strong relationships across all sections of the community.
- Create a strong sense of community by promoting formal and informal opportunities to build cross phase relationships in the context of our vertical tutor group system.
- Ensure an ethos of good behaviour where students treat one another, and the school staff, with respect creating an environment where bullying is not accepted.
- Create clear expectations of behaviour that is and is not acceptable in school to help stop negative behaviours from escalating.
- Gather and act on any relevant information from primary schools (for new starters in Y7) and previous secondary schools(for in-year admissions) in relation to bullying.
- Routinely share information within and across House Teams so that preventative action can be taken where student relationships are at risk of developing negatively and with conflict.
- Use student briefings to provide regular reminders and information about key aspects of this policy such as the school's shared definition of bullying, the key roles in bullying and routes for reporting and to provide more specific guidance for students as required.
- Use curriculum opportunities (e.g PSHE, tutorial programme, Sixth Form Core) to develop understanding of bullying and its impact, to discuss issues around diversity, drawing out anti- bullying messages and to promote social and emotional skills e.g. in relation to empathy and the management of feelings.
- Use opportunities throughout the school calendar to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week, Collective Worship, briefing themes etc)
- Recruit and train a team of student Anti-Bullying Ambassadors and support them to take a lead in promoting an anti-bullying culture; to enable them to engage and participate in regular reviews of policy, practice and communications; to create opportunities for them to promote open and honest reporting amongst the wider student body.
- Ensure that social time is appropriately supervised and that duty staff are trained to be vigilant in their duties
- Provide effective training so that staff understand the principles and purpose of the school's policy, how to report suspected bullying, resolve problems and know where to seek support.

11. Identifying bullying

As a school, we carefully monitor absence and behaviour to identify any patterns that may indicate unreported bullying and act on any suspicions so that appropriate intervention and support can be provided. In addition, parents/carers should be aware of the warning signs and changes in behaviour that may indicate that someone is being bullied or is engaging in bullying behaviour. Whilst the changes in behaviour could be as a result of other problems, bullying should be considered as a possibility that is explored with the child and the school alerted as necessary.

It may be that someone:

- Is frightened of walking to or from school
- Does not want to travel to school on public transport
- Insists on being driven to school
- Makes changes to a usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school after previously enjoying being part of the school community
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, 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
- Makes less effort with school work than previously
- Begins to perform less well in school work
- Comes home with clothes torn or books and/or possessions damaged
- Has possessions that unexpectedly go missing

- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home hungry
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Harasses other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what is wrong
- Is afraid to use the internet or their mobile device
- Is overly protective of their mobile device and reluctant to show the content
- Is nervous and jumpy when a text message or online message is received
- Gives unconvincing excuses for any of the above

12. Reporting bullying

Students

- Directly to a member of staff in person or by email. In many cases, it is likely that the member of staff will be the student's tutor, Assistant Head of House or Head of House
- Directly to one of the school's anti-bullying ambassadors
- By email using the stopbullying@st-laurence.com
- On our school website page In Good Faith

Parents and Carers

- Directly to the Head of House or Assistant Head of House by phone or by email. If reporting a concern by telephone, please call main reception (01225 309500) and ask for the relevant Head of House or Assistant Head of House. If reporting a concern by email, please use the contact details below:

House	Head of House	Assistant Head of House
Ashley	Mrs Mainwaring: rosmai@st-laurence.com	Miss Drake: skydra@st-laurence.com
Budbury	Mrs Kendall: chaken@st-laurence.com	Miss Penny: reapen@st-laurence.com
Conigre	Mr Garty: camgar@st-laurence.com	Mrs Charlton: khacha@st-laurence.com Mrs Kingston: laukin@st-laurence.com
Huntingdon	Mr Daniels: thodan@st-laurence.com	Mrs Howard: michow@st-laurence.com
Westfield	Mr Allen: pauall@st-laurence.com	Mrs Honeyman: shahon@st-laurence.com

13. Responding to bullying

If an allegation of bullying does arise, students, parents/carers and staff should feel assured that the school will:

- Take all reported incidents seriously
- Act as quickly as possible to listen to all involved parties and establish the facts
- Record and report the incident
- Provide support and reassurance to the individual(s) targeted in the bullying incident
- Make it clear to the students displaying bullying behaviour, in whatever role, that this behaviour will not be tolerated
- Identify any issues underlying the bullying and, if appropriate, provide the student displaying this behaviour with appropriate support to enable them to change that behaviour
- Use appropriate sanctions in line with the school's Policy on Behaviour in School
- Communicate effectively with the parents/carers of all of the students involved
- Use restorative practice as and when necessary to help repair the harm that has been done, promoting forgiveness and reconciliation
- Monitor the welfare of students who have been bullied to ensure that sustained bullying has stopped or that isolated

incidents have not been repeated

14. Responsibilities

a) All staff should:

- Read and become familiar with this policy and its contents
- Stay informed about anti-bullying practice and provision by reading information and materials circulated by staff involved in leading the school's anti-bullying provision
- Promote an open and honest anti-bullying ethos in which diversity is valued and the vulnerable are protected
- Know the signs of bullying and be alert and vigilant for these signs in and out of the classroom
- Take prompt action if bullying is witnessed
- Report any bullying incidents at the earliest opportunity
- Use the school's online reporting tool, My Concern, to report incidents of bullying
- Encourage students to report all incidents of bullying
- Listen to students who say that they have been bullied, take what they say seriously and act promptly
- Welcome and support the work of the school's Anti-Bullying Ambassadors

b) All students should:

- Follow the expectations in the school's Code of Conduct and treat all members of the community with respect
- Promote an open and honest anti-bullying ethos in which diversity is valued and the vulnerable are protected
- Read and become familiar with the guidance in the student planner
- Report any bullying incidents at the earliest opportunity
- Welcome and support the work of the school's Anti-Bullying Ambassadors
- Act responsibly online, checking privacy settings carefully and taking note of recommended age-related guidance

c) Parents and carers should:

- Read and become familiar with this policy and its contents
- Make early contact with a relevant member of the pastoral team if they suspect that their child is being bullied
- Avoid making contact with students believed to be involved in bullying behaviours, whether in person or online
- Work in partnership with the school and support the action being taken to stop the bullying, whatever their child's role in the bullying.
- Support the school's work to educate their children about the importance of responsible online behaviour by encouraging their children **not** to access social media apps before the recommended age, taking an active role in monitoring their child's online activity and taking appropriate action at home if their children are not acting responsibly online
- Promote kindness, understanding and inclusivity within the family home and seek opportunities to celebrate diversity.

d) School trustees should:

- Identify a member of the Trust Board who sits on the Care Committee to act as a named anti-bullying trustee.

e) The Designated Safeguarding Lead should:

- Share in the leadership of the whole school anti-bullying strategy
- Align, review, update and publish linked policies and additional guidance
- Monitor the implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Provide regular reports for SLT and trustees relating to the school's anti-bullying provision and practice
- Ensure the provision of regular training for staff
- Align, review, update and publish linked policies and additional guidance in relation to Safeguarding and Online safety, including the Child Protection Policy, the Online Safety Policy and the Relationships and Sex Education Policy
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Team promptly triage the reported incidents of bullying, where the KCSIE threshold to indicate a Safeguarding concern are not met, to the relevant member of staff to follow-up.

- Ensure that reported incidents of bullying that do meet the KCSIE threshold to indicate a Safeguarding concern are managed in line with statutory guidance

f) The DDSL (online safety) should:

- Provide guidance and regular training for staff on these topics
- Lead parent information sessions on these topics
- Use termly Safeguarding briefings to keep students informed about risks and how to manage them
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Team promptly triage the reported incidents of online bullying, where the KCSIE threshold to indicate a Safeguarding concern are not met, to the relevant member of staff to follow-up.
- Ensure that reported incidents of online bullying that do meet the KCSIE threshold to indicate a Safeguarding concern aremanaged in line with statutory guidance

g) The Head of Behaviour and Inclusion (DDSL) should:

- Share in the leadership of the whole school anti-bullying strategy
- Review and update the anti-bullying policy within the wider context of behaviour, inclusion and community cohesion taking account of new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with recent bullying incidents to improve procedures and practice
- Provide regular reports for SLT and Trustees relating to the school's anti-bullying provision and practice
- Review the bullying cases on MyConcern to assess the quality and effectiveness of the school's response to incidents of bullying and address any issues arising
- Ensure that the Safeguarding Team promptly triage the reported incidents of bullying, where the KCSIE threshold to indicate a Safeguarding concern are not met, to the relevant member of staff to follow-up.
- Develop and maintain high quality materials and approaches for students as part of the support to modify their behaviour
- Ensure the recruitment and training of student anti-bullying ambassadors
- Lead the group of student anti-bullying ambassadors, organising regular meetings and providing support for their whole school activities
- Provide guidance and regular training for staff on these topics
- Ensure careful planning of tutorial sessions which are part of the anti-bullying curriculum
- Receive and respond to all emails from the stopbullying@st-laurence.com email account
- Ensure that all concerns reported through the stopbullying@st-laurence.com are recorded on MyConcern for appropriate action to be taken
- Use student briefings to regularly promote the school's ethos and anti-bullying provision, highlighting behaviours to celebrate or modify within the school community

h) The Pastoral Team (Heads of House, Assistant Heads of House) should:

- Carefully monitor absence and behaviour to identify any patterns that may indicate unreported bullying and act on any suspicions so that appropriate intervention and support can be provided
- Respond promptly to any incidents of bullying reported by students or parents and carers
- Respond promptly to any tasks issued by the Safeguarding Team via My Concern in relation to bullying incidents reported by staff
- Investigate reported incidents thoroughly, taking statements from those involved and any witnesses to the incident
- Assess whether the incident is a bullying incident
- Record further details of each confirmed bullying incident on the MyConcern
- Inform parents/carers as soon as possible when issues of bullying come to light, whether their child is a target or involved either as the alleged ringleader or because s/he has adopted a supporting role in a group incident
- Ensure that parents/carers are kept up to date with investigations and outcomes, where necessary developing an agreed action plan to support the individual who has been bullied and to change the behaviour of the student(s) who has been involved in carrying out the bullying.
- Apply sanctions in accordance with the behaviour and exclusion policies.
- Monitor MyConcern carefully to enable preventative actions and to pre-empt any recurrence.

- Organise direct follow up with students over time to ensure that sustained bullying has stopped or that isolated incidents have not been repeated
- Investigate and, where practical and appropriate, act on reported incidents of bullying that occur outside of school
- Work with the wider community such as the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), the police and children's services in cases where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed

i) The Head of PSHE should:

- Ensure the development of a cohesive and well-planned anti-bullying programme as part of the PSHE planned curriculum and tutorial programme which is underpinned by the principles in this policy

j) The Anti-Bullying Ambassadors should:

- Work with the Head of Behaviour and Inclusion to regularly review the school's Anti-Bullying Policy
- Create and update a student friendly version of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy to be published in the Student Planner
- Lead the promotion of a strong anti-bullying culture in school through the organization of events and student briefings
- Promote open and honest reporting amongst the wider student body
- Mentor students who seek the support of their peers
- Ensure any bullying that is reported to them is passed on to the Head of Behaviour and Inclusion for logging.

Review

- This policy is reviewed annually.

Linked Policies

- Behaviour
- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Online safety
- Equality Statement
- RSHE