

THOMAS BECKET CATHOLIC SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

2026 - 2027

Approved by:	**Local Academy Committee**	**Date: October 2026**
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TBCS School Anti-Bullying Policy

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All children and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

As a Catholic school we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure environment free from oppression and abuse.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour and affects everyone. We believe that respect for individuals and positive relationships between all members of our school community are central to its wellbeing.

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti – discrimination laws with a single Act. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 give teachers stronger powers to tackle cyber – bullying by providing a specific power to search for and if necessary, delete inappropriate images or files on electronic devices, including mobile phones. Criminal law does not specify bullying as a criminal offence in the UK, however it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications; could be a criminal offence for example under the Protection from Harassment 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986.

The school may need to seek assistance from the police if an incident is considered to be a criminal offence. All types of bullying are unacceptable at Thomas Becket Catholic School and will not be tolerated. Bullying is defined in full in *Appendix 1*

1. Aims

- To ensure a positive learning environment is created in which all stakeholders feel safe.
- To encourage an ethos of respect and support for all.
- To raise awareness of what is considered bullying behaviour and ensure that students are equipped with the skills to deal confidently and positively with incidents of bullying if they occur.
- To engage with all members of the TBCS school community to ensure that we create a learning environment in which bullying will not be tolerated.
- To update and review our practices regularly, informing parents of any changes made to our anti-bullying policies or procedures, and signposting them to any useful resources.

2. Defining Bullying

Bullying is defined as: "Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally" (DfE definition).

Types of Bullying:

- **Verbal Bullying:** Involves name-calling or using written notes, e-mails, or mobile phone messages, pictures, or video clips (cyberbullying); this may include threats of physical violence, racist insults or threats, sexual insults or threats, or other prejudice-based behaviour.

- **Physical Bullying:** Consists of deliberate jostling, bumping, pushing, shoving, or sexual touching. This type of bullying may involve theft or damage to property, accompanied by the threat of violence.
- **Indirect Bullying:** Involves the manipulation of social networks with the intention of belittling an individual or individuals or excluding them from their friends and normal relationships; this can involve spreading rumours or making malicious accusations and might include cyberbullying.
- **Cyber Bullying:** The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) includes clear statements about e-communications, and assemblies highlight cyberbullying and CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection).

Other forms of bullying include:

- Homophobic/Biphobic/Transphobic (any incident which is perceived by the victim as being the result of negative attitudes towards an individual's sexuality.)
- Sexist (any incident which is perceived by the victim as being the result of sexist attitudes of the perpetrator)
- SEN/Disability (any incident which is perceived by the victim as being the result of their SEN or disability).
- Racism (any incident which is perceived by the victim as being the result of racial identity.

3. Recognising the signs

Someone who is bullied may:

- Be frightened of walking to and from school
- Insist on being driven to school
- Be unwilling to go to school
- Regularly have books or clothes damaged
- Have possessions "go missing"
- Continually "lose money"
- Begin doing badly in schoolwork
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches etc.
- Ask for money or begin stealing money
- Become withdrawn
- Have noticeable and prolonged changes in mood
- Become distressed/bad tempered
- Have loss of appetite
- Attempt or threaten to harm themselves

4. Procedures for Reporting Bullying Incidents

All students are encouraged to report bullying incidents. Incidents will be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

Steps for Reporting:

- **Staff Responsibility:** Staff should reassure the young person that their concerns are being taken seriously and will be investigated.
- **Avoid Labels:** Avoid labelling students as 'a bully' or 'a victim' to support rebuilding self-image and esteem.
- **Referral:** Staff should contact the relevant Head of Year (HOY) or Pastoral Support Officer (PSO) as soon as possible with details of the incident.

Investigation Procedure:

- The HOY/PSO will record the incident details on our Classcharts (CC) system and Myconcern.
- Appropriate students will be interviewed by the HOY/PSO, and statements will be taken and stored safely.
- Details of all actions taken will be recorded on our incident log
- Follow-up monitoring by the HOY/PSO, until satisfied that the issue have been resolved
- Parents of both parties will be contacted and updated on progress
- Take any appropriate disciplinary action and refer to senior leadership if necessary
- Work with pupils, parents/carers and other staff to support those involved and prevent further instances

5. Child-on-Child Abuse

Our school is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment for all students. Child-on-child abuse, including bullying, physical abuse, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and the sharing of inappropriate images, will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Definitions and Recognition

Child-on-child abuse can take many forms, including but not limited to:

Bullying: Physical, verbal, or psychological intimidation and harassment, including cyberbullying.

Physical Abuse: Hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or any other physical harm.

Sexual Violence: Rape, assault by penetration, or other forms of sexual assault.

Sexual Harassment: Unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual comments, jokes, or online harassment.

Sharing of Inappropriate Images: Consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos (also known as sexting).

Reporting and Response

All incidents of child-on-child abuse will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. Students are encouraged to report any concerns to a trusted adult, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), or through the school's anonymous reporting systems.

Support and Intervention

Upon reporting, the school will:

- Provide immediate support to the victim, ensuring their safety and well-being.
- Conduct a thorough investigation, involving external agencies such as social services or the police when necessary.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary measures for the perpetrator, while considering their needs and ensuring they receive appropriate support.

Preventive Measures

The school will:

- Educate students on respectful behaviors and the impact of abuse.
- Provide regular training for staff on recognising and responding to child-on-child abuse.
- Promote a culture of zero tolerance towards any form of abuse.

For more detailed information and procedures, please refer to our Safeguarding Policy.

6. Roles

All members of Staff should deal with any incident of suspected or observed bullying by:

- Talking to the pupil and giving reassurance
- Taking appropriate action at the time
- Producing a written statement of what has happened, and the action taken
- Reporting the incident to the Head of Year

Head of Year (HOY):

- Provide advice, support, and assistance to any student who reports bullying.
- Accept referrals from staff concerning students causing concern.
- Ensure bullying is a standing item in weekly meetings.
- Use restorative practice strategies where appropriate.
- Assign trained anti-bullying ambassadors to support involved students.
- Refer vulnerable students to appropriate services, e.g. counselling.
- Promote the anti-bullying strategy via assemblies, displays, and awareness campaigns.

Senior Leadership Team (SLT):

- Respond to student and parent feedback to review and amend anti-bullying practices.
- Monitor, review, and update the anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure all staff understand and implement the anti-bullying policy.
- Strive to enhance safeguarding work related to bullying.
- Formally consult parents about their child's safety and well-being annually.

Governors:

- Ensure an anti-bullying policy is in place and reviewed annually.
- Ensure serious bullying incidents are communicated in termly governors' reports.

Parents and Carers:

- Promote a social conscience and awareness in their child about reporting bullying.
- Support the academy's anti-bullying policy and actions.
- Work with the academy to support their child in responding positively to bullying incidents.
- Engage in the Early Help process if wider support is required.
- Monitor their child's e-communication and social media use.
- Encourage him/her to talk about the problem
- Reassure him/her of your support
- Try to listen calmly and not overreact
- Attempt to find out where and when the bullying takes place. Is there a pattern?
- Contact the Head of Year to discuss the problem
- Work with the Head of Year to support your child within or outside school
- If the bullying takes place outside school consider reporting the matter to the police

7. Appeals Process for Bullying Incidents

The academy will work with parents and students to ensure incidents of bullying are resolved satisfactorily. If an agreement cannot be reached, the matter may be addressed through the formal complaints procedure detailed on our website.

8. Promoting the Anti-Bullying Policy, Culture, and Ethos

TBCS School promotes the anti-bullying policy and develops a culture that supports tackling bullying through:

- Within the curriculum Thomas Becket Catholic School will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through inclusion in PHSE, tutorial time, assemblies, Youtube videos and subject areas, as appropriate.
- Conducting cyber bullying mentors/anti-bullying week activities with ambassadors promoting the anti-bullying message throughout the community.

9. Scope and Applicability

This policy applies to all students, staff, parents, and visitors within the school community. It covers behaviour on school premises, during school trips, and in online interactions related to the school.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school and will be used in conjunction with our Behaviour Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

10. Training and Education

- Ongoing training for staff, students, and parents on recognising, preventing, and responding to bullying.
- Professional development for staff on handling bullying incidents effectively.

11. Support Services

- Counselling and peer support groups for victims and perpetrators of bullying.
- Referrals to external agencies for additional support.

12. Record-Keeping and Confidentiality

- Maintain records of bullying incidents.
- Ensure confidentiality of all parties involved.
- Share information with external parties only when necessary and appropriate.

13. Legal Framework

- Adhere to national legislation and guidelines related to anti-bullying.

14. Data Monitoring and Evaluation

- Collect and analyse data on bullying incidents.
- Regularly review the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- Make adjustments based on data and feedback.

15. Community Involvement

- Engage local organisations and authorities in supporting the anti-bullying policy.
- Foster partnerships with community groups to enhance anti-bullying efforts.

16. Consequences

- Giving a verbal or written apology
- Placed on report
- Detention
- Internal exclusion
- Fixed term external suspension
- Permanent exclusion

17 Advice for Students

- If you are being bullied:
- Tell someone you trust
- Try to ignore the bully
- Try not to show that you are upset
- If possible, avoid being alone in the places the bullying takes place
- Try to be assertive
- Walk away quickly and confidently, even if you do not feel that way inside
- Your safety is more important than your possessions. If you are in danger do not hold on to them.
- Be proud of who you are.

18 Advice for Peers

- Listen and talk it through
- Try to be sensitive
- Try not to leave them on their own
- Persuade them to talk to an adult bystander
- Even if you do not take part in the bullying but see it and walk away, you are ignoring your responsibilities.
- Get help
- Give sympathy to the person being bullied