

St Dominic's School Anti-Bullying Policy

<i>Written by:</i>	St Dominic's Engagement Team
<i>Reviewed by:</i>	Julian Short, Chair of Governors
<i>Date of last review:</i>	31/01/2023
<i>Date of next review:</i>	31/01/2024

Our school commitment

St Dominic's School is fully committed to preventing and tackling bullying. Bullying is a deliberate, harmful and divisive act or set of behaviours which can have serious and far-reaching effects on those who experience it, whether 'victim' or 'perpetrator'. At St Dominic's School we work proactively with pupils/students, staff and families to educate our young people about bullying, to address and rectify bullying or concerns about bullying wherever we find them, and to support all members of the school community to feel safe, valued and respected.

Ethos and values

At St Dominic's School we are committed to safeguarding and nurturing our pupils/students so that they are able to achieve ambitious academic outcomes and build healthy and fulfilling lives.

Our Mission

We are a school for children and young people with complex needs. We specialise in giving everyone a pathway to achieve ambitious goals and live life to the full.

Our Ethos

Our ethos is shaped by our six core values: I am me, I matter, I am unique, I belong, I am safe and I am prepared. We aspire to these values through our individual and collective behaviour.

I am me : We provide a needs-led curriculum that focuses on the individual's qualities, interests and developmental needs and enhances and supports confidence in academic subjects.

I matter : We are a pupil-centred school, listening to and valuing the views of pupils, students, staff and families and enable them to participate in decision making.

I am unique : We accept, celebrate and understand our unique identities and support individuals to flourish.

I belong : We are a team that respect and value each other and what we can achieve in partnership with families, communities and professionals.

I am safe : We protect pupils and students through a culture of trust in which everyone is supported to be responsible, make safe choices and take safe risks.

I am prepared : Everything we do is to inspire, empower and secure positive outcomes for all pupils and students so that they can take the next steps into the wider world equipped to achieve their potential and live life to the full.

Our staff, pupils and students and stakeholders will be engaged through a positive culture of commitment, respecting every child's unique journey, in order to achieve our strategic aims set for 2026 and beyond.

Our definition of bullying

Bullying is a particular type of unacceptable behaviour. It is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally. We acknowledge that bullying has no time limit and can be short term or can happen over long periods of time.

We work with our pupils/students to understand that bullying is **Several Times On Purpose**. We use the acronym **STOP**.

St Dominic's School views bullying as anti-social behaviour which is never acceptable. **No person has the right to deliberately make another feel uncomfortable or unhappy.**

Bullying can be:

<i>Emotional</i>	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (eg hiding books, threatening gestures).
<i>Physical</i>	Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence; invasive, hurtful or threatening physical contact.
<i>Verbal</i>	Teasing, name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours.
<i>Written</i>	Letters, notes, texts, graffiti.
<i>Cyber</i>	All areas of online life, such as email and chat room misuse. Harassment, shaming, threats or persecution via social media Mobile threats by text messaging and calls. Misuse of associated technology eg camera and video facilities, iPad, games consoles. Making and/or sharing images with the intent to threaten or harm – this includes the non-consensual making/sharing of sexually explicit imagery.

Bullying can happen to anyone, but can often be specifically:

- Racist – ethnicity, skin colour, language, religious or cultural practices.
- Homophobic/transphobic – discrimination based on actual or perceived sexuality and/or gender identity.
- Sexual – unwelcome sexual advances or remarks that cause offence, humiliation or intimidation, including pressure to send images of a sexual nature; unwanted physical contact, intimidation, coercion; sexually abusive language, imagery or graffiti.
- Disablist – discrimination based on actual or perceived special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- 'Difference' – discrimination based on any real or perceived difference eg dress, hobbies and interests, family set up, social behaviour.
- Faith-based – discrimination based on matters relating to religious ideology, belief or creed.

Bullying can also form part of, or turn into, child on child abuse. St Dominic's School staff are trained to understand how to recognise and respond to both bullying and child on child abuse, and are vigilant in observing the dynamics between pupils/students and reporting any concerns immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Understanding bullying behaviour

Bullying takes place where there is an imbalance of power of bully over victim. This can be achieved by:

- Size and/or strength.
- The numbers or group size involved.
- Anonymity – through the use of cyber bullying (using email, social networking sites, texts, etc).
- The level of cognition, confidence, or emotional maturity of students.
- SEND needs of pupils/students.
- Hierarchy of staff.

At St Dominic's School we are vigilant about bullying and approach this in the same way as any other category of safeguarding. We do not wait to be told before raising concerns or dealing directly with the matter.

Pupils/students may not recognise, or not be able to articulate, that they are being bullied, or that their own behaviour may be seen by someone else as bullying. Our staff know our pupils/students well and are able to identify those who may be at risk of being bullied. We monitor behaviour logs to ensure we track patterns of behaviour which can cause concern. We are also alert to the dynamics within and between groups of peers, and will take action if harmful imbalances of power are developing.

Bullying and keeping children safe

St Dominic's School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. We ensure that consistent and effective safeguarding procedures and policies are in place to support pupils/students and staff at school and follow the guidance of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

This anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with our Child Protection Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy, as well as our Safeguarding & Wellbeing Offer which details the specific work, both proactive and reactive, that we undertake to ensure that our pupils/students are able to learn and thrive in a safe and supportive environment. These documents can be found on our website:

https://stdominicsschool.org.uk/about_us/safeguarding/

Bullying and discrimination

St Dominic's School is an all through special school for pupils/students whose Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) have identified ASC as their primary area of need. As such, we work closely to the guidelines laid out in the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that all of our pupils/students are treated fairly and in accordance with their individual learning needs.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

St Dominic's School aims to eliminate any discrimination or harassment on grounds of disability, race, religious belief, gender, pregnancy, or sexuality. The curriculum and restorative approaches used ensure that this type of behaviour is clearly explained to children and young people. Actions taken to promote inclusion and diversity in our community include running a Girls' Club, having equality champions and safeguarding ambassadors and holding debates. Where required, St Dominic's School will also liaise with outside agencies, including the police, to support the pupils and students in understanding the significance of discriminatory behaviour.

Stopping bullying wherever it takes place

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, corridors, on the journey to and from school, and in online forums. It can take place during school time, out of school while on residential visits, day visits, in group activities, and between families in the local community.

At St Dominic's School we consult with pupils/students via Student Voice to understand where and when they feel safe/unsafe, in order to ensure that there are robust and responsive processes in place.

Preventing bullying

St Dominic's School seeks to prevent bullying through:

- Staff training
- Student voice
- Curriculum – PSHE, e-safety
- Staff/student discussions – assemblies, themed days/weeks
- School values
- Reflective/restorative approach
- Worries and Concerns procedure
- Parent engagement
- Zero tolerance for abusive or offensive language
- Interventions
- Pastoral panel
- Close work with families
- Liaising with outside agencies

St Dominic's School's pupils/students are encouraged to think about and understand bullying through such opportunities as Student Voice, e-safety sessions, assemblies, PSHE lessons, Anti-Bullying Week, additional responsibilities and school policy writing.

Our school's ethos and working philosophy means that all staff actively encourage pupils/students to have respect for themselves, each other and their environment. Behaviour which, for example, 'shows how others are feeling', or 'cares for others' is consistently acknowledged.

Pupils/students are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate. Methods may include:

- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters that bullying is dealt with quickly.
- Discussions at Student Voice meetings.
- Restorative, reparation, and empathy developing work with pupils/students, eg using comic strip conversations to develop understanding.
- Assemblies around our school values.
- Engagement in PSHE curriculum.

St Dominic's School has a 'Pupil and Student complaints poster, to support our pupils/students in raising any complaint or concern. This can be found in classrooms and communal areas of the school. Pupils and students can also access Tootoot, which is an online platform where they can report anything from bullying to a mental health concern. These concerns are sent straight to the DSL and DDSL who ensure that they are heard and acted upon.

Staff regularly discuss bullying, creating an atmosphere of openness and building confidence among pupils/students to discuss bullying with the aim of them being equipped to identify and report bullying.

Expectations around behaviour are regularly reinforced by staff, as is the school's ethos of mutual respect and tolerance.

Reporting bullying

At St Dominic's School all members of the community can and are encouraged to report bullying. Steps include:

- A clear reporting structure, including reporting on Sleuth or to the relevant tutor or Head of School.
- A transparent complaints procedure.
- Displaying photos and names of staff that can help.
- Encouraging and supporting pupils/students to be alerted to bullying behaviour and be there to help other pupils/students using the SCP target 'Show Support'.
- Alternative reporting routes such as worry boxes in classrooms and online systems, eg Tootoot, and Student Voice.

- A clear system for recording bullying incidents and the actions that have been taken to resolve the situation using Sleuth and/or MyConcern.

If a pupil/student or parent has a concern they should contact the school immediately.

Designated Safeguarding Lead: Kirsty Glaysher

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: Vicky Perry & David Clarke

Assistant DSL: Jo Clayton

Safeguarding Team: Emily Rackstraw, Mary Broughton, Steph Chown, Nina Clarke, Lucy Douglas, Amme Pryor, Sam Francis, Carolyn Nesbit, Libby Snelgrove, Alex Pryor, Charlie Connor

Please see our Child Protection, Adult Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer for further details which are on the Safeguarding page of our website: https://stdominicsschool.org.uk/about_us/safeguarding/

Responding to bullying

St Dominic's School responds to bullying by:

- Ensuring all involved are safe.
- Liaising with families.
- Sanctions/restorative approaches in line with behaviour policy and other relevant policies/procedures.
- Possible involvement of external agencies (police, child protection, etc).
- Support for both 'victim' and 'perpetrator' – understanding the behaviour and its impact, building self-esteem, therapeutic input.
- Whole school actions where specific issues are identified eg initiatives to educate about hate crime and further staff training where necessary

Where bullying is identified, our primary aim is to ensure that all pupils/students are safe. St Dominic's School staff will take a twofold approach to resolving the issue: addressing the behaviour which has already taken place, and deploying strategies to change the behaviour so that bullying does not recur. This work will be completed with both sets of parents/carers' knowledge and support.

Measures to address the behaviour that has already taken place will be in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy and Behaviour Procedures, and proportionate to the behaviour. They will always include some form of restorative approach. Depending on the situation, sanctions such as removal of privileges or suspension may be deployed as part of the overall approach. Any suspensions will be determined in line with the Suspensions Policy.

Where criminal behaviour is suspected or confirmed to have occurred as part of the bullying incident, the Police/Safer Schools' Police Officer will be informed.

We may deploy a range of strategies to help those who display bullying behaviour to understand and change their behaviour and restore rapport with those being bullied. Strategies include:

- Restorative justice. Our Engagement Team have refined current sanctions for low level behaviours into a Tiered Response which ensures there are logical and appropriate sanctions for frequently occurring behaviours, and 'reframed' detention to ensure it has a clear reflective and restorative purpose (see Appendix 1 : Tiers of Response).
- Counselling/mediation
- Peer support systems eg assigning a Buddy
- Input from our Engagement team
- Therapeutic interventions eg play therapy
- Modification of curriculum

Any reports of bullying behaviour by St Dominic's School pupils/students outside of school will be investigated by school staff. If appropriate, action may be taken as above.

All policies are available from the Policies page of our website:
<https://stdominicsschool.org.uk/key-information/policies/>

Measuring progress

St Dominic's School measures progress and impact of these by utilising the following

- Pupil/student input – surveys, Student Voice.
- Parent/carer surveys.
- Reviewing data – trends, actions, effective follow up – EDI data.
- Reporting to governors, CEO monitoring, termly safeguarding audit.

Communicating the policy

- This policy is shared with pupils/students via assemblies, tutor time activities and themed days.
- Staff are given dedicated CPD sessions to ensure that they understand their roles and responsibilities around preventing and reporting bullying.
- Parents/carers and other stakeholders have access to this policy via our website.

APPENDIX 1 : TIERS OF RESPONSE

Tier 1 Response : Restoration

- Given by the member of staff in the lesson/unstructured time (eg break or lunchtime) the issue occurred
- The focus is on discussing and reflecting on the issue so that the risk of recurrence is mitigated as far as it can be. Expectations are reset and rapport rebuilt.

Family informed in tutor communication

Tier 2 Response: (During Lesson 5 on a Friday)

1. Catch Up
2. Repair to environment – when there has been significant, malicious damage to property/vandalism, to either repair damage or 'pay it back' by completing jobs from a list.
3. Awareness courses - specific reflections for issues around discrimination and bullying to enable pupils/students to understand the consequences of their actions and comply to social norms and expectations.
4. Level 2 Reflection - a longer reflection with a senior or middle leader

Family informed by Head of School

Tier 3 Response

If an issue continues to persist despite the interventions in the first 2 Tiers of Response, referral to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) may be necessary, at which stage the pupil/student's family will be invited to attend a meeting in school to outline key actions and expectations. If appropriate, a suspension risk assessment will be completed.

Family informed by a member of the SLT.