

## I. INTRODUCTION

This policy is to ensure that bullying at school is prevented, in so far as reasonably practicable, by the implementation of an effective anti-bullying strategy.

### WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time or a single incident that it intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, age, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, perceived differences or prejudice-based bullying because of protected characteristics as set out in the 2010 Equalities Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation). Bullying may take many forms; it may occur directly or indirectly through cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email).

We believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. Holy Cross is a well-disciplined school where we believe that bullying of any kind is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The school policy is to promote this belief so pupils, parents and teachers are fully aware that if there are any indications of bullying, action will be taken immediately as a community. All concerns or suspected cases will be dealt with promptly, sensitively, fairly and firmly.

*Bullying is an interaction that establishes group identity, dominance and status at the expense of another. It is only by the development of "higher values" such as empathy, consideration and unselfishness that the bully is likely to relinquish their behaviour and function differently in a social setting.*

*(G. Robinson and B. Maines)*

At Holy Cross, we strive to be a school where adults and children respect other people whatever their age; disability; gender reassignment; race, religion or belief; sexual orientation. Bullying on the basis of protected characteristics is taken particularly seriously.

No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. It has a serious impact both physically and emotionally (which may cause psychological damage) and it must be dealt with swiftly, firmly and fairly. Everybody has the right to individual liberty and mutual respect. Everyone has the responsibility to behave with tolerance towards those with different faiths and beliefs, in keeping with our fundamental British values, including respect for democracy. At Holy Cross we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all.

Peer-on-peer abuse includes, but is not limited to, physical and sexual abuse, sexual harassment and violence, emotional harm or on and offline bullying. Peer on peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously; abuse should never be tolerated or passed off as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up';

Bullying affects the whole community, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects less assertive pupils who can be drawn in by group pressure and those children who witness bullying (bystanders). It also affects the parents and teachers.

All parties (staff, parents and pupils) have a responsibility to be vigilant against bullying behaviour and to be clear about the part they can play to prevent bullying whether physical, verbal,

emotional/psychological or cyber (including sexting). This also applies when they find themselves as bystanders. All parties must be active in supporting this policy when repairing and rebuilding relationships in the Holy Cross Way.

## 2. PROCEDURES AND CONSEQUENCES

When bullying (physical, verbal, emotional or cyber - Appendix 1) has been observed or reported the following steps are taken by a senior member of staff. The senior member of staff and the class teacher will work together through the following stages. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is always the school's first priority. Notes must be made at each stage to provide a record on the Serious Pupil Misbehaviour and Bullying Register (refer to Complaints Policy which deals with the handling of complaints by parents of bullying).

Holy Cross Preparatory School will ensure that appropriate measures are put in place to safeguard and support the victim, the alleged perpetrator and the school community. See below.

### Investigation – fact finding

1. Interview with the victim to find out details of the incident, including who was involved, bystanders and **how the victim was made to feel**. (What happened? How did you feel? How do you think the other person felt? Why do you think they behaved this way?).
2. Interview all individuals separately to understand the nature of the incident from different points of view. (What happened? How did you feel? **How do you think the other person felt?** Why do you think it happened?).
3. Complete the bullying incident pro-forma to record the investigation – appendix 3.

Staff will need to judge the seriousness of behaviour, based on their assessment of the situation, in order to decide how to proceed. Steps must be taken to ensure that the victim feels safe again.

At this stage a decision is made whether to inform the parents/guardians and whether disciplinary sanctions are to be enforced. Disciplinary sanctions reflect the seriousness of the incident so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.

### Safeguarding Children and Young People

Under the Children Act 1989 a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. It would be an expectation that in the event of disclosures about pupil on pupil abuse, all children involved whether perpetrator or victim are treated as being at risk. Where this is the case, the school should report their concerns to their local authority children's services department or the police. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying.

Please refer to the School's Keeping Children Safe Policy. The following steps are a guide to an approach to bullying which is in the spirit of the Holy Cross Way and enables relationships to be rebuilt and restored.

### Reflection and restoration – show empathy with the victim

4. Meet with those involved as a group including the victim should they wish to attend. Remind them of the Holy Cross Way of behaviour and the shared responsibility of being a member of the Holy Cross family. Recount the incident. Discuss with the group the impact of their behaviour on the victim (or the victim can share their feelings). Encourage

the group to further reflect and empathise with the victim. Encourage the group to find solutions to address immediate feelings and find a way forward together, giving them the responsibility to support their peers. The teacher may offer suggestions for the group to adopt where necessary.

5. If sanctions are to be enforced pupils and parents are informed at this stage. These depend on the nature of the incident and the pupil's role. Sanctions could include missing playtime or trip, being relieved of a role of responsibility e.g., sport's team.
6. In the most serious and persistent cases temporary or permanent exclusion of the perpetrator may be necessary, particularly if violence is involved.

### Monitoring the incident

7. Any incident involving serious pupil misbehaviour and bullying and resulting in significant sanctions, is to be logged on the register of serious pupil misbehaviour kept by the Head of Pre-prep, the Head of the Junior Department and Assistant Head. This includes exclusions, major detentions and sanctions, as well as disciplinary meetings involving parents. The register includes the pupil's name and year group, the nature of the offence and the sanction imposed. This register is monitored by the Head of the Pre-prep and the Head of the Junior Department in order to identify any patterns which would need to be addressed.
8. After the incident/incidents have been investigated and sanctions enforced where necessary, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. As well as short term monitoring, staff will review over two or three months whether the action taken has prevented the recurrence of the bullying and ensured that the pupil feels safe again.
9. In class the bystanders should be encouraged to consult with a trusted adult when they feel that they are witnessing bullying behaviour. They must not feel that they are telling tales but they are taking the responsibility to support their peers in the Holy Cross Way.

### STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS

#### 4.1 Prevention

Holy Cross has an ethos of good behaviour (knowing right from wrong) where pupils behave with respect, tolerance and harmony, towards everyone, including school staff, the wider community and all cultures. They know what is right and wrong and that they must accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how their behaviour impacts on others, whether positively or negatively, in school and beyond appreciating all cultures. Values of respect for staff and other pupils, an understanding of the value of education, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole school environment and are reinforced by staff and older pupils who set a good example to the rest. We call this the Holy Cross Way.

The school's response to bullying does not start at the point at which a child has been bullied. Our school ethos and aims develop a caring community; a strong sense of responsibility, co-operation and tolerance based on an awareness of the needs of others.

The school curriculum actively encourages a sense of community and responsibility to support the school aims. This is taught through religious education (RE), personal social health and economic education (PSHE Ed), relationship and sex education (RSE), assemblies, masses, services, drama, literature, role-play, discussion and circle-time.

**All pupils have a role in preventing bullying. They are encouraged to seek out and inform an adult immediately in person if they feel uncomfortable about how another child is being treated. They may be witnessing bullying and must take action. Watching and doing nothing is supporting the bully.**

School staff are encouraged to proactively gather intelligence about issues between pupils which might provoke conflict and develop strategies to prevent bullying occurring in the first place; and talking to pupils about issues of difference through the curriculum.

### **4.2 Early signs and symptoms or behaviour that a pupil is being bullied.**

Watch for early signs and symptoms or behaviour that a pupil is being bullied e.g. of distress, deterioration of work, spurious illness, isolation, desire to stay with adults, erratic attendance, withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence, has possessions that are damaged or 'go missing', stops eating, becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable, is bullying other children or siblings, gives improbable excuses for any of these indicators. These could be a sign of other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated. Concerns should be recorded on the R-Drive and addressed under children of concern at meetings by completing an internal early help request form and on the children of concern list emailed to staff.

### **4.3 Bullying outside school premises**

School staff members have the power to discipline pupils for misbehaving outside the school premises "to such an extent as is reasonable". This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the school premises, such as on school or public transport, outside the local shops, or in a town or village centre and pupils are expected to show knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services.

Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it should be investigated and acted on. The headteacher should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in their local authority of the action taken against a pupil. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police should always be informed.

In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, the staff member can only discipline the pupil on school premises or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the staff member, for instance, on an educational visit. More detailed advice on teachers' powers to discipline, including their power to punish pupils for misbehaviour that occurs outside school, is included in 'Behaviour and Discipline in Schools – advice for headteachers and school staff' – see further sources of information below.

## **3. TRAINING**

Through training, staff awareness is raised so that:

- the principles of the school policy are understood including the needs of pupils and their families with protected characteristics (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation) and special educational needs
- legal responsibilities are known
- strategies are defined to resolve and prevent bullying problems using the school spirit of the Holy Cross Way
- sources of support are identified, e.g. elements of the PSHE Education curriculum, the computing digital literacy curriculum, assemblies, circle time and pastoral support

### 4. REVIEW

New staff are trained through the induction process. Further staff training takes place as part of regular CPD.

This is a public policy which is published on the school website and is reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees.

Last reviewed November 2025. Next review November 2026.

**References:** DfE Preventing and tackling bullying – Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies July 2017

### Appendix I

#### WHAT IS BULLYING? *[Source is preventing and tackling bullying DfE July 2017]*

Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online.

Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour.

School reminds pupils what is right and wrong, both on an everyday level and with regard to the civil and criminal law of England governing all of the following areas, bearing in mind the age of criminal responsibility.

It includes:

- **PHYSICAL:** pushing, punching, kicking, hitting, spitting or any use of violence.
- **VERBAL:** verbal abuse can take the form of name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours or teasing. It may be directed towards ethnic origin, physical/social disability, physical appearance, gender, sexual orientation, or personality.
- **EMOTIONAL:** being unfriendly. A child can be bullied by being excluded from discussions or activities, with their peers or those they believe to be friends; tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures or mimicking). Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen. Physical threats may be used by the bully in order that the pupil hands over property to them.
- **CYBER:** Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, which can occur in or outside school, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click. All areas of the internet, e.g. email and internet chat room misuse; via instant messenger services and social network sites; via images or videos posted on the internet or spread via mobile phone plus threats by text messaging. Misuse of associated technology i.e., camera and video facilities. Technology can be used to bully in the forms of any mentioned below. (Our E-safety co-ordinator is our computing co-ordinator.) 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.

#### Other specific types of bullying include:

- Bullying related to **race, religion or culture**. Research shows that a high proportion of bullied pupils have experienced racist or faith-based bullying.
- Bullying related to **special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)**. Children with SEND are more at risk than their peers and do not always have the levels of social confidence and competence and the robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying.
- Bullying related to **appearance or health conditions** e.g., those that are visible, such as eczema, may be more likely to become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size and weight and other body image issues can result in bullying.

- Bullying related to **sexual orientation**. Homophobic bullying is perhaps the least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying.
- Bullying of **young carers or looked-after children** or otherwise related to home circumstances. Children may be made vulnerable to bullying by the fact that they provide care to someone in their family with an illness, disability, mental health or substance misuse problem.
- **Sexist or sexual bullying**. Sexual bullying may be characterised by name calling, comments and overt 'looks' about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. Bullying can seriously damage a young person's confidence and sense of self-worth causing them to feel that they are at fault in some way. It can lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage for an individual. Those who conduct the bullying or witness the bullying can also experience emotional harm and the impact on staff and parents could be significant.
- Bullying related to **self-esteem** that counteracts the school's active development of their self-esteem, self-knowledge and self-confidence.

### WHO ARE THE BULLIES?

People who: are trying to get attention; may be having problems at home; have been victims of being bullied; think they will impress others; wish to be in a situation of power or control over others. They enjoy the power; are insecure; are prejudiced; are jealous; may be emotionally neglected. This list is not exhaustive.

### The Occasional Bully

The occasional bully is harder to recognise and can display kinder aspects of their character, but they resort to bullying at times. These bullies are difficult to classify because the bullying behaviour is not consistent and is often precipitated by some sort of crisis or by the bully 'having a bad day'.

These children and young people can also be quite charming, but often they: are suddenly aggressive to peers, parents, teachers and siblings; act impulsively and regret it later; don't learn from their mistakes; wish to be in charge; may be physically strong; may be articulate; may be manipulative; may display other anti-social behaviours, such as throwing tantrums or yelling when things go wrong; may, on the whole, have good self-esteem; may be over indulged – parents cannot understand how their children could be bullying others because they are perfect at home where their every wish is granted. These are characteristics we often find in children who bully occasionally. Their self-esteem can be quite high, and they may well be overly indulged.



### Appendix 2

#### **THE LAW** [Source is preventing and tackling bullying DfE July 2017]

##### **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 and Equality Duty 2011 covers age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Part 6 of the Act makes it unlawful for the responsible body of a school to discriminate against, harass or victimise a pupil or potential pupil in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for pupils, provision of pupil access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a pupil or subjecting them to any other detriment.

##### **Criminal Law**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, 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 Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication 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, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient



## Appendix 3

### Bullying Incident Pro forma

#### SUMMARY OF BULLYING INCIDENT

Date:
Location:
Individuals involved and class
1. Summary of incident.
2. Relevant history.

#### INVESTIGATION – fact finding

1. Interview with victim to find out details including who was involved, bystanders, how the victim felt, why they behaved this way. (What happened? How did you feel? How do you think the other person felt? Why do you think they behaved this way?)
2. Interview other individuals separately to understand the nature of the incident from different points of view. (What happened? How did you feel? How do you think the other person felt? Why do you think it happened?)
3. Interview with bully to find out details including who was involved, why they behaved this way, how the victim felt, how they felt.
4. Staff judgement of the seriousness of behaviour and how to proceed.
5. Will disciplinary sanctions be enforced?
6. Will parents be informed?

## REFLECTION & RESTORATION - show empathy with the victim

1. Meet with those involved as a group (with the victim should they wish to attend) (Remind Holy Cross Way, shared responsibility of Holy Cross family. Recount the incident. Discuss impact of behaviour on victim - victim may share their feelings. Encourage group further reflection, empathy with victim. Encourage group to find solutions address immediate feelings and a way forward together, giving the group responsibility to support their peers. Teacher may offer suggestions).
2. Consider and plan actions needed to support the victim.
3. Consider and plan actions needed to support the bully.
4. Inform pupils of any sanctions.
5. Inform parents of any sanctions.

## MONITORING THE INCIDENT

1. Serious misbehaviour and bullying resulting in significant sanctions is logged on register of serious pupil misbehaviour by Head of Dept.
2. Short term monitoring.
3. 2/3 month review - consider whether actions have prevented recurrence of bullying and ensures pupil feels safe.