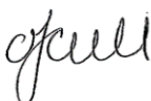
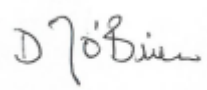




St Gabriel's RC High School

Anti Bullying Policy



Time of review: 1 st October 2026	Time of next review: 1 September 2027
Author: 	
Signed: _____ Date: 08/10/2026	
Headteacher: Mr Braithwaite 	
Signed: _____ Date: 3rd October 2026	
Approved by the Local Governing Body 	
Signed by Chair of Governors: _____ Date: 09/10/2026	



Our Mission Statement

At St Gabriel's, we are an **inclusive Catholic family** who embrace diverse identities, faiths and beliefs. We strive to use our God-given talents to **serve** others and to **succeed**. The Lord is our **strength**, which inspires us to make positive contributions to our school community and be valued members of our global society.

1. Statement of intent

1.1. St Gabriel's RC High School believes that every pupil has the right to learn, worship, participate and develop in a safe, respectful and supportive environment, free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, abuse and intimidation.

1.2. Our approach is rooted in our Catholic identity and mission. We believe that every human person is created **imago Dei**, in the image and likeness of God, and therefore possesses inherent dignity and worth. This dignity must be respected in every aspect of school life and is reflected in Catholic Social Teaching, particularly the dignity of the human person, solidarity, participation and the common good.

1.3. Our commitment to tackling bullying is therefore grounded in the teaching of Jesus Christ and the Greatest Commandment:

"Love thy neighbour as thyself."

1.4. Bullying, harassment, prejudice, discrimination, violence and abuse are contrary to our Catholic ethos and to our expectation that every member of the school community treats others with dignity, compassion, mercy, justice and respect.

1.5. The school adopts a **zero-tolerance approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse**. This means that bullying, harassment and abuse will never be dismissed, normalised or excused as "banter", "just having a laugh", "part of growing up" or "boys being boys". This does not mean that every incident will result in the same sanction; the school's response will be proportionate, child-centred, safeguarding-informed and consistent with the Behaviour Policy and relevant statutory guidance. KCSIE 2026 expressly requires schools to challenge child-on-child abuse and not allow such behaviour to be normalised.

1.6. The school recognises that bullying can have a serious and lasting impact on a pupil's emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance, educational attainment, relationships and sense of belonging. Serious bullying may constitute emotional abuse and may require a safeguarding response.

1.7. Bullying may occur:

- in school
- on school transport
- during school trips, residentials and other school activities
- before or after school
- in the local community
- through social media, messaging services, gaming platforms or other digital technologies
- entirely outside school where it affects the welfare, safety or education of pupils or the orderly operation of the school

1.8. The school recognises that online and offline behaviour are frequently interconnected. A bullying incident may therefore require consideration of both behavioural and safeguarding risks.

1.9. The school is committed to prevention as well as response. We will promote an inclusive Catholic culture in which difference is respected, discrimination is challenged, positive relationships are developed and pupils feel confident that they can report concerns and will be taken seriously.



1.10. This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. Where bullying involves a safeguarding concern, the safeguarding procedures take precedence.

2. Legal and policy framework

2.1 Legislation

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation, including, but not limited to:

- Education Act 2002, including section 175 safeguarding duties
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, particularly section 89, which requires measures to encourage good behaviour, respect for others and the prevention of all forms of bullying among pupils
- Education Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, where relevant provisions apply
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Public Order Act 1986
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Malicious Communications Act 1988, as amended
- Online Safety Act 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018
- UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data (Use and Access) Act 2025
- School Premises (England) Regulations 2012
- relevant regulations and statutory requirements relating to safeguarding, behaviour, exclusions and education

The school will keep this policy under review where legislation is amended or new legislation comes into force.

2.2 Statutory guidance and advice

This policy has regard to, in particular:

- **Department for Education, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026** – statutory guidance in force from 1 September 2026
- **Department for Education, Preventing and tackling bullying**; the DfE guidance was updated in July 2026
- **Department for Education, Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff**
- **Department for Education, Relationships, Sex and Health Education statutory guidance**, revised and in force from 1 September 2026
- **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**
- **Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people**, including guidance relevant to AI-generated material
- **Searching, screening and confiscation: guidance for schools**, relevant Department for Education guidance on online safety, data protection, attendance, suspension and exclusion.

2.3 Current safeguarding context

KCSIE 2026 states that child-on-child abuse includes, but is not limited to:

- bullying, including cyberbullying and prejudice-based/discriminatory bullying



- discriminatory behaviour, including racism and faith-targeted abuse
- abuse within intimate personal relationships between children
- physical abuse
- physical assault and threats involving weapons
- harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment
- consensual and non-consensual making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, including AI-generated material
- upskirting
- initiation/hazing violence and rituals

The school will therefore consider whether an incident reported as “bullying” may also constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern.

3. Definition of bullying

3.1. For the purposes of this policy, **bullying** is behaviour by an individual or group which deliberately or recklessly causes, or is intended to cause, physical, psychological, emotional, social or other harm to another pupil or group, and which may be repeated, form part of a pattern, or involve an actual or perceived imbalance of power.

3.2. Bullying commonly involves one or more of the following:

- **Repetition or pattern:** behaviour occurs repeatedly or forms part of an ongoing pattern
- **Intent or impact:** the behaviour is intended to cause harm, or has caused significant harm even where the perpetrator claims that harm was not intended
- **Targeting:** behaviour is directed towards a particular pupil, group or characteristic
- **Power imbalance:** there is an actual or perceived imbalance of power, which may be physical, social, emotional, financial, technological or related to status or group membership

3.3. These characteristics are helpful indicators but **are not separate tests that must all be satisfied** before the school takes action.

3.4. A single serious incident will not be disregarded simply because it does not meet a traditional definition of repeated bullying. A one-off incident may constitute serious misconduct, discriminatory harassment, sexual harassment, violence, harmful sexual behaviour, child-on-child abuse or a safeguarding concern and will be responded to accordingly.

3.5. Similarly, conflict between pupils, friendship difficulties, arguments and isolated incidents of unkind behaviour may not constitute bullying. They will nevertheless be addressed through the Behaviour Policy and, where appropriate, pastoral or safeguarding procedures.

3.6. The school will consider the **context, frequency, severity, impact, power dynamics, vulnerability, age and developmental stage** of the children involved when determining the appropriate response.

3.7. The school will not require a child to demonstrate that the behaviour has occurred a particular number of times before taking action.

4. Types of bullying and harmful behaviour

Bullying and harmful behaviour can take many forms and may overlap.

4.1 Verbal bullying

This may include:

- name-calling
- insults
- threats
- mocking
- humiliating comments
- repeated teasing



- offensive jokes
- derogatory language
- comments about appearance, accent, ability, family or background

4.2 Physical bullying

This may include:

- hitting
- kicking
- pushing
- punching
- tripping
- spitting
- damaging or taking possessions
- physical intimidation
- unwanted physical contact
- threats of physical harm

4.3 Emotional and psychological bullying

This may include:

- intimidation
- humiliation
- deliberately causing distress
- manipulation
- threatening or coercive behaviour
- persistent criticism
- spreading rumours
- deliberately undermining confidence
- controlling behaviour
- encouraging others to isolate a pupil

4.4 Relational and social bullying

This may include:

- deliberate exclusion
- social isolation
- ostracising a pupil
- manipulating friendship groups
- encouraging others not to associate with a pupil
- spreading rumours
- public humiliation
- creating or maintaining group chats for the purpose of excluding or humiliating someone

4.5 Cyberbullying and online abuse

Cyberbullying includes bullying or harmful behaviour undertaken through digital technology, including:

- social media
- messaging services
- group chats
- gaming platforms
- email
- websites
- video-sharing platforms
- livestreams



- anonymous accounts
- fake accounts
- AI-generated material
- digitally altered photographs, videos or audio
- online polls or campaigns intended to humiliate or target a pupil

Online abuse may take place outside school hours or on privately owned devices but may still require school action where it affects pupils, safeguarding, welfare, relationships or the orderly operation of the school.

KCSIE 2026 recognises that children may abuse other children online through abusive, harassing and misogynistic/misandrist messages, non-consensual sharing of intimate imagery and the sharing of abusive or pornographic material with children who do not want to receive it.

4.6 Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

The school will take particularly seriously behaviour motivated by prejudice or discrimination, including behaviour relating to:

- race
- ethnicity
- nationality
- religion or belief
- disability or SEND
- sex
- sexual orientation
- gender reassignment
- pregnancy or maternity
- social or economic background
- health or medical circumstances
- family circumstances
- caring responsibilities
- appearance
- language or accent
- perceived difference or vulnerability

The school recognises that prejudice-based harm may have significant effects on wellbeing, mental health and a child's willingness to seek help. KCSIE 2026 expects schools to recognise and challenge racism and other discriminatory behaviour as part of their safeguarding responsibilities.

4.7 Racist and faith-based bullying

This includes derogatory, hostile, intimidating or abusive behaviour based on race, ethnicity, nationality, colour, religion or belief.

Such behaviour may also amount to unlawful harassment, a public-order offence or a hate crime depending on the circumstances. The school will assess each case individually and will involve the police where appropriate.

4.8 Homophobic and biphobic bullying

This includes behaviour targeting a pupil because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, including derogatory language, harassment, exclusion, threats or online abuse.

4.9 Sexist bullying

This includes behaviour based on sex or sexist stereotypes, including:

- degrading comments
- gender-based insults
- objectification



- exclusion based on sex
- misogynistic or misandrist language
- harassment
- online abuse

4.10 Transphobic or gender-related bullying

This includes bullying or harassment directed at a pupil because of actual or perceived gender identity, gender expression or gender-related characteristics.

The school will respond in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, safeguarding duties, current DfE guidance and the school's wider equality and safeguarding policies.

4.11 Sexual bullying and sexual harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which can occur online or offline and may violate a child's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, offensive or sexualised environment. KCSIE 2026 states that sexual harassment can occur independently or as part of a broader pattern of abuse.

Examples include:

- sexual comments
- sexualised name-calling
- sexual jokes or taunting
- comments about someone's body, clothing or appearance
- unwanted sexual touching
- displaying sexual images
- upskirting
- unwanted sexual messages
- sexualised online bullying
- coercing someone to send an intimate image
- sharing unwanted explicit content
- threats or coercion of a sexual nature

All reports of sexual harassment will be taken seriously and considered under the safeguarding procedures.

4.12 Harmful sexual behaviour and sexual violence

Any allegation or concern involving harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence or sexual harassment will be referred immediately to the DSL or deputy DSL.

Such behaviour must not be dismissed as bullying, banter, experimentation or normal adolescent behaviour. KCSIE 2026 requires a safeguarding response to reports of harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment and sexual violence.

4.13 Bullying related to socioeconomic circumstances

This may include targeting a pupil because of:

- poverty or perceived poverty
- clothing
- possessions
- housing
- family income
- parental occupation
- access to technology
- free school meal status
- perceived social status

4.14 Bullying related to SEND, health or vulnerability



The school recognises that pupils with SEND, disabilities, health conditions, mental health needs and other vulnerabilities may face increased risk of bullying or abuse.

Staff must not assume that a change in behaviour or presentation is simply a consequence of SEND or another condition. Concerns must be explored and referred appropriately.

5. Vulnerability and additional safeguarding considerations

5.1. Any pupil may experience bullying or child-on-child abuse. The school recognises that some children may face increased vulnerability.

5.2. This may include pupils who:

- have SEND or an Education, Health and Care Plan
- have physical or mental health needs
- are disabled
- are young carers
- are disadvantaged
- are experiencing family difficulties
- are looked after or previously looked after
- have experienced abuse or trauma
- are affected by domestic abuse
- are experiencing difficulties with attendance
- are socially isolated
- are new to the school
- are perceived to be different from their peers
- are experiencing questioning or difficulties relating to identity
- have previously been involved in bullying or harmful behaviour

5.3. Vulnerability does not mean that a child is automatically a victim. It means that staff should maintain appropriate professional curiosity and consider whether additional support or safeguarding action is required.

5.4. KCSIE 2026 emphasises that safeguarding concerns should be approached from a child-centred perspective and that children with SEND, mental health needs and other vulnerabilities may require additional support.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body will:

- ensure that the school has an effective anti-bullying strategy
- ensure that the policy is consistent with statutory duties and the school's Catholic ethos
- ensure that bullying and discriminatory behaviour are appropriately monitored
- review relevant data and trends
- ensure that the policy is not discriminatory
- ensure that safeguarding implications are appropriately considered
- challenge school leaders where evidence indicates that bullying or harmful behaviour is not being addressed effectively
- receive appropriate reports on bullying, prejudice-based incidents and child-on-child abuse

6.2 Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure implementation of this policy
- ensure that bullying prevention is incorporated into the Behaviour Policy



- ensure that accessible systems exist for pupils to report concerns
- ensure appropriate recording and monitoring
- ensure that safeguarding concerns are referred to the DSL
- ensure that staff receive appropriate training
- ensure that parents/carers are appropriately informed
- report relevant trends and patterns to governors/local governors
- ensure that appropriate action is taken where behaviour occurs outside school
- ensure that the policy is reviewed following relevant legislative or guidance changes

6.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- provide strategic safeguarding oversight of child-on-child abuse
- ensure staff understand when bullying may constitute a safeguarding concern
- ensure reports involving sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, serious violence, threats, coercion or other abuse are managed through safeguarding procedures
- ensure concerns are recorded appropriately
- ensure referrals to children's social care, police or other agencies are made where required
- undertake or oversee risk and needs assessments where appropriate
- ensure appropriate support is provided to victims, alleged perpetrators and other affected pupils
- ensure safeguarding information is shared lawfully and on a need-to-know basis
- work with the SENCO, pastoral staff and other professionals where additional vulnerability is identified

KCSIE 2026 requires clear systems for children to report abuse, appropriate recording and investigation, and support for victims, alleged perpetrators and other affected children.

6.4 Deputy DSLs and pastoral leaders

They will:

- respond promptly to concerns
- ensure reports reach the appropriate safeguarding or pastoral route
- monitor pupils following incidents
- liaise with parents/carers where appropriate
- maintain accurate records
- identify patterns and recurring concerns
- ensure vulnerable pupils receive appropriate support

6.5 Teachers and support staff

All staff will:

- challenge bullying, harassment and discriminatory behaviour
- maintain awareness of pupil relationships and social dynamics
- take reports seriously
- avoid dismissing harmful behaviour as banter
- record and report concerns promptly
- refer safeguarding concerns to the DSL/deputy without delay
- provide appropriate immediate support
- maintain professional curiosity where behaviour or presentation changes
- contribute to a culture in which pupils feel safe to report concerns

KCSIE 2026 requires staff to act immediately on safeguarding concerns and report them to the DSL/deputy without delay.

6.6 Parents/carers



Parents/carers are expected to:

- inform the school promptly if they are concerned that their child is experiencing or displaying bullying
- provide relevant information or evidence
- encourage their child to report concerns
- support the school's efforts to resolve incidents
- avoid contacting or confronting another pupil or their family directly where this may escalate the situation
- work constructively with the school

6.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- treat others with dignity and respect
- report bullying, harassment, abuse or discriminatory behaviour
- report concerns about friends or other pupils
- use the school's Report and Support system where appropriate
- preserve evidence of online abuse where safe and appropriate
- not retaliate or encourage others to retaliate
- seek help from a trusted adult if they feel unsafe

Pupils will never be blamed for reporting bullying or safeguarding concerns.

7. Prevention

7.1. Prevention is central to the school's anti-bullying approach.

7.2. The school will promote:

- Catholic Social Teaching
- the dignity of every human person
- respect, compassion, mercy and forgiveness
- inclusion and belonging
- positive relationships
- emotional literacy
- resilience
- equality
- responsible digital citizenship
- respectful disagreement
- healthy relationships and boundaries

7.3. Anti-bullying education will be incorporated into:

- RSHE
- Personal Development
- Religious Education
- assemblies and liturgy
- tutor/form time
- curriculum teaching
- pastoral programmes
- online safety education
- enrichment and extracurricular activities

7.4. The revised RSHE statutory guidance came into force on 1 September 2026 and is relevant to the school's preventative education programme.

7.5. Preventative education will address, at an age- and developmentally appropriate level:



- healthy and respectful relationships
- kindness
- empathy
- boundaries
- consent
- prejudice and discrimination
- racism and faith-based prejudice
- sexism and misogyny/misandry
- homophobia and biphobia
- harmful stereotypes
- online safety
- cyberbullying
- digital citizenship
- social media
- image-sharing
- AI-generated and manipulated content
- pornography and its impact
- harmful online influences
- how to seek help
- how to report concerns

KCSIE 2026 specifically identifies a whole-school approach to tackling sexism, racism, misogyny/misandry, homophobia, biphobia, sexual violence/harassment, derogatory behaviour and physical violence, reinforced through evidence-based RSHE.

7.6. The school will use pupil voice, surveys, pastoral information and incident data to identify areas of concern.

7.7. The school will consider the physical environment and times when pupils may be more vulnerable, including corridors, toilets, changing areas, transport, lunch and break times and online spaces associated with school life.

7.8. Seating plans, supervision, movement around school and groupings will be adjusted where necessary to reduce risk.

7.9. Pupils identified as vulnerable may be offered additional pastoral support, trusted-adult arrangements, mentoring, buddying or other appropriate support.

7.10. Staff will receive appropriate safeguarding and anti-bullying training, including online safety. KCSIE 2026 requires safeguarding training at induction, regular updates and at least annual safeguarding updates.

8. Reporting bullying and safeguarding concerns

8.1. Pupils can report concerns to:

- any trusted member of staff
- their Form Tutor
- Head of Year
- pastoral team
- DSL or Deputy DSL
- another adult they trust

8.2. Parents/carers may report concerns to the Form Tutor, Head of Year, pastoral team or DSL.

8.3. Staff must not tell a pupil simply to “sort it out themselves” where bullying, abuse, intimidation or a safeguarding concern has been disclosed.



8.4. Staff must not promise confidentiality. Information will be shared only with those who need to know, but safeguarding information may need to be shared without the pupil's consent where necessary to protect them or others.

8.5. Data protection law is not a barrier to appropriate safeguarding information sharing. KCSIE 2026 makes clear that information should be shared and recorded where necessary to protect children.

8.6. A pupil who makes a report will:

- be listened to
- be taken seriously
- be reassured
- not be blamed
- not be made to feel that they are causing a problem
- be informed, as far as appropriate, about what will happen next
- receive appropriate support

9. Responding to reports

9.1. Every report will be assessed promptly.

9.2. The member of staff receiving the report will consider:

- what happened
- who was involved
- whether there is immediate danger
- whether the behaviour is repeated or part of a pattern
- the seriousness and impact of the behaviour
- whether there is a power imbalance
- whether discrimination or prejudice is involved
- whether there is a safeguarding concern
- whether sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour may be involved
- whether there is an online element
- whether there is evidence of coercion, threats or exploitation
- the ages and developmental stages of the children involved
- whether any pupil has SEND or other additional vulnerabilities
- whether other pupils may also be at risk

9.3. Where there is an immediate risk of serious harm, staff will take immediate protective action and contact the DSL/deputy and, where necessary, emergency services.

9.4. Where a safeguarding concern is identified, the DSL will lead or oversee the response.

9.5. Where an incident is primarily a behaviour matter, it will be managed under the Behaviour Policy while remaining alert to any safeguarding implications.

9.6. Investigations will normally involve speaking separately with:

- the pupil reporting the concern
- the pupil alleged to have caused harm
- relevant witnesses
- other individuals who may have relevant information

9.7. Interviews will be conducted sensitively and without prejudging the outcome.

9.8. Pupils will not normally be required to confront one another.

9.9. The school will take reasonable steps to prevent further contact or retaliation while an incident is being investigated.

9.10. Where appropriate, written accounts, screenshots, messages, photographs or other evidence may be obtained.



9.11. Staff must avoid requiring a pupil to repeatedly recount traumatic experiences unnecessarily.

9.12. Where a concern involves sexual violence, sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour, the response will follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and KCSIE 2026. Reports will be considered on a case-by-case basis and risk to all children will be assessed.

10. Recording and monitoring

10.1. Bullying incidents will be recorded on CPOMS or the school's designated safeguarding/behaviour recording system.

10.2. Records should include, where appropriate:

- date and time
- location
- pupils involved
- nature and type of behaviour
- whether the incident was online/offline
- whether a protected characteristic or prejudice was involved
- whether there was a safeguarding concern
- actions taken
- sanctions or consequences
- support provided
- parental contact
- referrals
- follow-up actions
- outcome
- rationale for significant decisions

10.3. Safeguarding records must be factual, clear and distinguish between observed information, professional opinion and historic information.

10.4. The school will monitor data for patterns including:

- repeat victims
- repeat alleged perpetrators
- locations
- times of day
- year groups
- forms of bullying
- protected characteristics
- online/offline trends
- links with attendance
- links with SEND or vulnerability
- links with sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour

10.5. Data will be reviewed by senior leaders and reported to governors/local governors as appropriate.

10.6. Data will be handled in accordance with data protection legislation and school procedures. The Data (Use and Access) Act 2025 has amended the wider data protection framework and is reflected in current DfE guidance.

11. Signs that a pupil may be experiencing bullying

11.1. Staff and parents/carers should be alert to changes including:

- reluctance or refusal to attend school
- increased absence or lateness
- changes in friendship groups



- withdrawal or isolation
- anxiety or distress
- reduced confidence
- deterioration in academic engagement
- changes in behaviour
- irritability or anger
- changes in eating or sleeping
- unexplained injuries
- damaged or missing possessions
- unexplained requests for money
- reluctance to use phones or digital devices
- distress following messages or notifications
- increased or decreased online activity
- avoidance of particular places or people
- self-isolation
- changes in appearance or presentation
- emotional distress following social media use

11.2. These signs may have many causes and do not necessarily indicate bullying. Staff should use professional curiosity and consider whether there are wider safeguarding, mental health, family, attendance or peer relationship concerns.

12. Staff principles

12.1. Staff will:

- take every report seriously
- challenge harmful behaviour
- never dismiss bullying as “banter”
- never assume that someone else will deal with a concern
- act promptly
- follow safeguarding procedures where relevant
- protect pupils from retaliation
- avoid victim-blaming
- maintain appropriate confidentiality
- consider the needs and wishes of the child while recognising the school's safeguarding duties
- consider the impact of SEND and other vulnerabilities
- consider both online and offline behaviour
- provide appropriate support following an incident

12.2. Staff should maintain an “it could happen here” approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse, including incidents that occur outside the school premises or online. KCSIE 2026 specifically requires staff to respond appropriately to child-on-child abuse concerns whether they occur on or off site.

13. Child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment and sexual violence

13.1. The school has a zero-tolerance approach to child-on-child abuse.

13.2. Child-on-child abuse includes bullying and discriminatory behaviour but extends beyond traditional bullying to physical abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, sexual violence, intimate relationship abuse, image-sharing and other harmful behaviours.

13.3. All staff must understand that both boys and girls can be victims and perpetrators of child-on-child abuse.



13.4. No behaviour will be dismissed as:

- “banter”
- “just a joke”
- “boys being boys”
- “part of growing up”
- “normal teenage behaviour”

13.5. Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature and may occur online or offline, inside or outside school.

13.6. Where a report involves sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour:

- the DSL/deputy will be informed immediately
- the victim will be taken seriously and supported
- the alleged perpetrator will be treated fairly and supported appropriately
- immediate risks will be assessed
- the safety of all affected pupils will be considered
- parents/carers will be involved where appropriate and in accordance with safeguarding procedures
- children's social care and/or police will be contacted where required
- appropriate specialist support will be considered

13.7. For serious reports of sexual violence, the DSL will undertake an immediate risk and needs assessment and keep this under review. KCSIE 2026 identifies the safety and support needs of the victim, potential other victims, the alleged perpetrator, the wider school community and the location/time of the incident as relevant considerations.

13.8. The school will consider whether pupils should be separated or whether other protective arrangements are required. Such measures are protective and do not imply a finding of guilt.

13.9. The school will not normally require a victim and alleged perpetrator to participate in reconciliation or mediation.

14. Nudes, semi-nudes, intimate imagery and AI-generated material

14.1. The school will follow current DfE/UKCIS safeguarding guidance in relation to the making or sharing of nudes and semi-nudes.

14.2. This includes images or videos which are:

- self-generated
- created by another person
- digitally manipulated
- AI-generated
- “deepfake” or “deep nude” material

KCSIE 2026 expressly recognises that images may be digitally altered or wholly generated using artificial intelligence.

14.3. Any concern about the sharing of a nude or semi-nude image involving a child will be referred to the DSL.

14.4. Staff should not deliberately view, copy, save, forward or distribute indecent images of children.

14.5. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding and device-searching procedures rather than attempting to investigate potentially illegal imagery themselves.

14.6. The school will consider:

- whether a child has been harmed
- whether coercion or exploitation is present
- whether an image has been distributed
- whether further pupils may be at risk



- whether police or children's social care involvement is required
- what support the children involved need

14.7. A child who has shared an image will not automatically be treated as a perpetrator. The circumstances, age, development, coercion, exploitation, intent and vulnerability of the children involved will be considered.

15. Cyberbullying and online bullying

15.1. Cyberbullying is treated with the same seriousness as bullying occurring face-to-face.

15.2. The school will consider incidents occurring on:

- school devices
- personal devices
- social media
- messaging platforms
- gaming platforms
- group chats
- online forums
- other digital platforms

15.3. Where appropriate, pupils will be encouraged to retain evidence such as screenshots, messages, usernames, URLs and dates, provided that doing so does not place them at further risk.

15.4. Pupils should not forward abusive or sexual content to other pupils.

15.5. The school may work with parents/carers, online platforms, police or other agencies where appropriate.

15.6. The Online Safety Act 2023 places duties on relevant online services to protect children from harmful content and provides mechanisms concerning online safety and complaints. The existence of those duties does not remove the school's responsibility to safeguard pupils or respond to online incidents affecting them.

16. Searching, confiscation and electronic devices

16.1. Where a pupil's electronic device is believed to contain evidence of bullying, harmful behaviour, an offence or a breach of school policy, any search will be undertaken only by staff authorised to do so and in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and the current DfE **Searching, Screening and Confiscation** guidance.

16.2. Staff must not conduct informal or unnecessary searches of pupils' personal devices.

16.3. Where an electronic device is searched, staff will consider:

- the legal basis for the search
- whether there are reasonable grounds
- the safeguarding implications
- the pupil's privacy
- whether evidence may need to be preserved
- whether the police or DSL should be contacted

16.4. Where material may constitute evidence of an offence, it must not be deleted and the appropriate police/safeguarding procedure must be followed.

16.5. Particular care must be taken where a device may contain a nude or semi-nude image of a child. Staff must follow the school's safeguarding procedure and current DfE guidance rather than viewing or circulating the image unnecessarily.



17. Sanctions and consequences

17.1. Where bullying or harmful behaviour is established, the school will take proportionate and appropriate action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

17.2. Consequences may include:

- restorative or reflective work where appropriate
- detention
- loss of privileges
- changes to seating or movement arrangements
- behaviour support
- pastoral intervention
- parental involvement
- internal sanctions
- suspension
- permanent exclusion in the most serious circumstances

17.3. The response will take account of:

- seriousness
- frequency
- impact
- age and developmental stage
- intent
- vulnerability
- safeguarding considerations
- previous behaviour
- whether discrimination or prejudice was involved
- whether there was coercion or exploitation
- the need to protect other pupils

17.4. The school will distinguish between a pupil's responsibility for harmful behaviour and any underlying needs that may require support.

17.5. Support for a pupil who has displayed harmful behaviour does not remove accountability for their actions.

17.6. Restorative approaches may be used where appropriate but will **not** be automatic.

17.7. A victim will never be required to meet, reconcile with or apologise to an alleged perpetrator.

17.8. In cases involving sexual violence, sexual harassment or other safeguarding concerns, restorative approaches will only be considered where consistent with safeguarding advice and the child's welfare.

18. Support for pupils experiencing bullying

18.1. Pupils who experience bullying will be offered appropriate support, which may include:

- access to a trusted adult
- pastoral support
- regular check-ins
- support with friendships
- emotional wellbeing support
- counselling or referral to appropriate services
- reasonable adjustments
- changes to seating or routines
- safe spaces



- support with online safety
- support to rebuild confidence and school engagement

18.2. The school will avoid placing responsibility on the victim to prevent the bullying.

18.3. Where necessary, the school will consider reasonable adjustments and additional support for pupils with SEND or disabilities.

18.4. The school will monitor the situation after the immediate incident to ensure that the behaviour has stopped and that there is no retaliation or continuing harm.

19. Support for pupils who have displayed bullying or harmful behaviour

19.1. The school will hold pupils accountable while recognising that children who display harmful behaviour may themselves have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect, exploitation or other difficulties.

19.2. Support may include:

- pastoral intervention
- behaviour support
- work on empathy and emotional regulation
- restorative work where appropriate
- counselling or specialist intervention
- work with parents/carers
- safeguarding referral
- support from external agencies

19.3. KCSIE 2026 recognises that child-on-child abuse is a safeguarding issue for both the victim and alleged perpetrator and that timely, evidence-based support can help prevent children from going on to commit abuse or violence.

20. Bullying outside of school

20.1. The school will take reports of bullying occurring outside school seriously where the behaviour affects:

- the welfare or safety of pupils
- relationships between pupils
- school attendance
- the school environment
- the orderly running of the school
- the reputation or functioning of the school community

20.2. Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 requires schools to have measures to prevent bullying, and school leaders have powers to regulate and discipline behaviour in appropriate circumstances outside the school premises.

20.3. This may include bullying occurring:

- on school/public transport
- near the school
- in the local community
- at school-related events
- during school trips
- online
- through social media or messaging services

20.4. Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or presents a serious risk of harm, the school will consider contacting the police or other appropriate agencies.

20.5. The school will not attempt to conduct a criminal investigation. It will safeguard pupils, establish the relevant school facts and work with external agencies where appropriate.



21. Equality and human rights

21.1. The school will act consistently with the Equality Act 2010 and its Public Sector Equality Duty.

21.2. The school will have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not

21.3. The school will make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils where required.

21.4. The school recognises that bullying and discriminatory behaviour may engage pupils' rights under the Human Rights Act 1998, including rights relating to dignity, privacy, education and freedom from degrading treatment.

21.5. Equality duties will be considered when responding to incidents and when reviewing patterns of bullying.

22. Confidentiality and information sharing

22.1. Information relating to individual incidents will be treated sensitively and shared only with those who need to know.

22.2. Staff must not promise absolute confidentiality to a pupil.

22.3. Where there is a safeguarding concern, information may need to be shared with the DSL, children's social care, police, health professionals or other relevant agencies.

22.4. The school will comply with data protection law when recording, storing and sharing information.

22.5. Data protection requirements will not be used as a reason to delay necessary safeguarding action.

KCSIE 2026 expressly states that data protection law does not prevent information sharing for the purposes of keeping children safe.

23. Working with parents and carers

23.1. The school recognises parents/carers as important partners in preventing and addressing bullying.

23.2. Parents/carers will normally be informed when:

- their child has experienced serious or persistent bullying
- their child has been found to have engaged in bullying
- there is a significant safeguarding concern
- further support or intervention is required

23.3. There may be circumstances in which information cannot be shared immediately or fully because doing so could increase risk to a child, compromise an investigation or conflict with safeguarding advice.

23.4. Parents/carers are asked not to contact or confront other pupils or families directly where this may escalate the situation.

24. Monitoring and evaluation

24.1. The school will monitor:

- reported bullying incidents
- prejudice-related incidents
- racist incidents
- discriminatory incidents
- cyberbullying
- sexual harassment
- child-on-child abuse
- repeat incidents
- locations and times



- year groups
- protected characteristics
- pupil attendance and engagement where relevant
- pupil wellbeing indicators

24.2. The school will use this information to identify patterns and evaluate the effectiveness of prevention strategies.

24.3. The Local Governing Body will receive appropriate information through the Headteacher's Report or other safeguarding/behaviour reporting mechanisms.

24.4. The school will seek pupil voice where appropriate, including through surveys, focus groups, pastoral discussions and other feedback mechanisms.

24.5. The school will consider whether pupils feel:

- safe
- listened to
- respected
- included
- able to report concerns
- confident that staff will take action

25. Review

25.1. This policy will be reviewed **at least annually** by the Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) in consultation with the DSL and relevant senior leaders.

25.2. The policy will be reviewed sooner where:

- legislation changes
- statutory guidance changes
- safeguarding arrangements change
- significant incidents identify a need for revision
- monitoring identifies weaknesses or patterns
- pupil, parent/carers or staff feedback identifies a need for change

25.3. The review will consider the latest versions of:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Preventing and tackling bullying guidance
- Behaviour in schools
- RSHE statutory guidance
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance
- online safety guidance
- relevant equality legislation and guidance
- relevant data protection legislation and guidance

25.4. The next scheduled review of this policy is **October 2027**, unless an earlier review is required.

Appendix 1: Practical reporting pathway

If a pupil reports bullying to a member of staff:

1. Listen

- Remain calm
- Listen carefully
- Do not blame the pupil



- Do not promise confidentiality

2. Make the pupil safe

- Consider whether there is an immediate risk
- Separate pupils if necessary
- Seek first aid if there is an injury

3. Record

- Record the concern accurately
- Include relevant facts, actions and decisions

4. Refer

- Report safeguarding concerns to the DSL/deputy immediately
- Refer routine bullying concerns to the appropriate pastoral leader

5. Investigate

- Speak to pupils separately
- Gather relevant evidence
- Avoid premature conclusions

6. Act

- Apply the Behaviour Policy where appropriate
- Implement safeguarding procedures where necessary
- Inform parents/carers where appropriate

7. Support

- Support the pupil who has experienced harm
- Provide appropriate support to the pupil who has displayed harmful behaviour
- Consider support for witnesses and other affected pupils

8. Follow up

- Monitor the situation
- Check that bullying has stopped
- Check for retaliation or recurrence
- Review risk where necessary

Appendix 2: Indicators requiring immediate DSL involvement

Staff must refer immediately to the DSL/deputy where bullying or peer conflict involves, or may involve:

- serious physical injury
- threats to kill or seriously harm
- weapons
- sexual harassment
- sexual violence
- harmful sexual behaviour
- unwanted sexual touching
- sharing or suspected sharing of nude/semi-nude images
- AI-generated sexual imagery involving a child
- coercion or blackmail
- exploitation
- serious or repeated threats
- hate-related behaviour
- serious racist or faith-targeted abuse
- serious discriminatory abuse



- intimate relationship abuse
- stalking
- significant online abuse
- serious emotional abuse
- a child who appears frightened or at significant risk
- a child with additional vulnerabilities where the incident may increase safeguarding risk
- concerns that another child may also be at risk

Where staff are unsure, they should **speak to the DSL/deputy** rather than deciding that an incident is “only bullying”.

Appendix 3: Key policy principles

At St Gabriel's RC High School:

1. **Every child has dignity because every person is created imago Dei**
2. **Bullying is never acceptable**
3. **Child-on-child abuse is never “banter”**
4. **A one-off serious incident will not be ignored because it is not repetitive**
5. **All reports will be taken seriously**
6. **Victims will not be blamed**
7. **Safeguarding concerns will be referred to the DSL**
8. **Online and offline behaviour will be considered together where appropriate**
9. **Prejudice and discrimination will be challenged**
10. **Pupils who display harmful behaviour will be held accountable and supported to change**
11. **The school will work with parents/carers and external agencies where necessary**
12. **The school's response will seek justice, restoration, safety and the common good while upholding the dignity of every person**