

St. Mary's Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy



August 2026 (Next Review Aug 27)

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Our Shared Vision



In St. Mary's Primary School, we aim to develop the faith, knowledge and skills of all learners to prepare them to have a happy, successful and prosperous life in the 21st century.

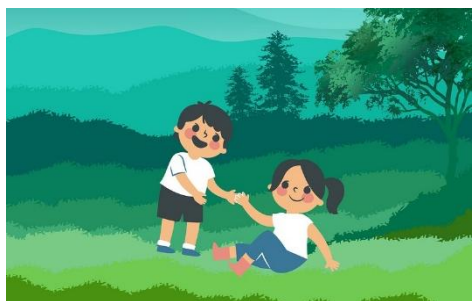
As a Catholic Primary School, a strong emphasis is placed on developing our Christian faith and promoting the Gospel values. Through your help, and with continued support from our parish, we aim to develop a genuine love of God and an understanding of social justice in our children's lives.

Our Shared Values



Happiness

To create an environment where our whole school community experiences happiness.



Kindness

To promote kindness to all in our words and actions and to treat others like Jesus taught us.



Respect

To support everyone in showing respect for ourselves, peers and our whole school community.



Ambition

To always aim for the very top by giving everything we do our best.

The agreed national definition of Bullying Behaviour as set out in 'Respect for all' – adopted by Inverclyde Council

Inverclyde Council considers that bullying should never be viewed as a normal or inevitable part of growing up. Adults are not expected to be the subject of abuse by colleagues or friends; therefore, it should not be any different for children and young people.

In St. Mary's Primary, we have adopted the national definition of bullying (Respect for All, 2024 and Inverclyde Anti-Bullying Policy, 2025):

"Bullying is face-to-face and/or online behaviour which impacts on a person's sense of physical and emotional safety, their capacity to feel in control of their life and their ability to respond effectively to the situation they are in."

"The behaviour does not need to be repeated, or intended to cause harm, for it to have an impact. Bullying behaviour can be physical, emotional or verbal and can cause people to feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out."

Examples of bullying behaviour in a school setting include (Respect for All, 2024):

- Being called names, teased, put down or threatened (face to face and/or online).
- Being hit, tripped, pushed or kicked.
- Having belongings taken or damaged.
- Being ignored, left out or having rumours spread about you (face-to-face and/or online).
- Sending abusive messages, pictures or images on social media, online gaming platforms or phones/tablets.
- Behaviour which makes people feel like they are not in control of themselves or their lives (face-to-face and/or online).
- Being targeted because of who you are or who you are perceived to be (face to face and/or online).

- Increasing the reach and impact of bullying or prejudice through the recruitment and/or involvement of a wider group.

What Bullying is Not

It is important to recognise the difference between bullying and other behaviours. Not all conflict is bullying. We know that children and young people will fall out and disagree with each other as they form and build relationships. Children may argue, fall out, or make mistakes without intending to cause harm. This is not considered to be bullying; this is considered to be a normal part of growing up. These situations still need adult support but are managed differently.

Conflict is normal and can happen in healthy, happy, equal relationships. Usually at least one party involved doesn't want the conflict to continue unresolved and will try to take early action to make amends and improve the situation. Healthy relationship conflict is not the same as bullying and is unlikely to lead to bullying as the people involved have a vested interest in restoring equilibrium and staying connected to each other.

Examples that are not bullying include:

- Friends having an argument but later making up.
- A one-off incident where someone says something unkind in the heat of the moment.
- Rough play where both children are enjoying the game and no one is hurt or excluded.

We take all concerns seriously, but we respond differently depending on whether behaviour is bullying, conflict, or another concern.

Inverclyde's Stance, the Scope and Aims of the Council Policy

Inverclyde Council considers bullying behaviour in its schools to be unacceptable in all circumstances. All children and young people have the right to access learning environments in which they feel safe and free from all forms of abuse, bullying or discrimination. It has been recognised that the most effective intervention in tackling the issue of bullying behaviour is prevention. Resultingly, the importance of prevention will form a key strand that will be threaded throughout both the council and establishment policy. The policy also recognises that bullying behaviour is a violation of rights as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, notably Articles 3, 12, 13, 19, 29 and 39.

This Anti-Bullying Policy has been developed using the Inverclyde Education Service Anti-Bullying Policy (2025) as its framework. While the Council policy sets the authority wide standards and expectations, this document explains how St. Mary's Primary School applies these standards in our own community.

Our aim is to make sure that every child and family knows what bullying is, how it is dealt with in our school, and how children will be supported. We want children to feel confident to speak up, staff to feel confident to act, and parents to feel reassured that bullying will never be ignored.

At St. Mary's Primary, we believe that every child has the right to feel safe, respected, and included at all times. Bullying is never acceptable and will not be tolerated in our community. This policy explains how we prevent, respond to, and record bullying.

Our school policy is built on the **Inverclyde Council Education Service Anti-Bullying Policy (2025)**, which provides the framework for all schools and early years settings in the authority. It also reflects our own school vision and values of Happiness, Kindness, Respect and Ambition. These values guide how we treat one another every day.

Preventing and Responding to Bullying

Prevention is the most effective intervention when it comes to bullying and is supported by the creation of inclusive learning environments. We aim to build a culture where kindness, respect and inclusion are the norm. In St. Mary's we:

- Ensure safety and supervision in the playground, classrooms and corridors
- Teach respect and empathy through our Catholic Ethos and explicit teaching of the Gospel Values. This will be supported by our RE Curriculum and Health & Wellbeing curriculum
- Hold assemblies and class discussions about kindness, celebrating difference and safety.
- Live our school values so children see them in action and fully understand these.
- Use restorative conversations to resolve disagreements early.
- Encourage pupil participation through Houses, playground pals and pupil leadership groups.
- Ensure every child has trusted adults in school who they know will listen to them.
- Work with families to reinforce positive behaviour and respectful relationships.

We also follow the Equality Act 2010. This means we actively prevent bullying and discrimination based on protected characteristics. We also recognise that bullying can occur for other reasons.

At St. Mary's Primary, we take a restorative approach to relationships and behaviour. This means that when something goes wrong, we focus on repairing the harm, rebuilding trust, and helping children learn for the future.

Restorative practice involves:

- Giving everyone involved the chance to share what happened, how they felt, and what the impact was.
- Encouraging children to listen to one another's point of view.
- Supporting children to recognise the consequences of their behaviour.
- Agreeing on actions to put things right and prevent the behaviour happening again.

This approach is not about ignoring harmful behaviour or avoiding consequences. It is about ensuring that consequences are meaningful, fair, and lead to positive change. Children are held accountable for their actions, but in a way that helps them learn and grow.

Why we use this approach

We adopt restorative practice because:

- ❖ It helps children develop empathy, problem-solving, and conflict resolution skills.
- ❖ It reduces repeated incidents of bullying and poor behaviour by addressing the root causes.
- ❖ It helps relationships recover rather than break down completely.
- ❖ It keeps children included in the community, rather than pushing them out.
- ❖ It matches our values as a Rights Respecting School, where every child's voice matters.

Sometimes children may hear from adults that if someone hits you, you should hit back. In St. Mary's, we do not encourage this approach. Retaliation usually makes the situation worse, leading to further conflict, injuries, or blame on both sides.

Instead, we teach children to:

- Seek help from a trusted adult immediately.

- Use their words to express how they feel, rather than using physical actions.
- Trust that adults in the school will listen and act to keep them safe.

We ask parents to support this approach at home, so that children receive a clear and consistent message. By working together, we can show children that problems are best solved through communication, respect and repair - not by fighting back.

Children's Rights

St. Mary's Primary School is a Gold Rights Respecting School and we are very proud of this.



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is an international treaty that protects children and young people's rights. It is based on equality, dignity, respect, protection, development and participation. The UNCRC is now enacted in Scots' Law. Inverclyde Council considers bullying behaviour to be a violation of children's rights and to be incompatible with the UNCRC. Through this policy Inverclyde Council recognises that bullying behaviour violates the UNCRC in relation to the following articles:

Our policy is grounded in children's rights from the UNCRC. We particularly focus on:

- Article 2: All children have the right not to be discriminated against.
- Article 12: All children have the right to be listened to and taken seriously.
- Article 13: All children have the Right to freedom of expression.
- Article 19: All children have the right to be safe from violence and harm.
- Article 28 and 29: All children have the right to education in a safe and respectful environment.
- Article 39: All children have the right to help when inappropriately treated.

Responsibilities of Children and Young People, Staff/ Volunteers and Parents/ Carers

Everyone in St. Mary's Primary has a role to play in preventing and addressing bullying behaviours.

Children and Young People will:

- Show respect and kindness to everyone.
- Report any bullying you see or hear to an adult.
- Always use gentle hands and kind words.
- Be supportive to all pupils and listen to everyone's opinions.
- Include everyone in games.
- Respect differences and celebrate it.

Parents and Carers will:

- Model positive and kind behaviour and lead by example.
- Work in partnership with the school to make things better for everyone involved.
- Encourage children to make good choices.
- Listen and be aware.
- Work with children to understand bullying.
- Remain calm and help everyone feel safe.

Staff and Volunteers will:

- Listen to all our pupils and help them with their worries or concerns.
- Teach our pupils about their emotions and that it is ok not to be ok.
- Model positive and kind behaviour and lead by example.
- Reassure pupils that disagreements can happen, and we can learn from them.

School Leaders (Head Teacher, Depute Head Teacher and Principal Teacher) will:

- Ensure this policy is put into practice across the school.
- Provide staff with training, resources, and support on anti-bullying and restorative practice.
- Monitor records in SEEMIS to identify patterns and trends.
- Ensure parents are informed and involved in investigations and outcomes.
- Consult with pupils, parents/ carers and staff as part of regular policy reviews.

Inverclyde Council and Education Services

Although this is a school level policy, we are supported by Inverclyde Council and Education Services who:

- Provide the overarching Inverclyde Anti-Bullying Policy as a framework for schools.
- Offer professional learning opportunities and resources for staff.
- Analyse SEEMIS data at authority level to monitor trends.
- Support schools where complex or persistent bullying concerns arise.
- Ensure that anti-bullying work links with wider strategies for inclusion, wellbeing, and equalities.

Partner Agencies

Sometimes it is important to work with partner agencies, such as:

- **Police Scotland** - if behaviour may be criminal or if children are at risk of harm.
- **Health professionals** - to support children whose wellbeing or mental health has been affected.
- **Third sector organisations** - such as charities that support children experiencing prejudice or bullying.

Respectful Behaviour

Our ethos in St. Mary's is warm and welcoming to all. There is a strong commitment from all staff to ensure positive relationships are at the heart of what we do. Positive role modelling from key adults is central to our approaches.

Labelling

Labelling children as 'bullies' or 'victims' or 'perpetrators' is disempowering and is unhelpful in supporting children to change their behaviour, or to recover from the impacts of bullying.

When discussing bullying behaviours, adults will focus on the behaviour itself and the impact it has had, rather than applying labels. This will assist children's understanding of their behaviour and impact and help them to understand what is expected from them. This is used as part of our restorative approaches.

When adults record incidents on SEEMIS, they will avoid labelling language and focus on behaviours and impact.

Reporting and Recording

In St. Mary's Primary, we want children, parents and staff to feel confident that any concerns about bullying will be taken seriously and acted upon. Clear procedures help everyone know what to expect and ensure consistency across our school. Records are handled in line with data protection law. We keep information confidential and share it only with staff and partners who need it to support the children involved.

Reporting bullying

Bullying can be reported in several ways:

- Children can tell any trusted adult in school - their class teacher, PSA or another member of staff.
- Parents and carers can contact the school by phone, email, or in person.
- Other children may report if they have witnessed something.

We encourage children to report concerns as soon as possible. All staff are trained to respond calmly, listen carefully and reassure children that they will be supported.

Recording bullying

All concerns and incidents are recorded so that we can track patterns and ensure appropriate action.

- Staff record incidents in SEEMIS, using the Bullying and Equalities system for recording incidents.
- Prejudice based incidents are specifically recorded so that the school and Inverclyde Council can monitor trends.
- Confidentiality is respected, but relevant staff are informed so they can support the children involved.
- Consideration is given of any personal or additional support needs and wellbeing concerns when incidents are recorded.
- Actions, including resolution, are recorded as part of the incident.

Investigating bullying

Investigations are led by the Head Teacher or Depute Head Teacher. The process is as follows:

1. **Initial concern logged** – the member of staff who hears the concern makes an immediate note and informs the HT/DHT.
2. **Gathering information** – the HT/DHT speaks separately with the child who reported the bullying behaviours, the child experiencing bullying behaviours, and the child/children whose behaviour caused harm.
3. **Speaking with witnesses** – if others saw what happened, their accounts are also gathered.
4. **Communication with parents** – parents of all children involved are informed that the school is investigating.
5. **Assessment** – the HT/DHT decides whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying, conflict, or another concern, and records appropriately.
6. **Agreeing actions** – steps are agreed to support the child impacted and to address the behaviour of the child who caused harm.
7. **Restorative meeting** – where appropriate, a restorative conversation is held to repair relationships.
8. **Follow-up** – staff check in with the children involved regularly, and the HT/DHT reviews progress.

Timescales

- Investigations normally begin within 24 hours of the concern being raised.
- Parents are informed within the first few days.
- Investigations are usually completed within 1-3 school days.
- Follow-up checks are made after 2 weeks, 1 month, and 3 months to ensure the situation has improved.

Escalation

If bullying concerns are not resolved or if the behaviour is persistent, we may:

- Arrange further meetings with parents to review support.
- Involve partner agencies for support.
- Seek support from Inverclyde Education Services for complex cases.

This clear process helps ensure that bullying is always taken seriously, recorded consistently and addressed quickly.



Anti-Bullying Charter

In St. Mary's Primary School, we aim to develop the faith, knowledge and skills of all learners to prepare them to have a happy, successful and prosperous life in the 21st century. We value Happiness, Respect, Kindness and Ambition. We do not tolerate bullying.



In St. Mary's Primary, we have adopted the national definition of bullying (Respect for All, 2024 and Inverclyde Anti-Bullying Policy, 2025):

"Bullying is face-to-face and/or online behaviour which impacts on a person's sense of physical and emotional safety, their capacity to feel in control of their life and their ability to respond effectively to the situation they are in."

"The behaviour does not need to be repeated, or intended to cause harm, for it to have an impact. Bullying behaviour can be physical, emotional or verbal and can cause people to feel hurt, threatened, frightened and left out."

We aim to listen to anyone who reports bullying, will investigate fully and record findings. We want to create an environment where everyone feels safe, happy and trusting that if they report bullying it will be dealt with appropriately.

Our Pupils Will:

- Show respect and kindness to everyone.
- Report any bullying you see or hear to an adult.
- Use gentle hands and kind words at all times.
- Be supportive to all pupils and listen to everyone's opinions.
- Include everyone in games.
- Respect differences and celebrate it.

Our Staff Will:

- Listen to all of our pupils and help them with their worries or concerns.
- Teach our pupils about their emotions and that it is ok not to be ok.
- Model positive and kind behaviour and lead by example.
- Reassure pupils that disagreements can happen and we can learn from them.

Our Parents Will:

- Model positive and kind behaviour and lead by example.
- Work in partnership with the school to make things better for everyone involved.
- Encourage children to make good choices.
- Listen and be aware.
- Work with children to understand bullying.
- Remain calm and help everyone feel safe.

Related Policies

Key related Inverclyde policies include:

- **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy:** ensuring children are protected from harm and that all concerns are acted on quickly.
- **Equalities and Diversity Policy:** meeting our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and promoting an inclusive culture.
- **Digital Learning and Online Safety Policy** – helping children use technology responsibly and safely.
- **Positive Behaviour and Restorative Practice Policy:** outlining our whole-school approach to promoting positive behaviour and repairing harm when things go wrong.
- **Additional Support for Learning Policy:** supporting children with barriers to learning, including those affected by bullying.

Useful Contacts and Resources

St. Mary's and Nursery

- Address: 4 Kelly St, Greenock, PA16 8NF
- Telephone: 01475 715694
- Email: office@st-marys.inverclyde.sch.uk

Inverclyde Council Education Services

- Education HQ, Wallace Place, Greenock
- Website: <https://www.inverclyde.gov.uk>
- Admissions (general enquiries): 01475 712850
- admissions.educationhq@inverclyde.gov.uk

National Organisations

- Respect Me: www.respectme.org.uk
- Childline: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk
- Young Scot: www.young.scot
- Police Scotland (non-emergency): 101 | www.scotland.police.uk

Useful Resources for Parents and Carers

- NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk
- Parentzone Scotland: education.gov.scot/parentzone
- ThinkUKNow: www.thinkuknow.co.uk