

The Vine Schools

(Christian Malford, Seagry and
Somerfords' Walter Powell)



*Learning, Listening and
Laughing together*



CHRISTIAN MALFORD
Church of England Primary School



Where happy children learn to fly

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Statement of Intent

At The Vine Schools (Christian Malford Primary School, Seagry Primary School and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary School), we are committed to providing a safe, caring and inclusive environment in which every pupil is treated with dignity and feels able to learn, play and participate without fear of bullying. Bullying is unacceptable and will be addressed promptly and proportionately.

Our Christian vision, "Growing together in belief, knowledge, and wisdom", and our values underpin our approach. We work with pupils, staff, parents and carers to promote positive relationships, challenge prejudice and help every child feel that they belong.

We recognise that bullying can affect a child's safety, wellbeing, attendance, learning and sense of belonging. We take reports seriously, listen to children, protect those who may be at risk and respond fairly. We consider the needs and circumstances of each child, including SEND and disability, and make reasonable adjustments where required. Bullying and discriminatory behaviour are not excused by a pupil's age, needs or circumstances; responses will be appropriate, inclusive and informed by the individual situation.

This policy should be read alongside our safeguarding and child protection, behaviour, online safety and equality policies. Where an incident may involve child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment or violence, discriminatory harassment, or another safeguarding concern, staff must follow the safeguarding policy and refer promptly to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy DSLs. A bullying response does not replace safeguarding action.

This policy is informed by the following legislation and Department for Education guidance, as applicable in England:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (statutory guidance; in force from 1 September 2026).
- DfE, Preventing and tackling bullying (2017 guidance, available through the DfE's Preventing bullying publication page, updated 9 July 2026).
- DfE, Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff (2022; DfE publication page last updated February 2024).
- Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 89, concerning school behaviour measures, including the prevention of bullying.
- Equality Act 2010, including duties relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation and reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, concerning children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, where relevant to identifying and meeting pupils' special educational needs and disabilities.

The DfE guidance and legislation above should be read in their current versions. This policy is not a substitute for the school's statutory safeguarding procedures.

2. Aims

- Make clear to pupils, parents and staff what bullying is and how concerns will be handled.
- Prevent bullying through a positive, inclusive culture and teaching about respect, empathy, diversity and online safety.
- Provide clear routes for reporting, recording, investigating and responding to concerns.
- Protect and support pupils who experience bullying, while helping pupils who have bullied others to understand the impact of their behaviour and change it.
- Identify patterns and use monitoring, pupil voice and feedback to improve practice across all three schools.

3. What is bullying?

For the purposes of this policy, bullying is behaviour that is repeated over time, is intended to hurt or harm another person, and involves an imbalance of power that makes it difficult for the person being targeted to defend themselves. The imbalance may relate to physical strength, age, social status, group size, access to information, or another difference. This is a working definition informed by DfE guidance; there is no single statutory definition of bullying.

A one-off disagreement, fall-out or unkind act may not meet this definition, but it must still be taken seriously and addressed under the Behaviour Policy or safeguarding procedures as appropriate. A single serious incident may require immediate safeguarding action even where it is not classed as bullying.

Bullying may be:

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or taking belongings.
- Verbal: name-calling, insults, threats, humiliating comments or repeated hurtful teasing.
- Social or emotional: deliberately excluding someone, spreading rumours, intimidation or manipulating friendships.
- Online: using messages, social media, games, images, videos or other digital communication to threaten, humiliate, harass or repeatedly target someone. Online incidents may occur outside school hours and still affect school safety and wellbeing.
- Prejudice-related: targeting someone because of a protected characteristic or a perceived difference, including race, disability, sex, religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender reassignment, or because of family circumstances or another aspect of their identity.

Bullying may be direct or indirect, may involve a group, and may be difficult for a child to report. Staff should consider the impact and context of behaviour, including any power imbalance and whether incidents form a pattern. Discriminatory language, sexual harassment, threats or other harmful behaviour must be addressed even if repeated behaviour or an imbalance of power has not been established.

4. Prevention

We aim to prevent bullying by building a culture in which kindness, inclusion and respectful relationships are taught, modelled and expected.

Whole-school culture

- Embed the school rules: act safely, be ready and show respect.
- Promote our Christian vision and values through collective worship, the curriculum and daily interactions.
- Use clear, consistent and proportionate behaviour approaches, in line with the Behaviour Policy.
- Ensure staff are visible and approachable in areas where bullying may occur, including playgrounds, corridors and less structured times.
- Challenge discriminatory language, exclusion and unkind behaviour promptly.

Curriculum and education

- Teach age-appropriate learning about respect, empathy, relationships, diversity, resilience and online safety through PSHE, Relationships Education and the wider curriculum, including Religious World Views (RWV).
- Use relevant opportunities such as Anti-Bullying Week, Safer Internet Day and NSPCC Speak Out, Stay Safe resources where appropriate.
- Teach pupils how to report concerns, how to seek help and how to support someone who may be experiencing bullying.
- Use stories, discussion and role-play where appropriate to help pupils understand the effects of bullying and practise positive responses.

Pupil voice and leadership

- Use the Worship Council, Head Pupils and other pupil voice opportunities to promote inclusion and respect.

- Use peer support, buddy systems or buddy benches where appropriate, while ensuring these do not replace adult action or supervision.
- Involve pupils in developing class charters, expectations and anti-bullying pledges.

Working with parents and carers

- Communicate expectations and reporting routes clearly to parents and carers.
- Share advice about friendships and online safety where helpful.
- Involve parents and carers promptly and constructively when concerns arise, while respecting confidentiality and safeguarding requirements.

Staff development

- Ensure staff understand this policy, the signs and impact of bullying, reporting routes and the links with safeguarding.
- Share learning and good practice across The Vine Schools to promote consistency.
- Use restorative approaches where suitable and safe; these must not be imposed on a pupil who has experienced bullying or used as a substitute for appropriate safeguarding or disciplinary action.

5. Reporting and responding to bullying

Pupils should be encouraged to tell a trusted adult if they are being bullied, have witnessed bullying or are worried about someone else. Parents and carers can contact the class teacher or headteacher. Staff must act on concerns and must not promise secrecy where information needs to be shared to keep a child safe.

When a concern is raised, the school will:

1. Listen calmly and take the report seriously, reassuring the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
2. Consider immediate safety and wellbeing. If there is a safeguarding concern, possible child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment or violence, a serious threat, or a risk of significant harm, inform the DSL or deputy DSL promptly and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
3. Record the concern accurately and promptly on CPOMS in line with school procedures. Record the facts, the child's own words where appropriate, actions taken and follow-up; avoid assumptions or unsupported conclusions.
4. Make appropriate enquiries, speaking separately with pupils and relevant adults. Gather information about the incident and any previous concerns or patterns. Avoid leading questions and do not require children to confront one another.
5. Decide whether the behaviour meets the school's definition of bullying and determine a proportionate response. Even if it is not bullying, address the behaviour through the appropriate policy or procedure.
6. Inform parents or carers as appropriate, balancing open communication with confidentiality and the need to protect other children's personal information.
7. Take appropriate action, which may include increased supervision, a safety plan, behaviour support, education, proportionate sanctions under the Behaviour Policy, contact with parents or carers, and referral to external agencies where necessary.
8. Provide support to the pupil experiencing bullying, including checking what would help them feel safe and identifying a trusted adult. Consider whether adjustments or additional support are needed.
9. Work with the pupil who has bullied another child to understand the harm caused and change their behaviour. Consider context and individual needs without excusing the behaviour or minimising its impact.
10. Monitor the situation and check back with the pupils involved to establish whether the behaviour has stopped and whether further action is needed.

Restorative conversations may be helpful in some cases, but only when appropriate, safe and voluntary for the child who has experienced bullying. They must not be used to pressure a child to forgive, reconcile or accept shared responsibility for being bullied.

The school may need to act on bullying that takes place outside the school premises or online where it affects pupils' safety, wellbeing or the orderly running of the school. Responses will be consistent with the school's legal powers and relevant policies.

Where concerns relate to a protected characteristic, staff must consider the Equality Act 2010 and the school's equality duties. Where behaviour may constitute a crime or a significant safeguarding concern, the DSL/headteacher will consider referral to the relevant external agency, including the police or children's social care where appropriate.

6. Roles and responsibilities

- All staff: model respectful behaviour; take reports seriously; respond promptly; record concerns; and follow this policy, the Behaviour Policy and safeguarding procedures.
- Headteachers and the leadership team: ensure the policy is implemented; oversee appropriate responses; review CPOMS records and patterns; ensure staff know the reporting route; and report relevant information to the Governors and trust leaders in line with the scheme of delegation.
- Designated Safeguarding Lead and deputy DSLs: assess and manage safeguarding aspects of concerns, including possible child-on-child abuse, and make referrals in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- Governors and trust leaders: provide appropriate oversight and challenge, review patterns and the effectiveness of the school's approach, and ensure that relevant trust-level procedures are followed.
- Parents and carers: encourage children to speak up, model respectful behaviour and work constructively with the school to address concerns.
- Pupils: treat others with respect, report concerns to a trusted adult and support peers safely. Pupils are not expected to investigate bullying or resolve unsafe situations themselves.

7. Recording, monitoring and review

- Concerns and incidents will be recorded on CPOMS in line with school recording procedures, including where an initial report is not ultimately identified as bullying if it raises a behaviour or safeguarding concern.
- The safeguarding team will monitor records for repeat incidents, locations, groups, protected-characteristic concerns and other patterns, while maintaining appropriate confidentiality.
- Information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of prevention and response, identify training needs and inform reports to the governors and trust leaders as appropriate.
- The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or school practice changes. Pupil, staff and parent/carers feedback will inform the review where appropriate.

8. Linked policies and guidance

- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy (or the school's current equivalent)
- Staff Code of Conduct and complaints procedures, where relevant

Policy reviewed: September 2026

Next scheduled review: September 2027