Aims:

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at schools.

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves. The three main types of bullying are:

• physical (hitting, kicking, theft)

• verbal (name calling, racist remarks)

• indirect (spreading rumours, excluding someone from social groups).

The nature of their learning needs means that pupils with Autism, SLD and PMLD may not have sufficient understanding or awareness that certain behaviours directed towards others may be undesirable or that they might be construed as bullying. Similarly, some pupils at St Andrew’s, who are the recipients of such behaviours may be unable to express or communicate their aversion to such behaviours or to tell adults. This means that all staff at St Andrew’s School have a duty to not only be aware of such behaviours and of any child involved, but also to respond appropriately to instances of bullying behaviours.

If necessary, St Andrew’s School can draw upon a range of skilled and knowledgeable professionals to help devise strategies to manage and reduce bullying behaviours and their effects. This could be for example enlisting the assistance of SLT for sharing social stories or helping with appropriate symbols.

Implementation:

The pupils attending St Andrew’s School all have an Individual Education Plan. This may mean that they are likely to have a limited ability to comprehend that they may be engaging in activities which have the characteristics of bullying behaviour. These may include wanting to be near a ‘target’ child or being interested in making physical contact with a pupil, such as touching a particular part of his or her body, or demonstrating potentially physically harmful behaviours, such as kicking or pinching the skin. The pupil who is the target may show fear or anxiety when they see the pupil who targets them. This information must be shared amongst all members of the class team, and also shared with other members of staff as soon as possible, particularly with those on duty during playtimes and lunchtime. Staff need to be skilful in observing the outcomes of the behaviours described above. It is important to refer to pupil documents such as the sensory passport. The proactive strategies being employed to overcome a pupil’s potential or actual bullying behaviour must be recorded in the chronologies of all the involved children. Strategies need to be carried out over a specific time span and their effectiveness reviewed. It is important that strategies are shared with parents and carers of the pupils involved so that there is a consistency of approach at school and at home. It is also important to help the pupil who is the target of bullying behaviour, particularly as he or she may have difficulty communicating about their experiences. The child should be able to communicate in his or her preferred mode. The pupils need to understand that they will always be “safe” if they do this.

Bullying and The St Andrew’s School Curriculum

In all work with pupils, staff emphasise the importance of developing social skills, including respect for the feelings of others. Where pupils have difficulties interacting appropriately with their peers or with adults, then staff aim to help them develop an awareness of why particular behaviours are valued socially and what is inappropriate. The St Andrew’s School curriculum builds on this through a wide range of activities and social learning experiences. Staff are important role models for the pupils. The behaviour of adults towards each other and towards the pupils is a potentially highly effective tool for preventing and for decreasing bullying behaviours in pupils with Autism, SLD and PMLD. Monitoring, evaluation and review The school will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.