



ST JOHN'S
CE Primary School
Part of the Aquinas Trust

Belonging Charter

(Christian Ethos – Warm and Welcoming)

“One body, many valued members—each cherished, each needed.”

Applies to: All pupils, staff, AAC members, volunteers and families.

Next review due: January 2027

Rationale and Vision

Our school is a place of welcome and hope. Rooted in a theologically grounded Christian vision, we draw on the Apostle Paul's teaching that *"just as the body is one and has many members... so it is with Christ"* (1 Corinthians 12). Every person carries God given dignity, purpose, and unique gifts.

In a small school, every relationship matters; every interaction can nurture safety, identity, and success. Belonging is not accidental— it is prayerfully envisioned and deliberately practised through inclusive systems, compassionate relationships, and calm, proactive behaviour for learning.-given dignity, purpose, and unique gifts.

Paul's teaching reminds us that, just as a body has many parts—hands, feet, eyes, and ears—each different yet essential, so every individual in our community contributes to the wholeness of the whole. When one part flourishes, all are strengthened; when one part struggles, the whole body responds with care. This vision shapes not only our theology but our daily practice: we gladly serve families of all faiths and none, affirming equal worth and shared purpose while expressing our ethos through language of care, reconciliation, and service.

Definition of 'belonging'

Belonging means each child is known by name and story, feels accepted, and is celebrated for who they are and who they are becoming. Inclusion is intentionally designed through positive routines and strong relationships; pupils see themselves represented in the curriculum, the environment, and the celebrations of our community. Like the many parts of one body, pupils have voice and agency in the life of the school and in decisions that affect them. Their participation strengthens the whole.

We believe that when we live by this vision—of one body made up of many valued members—the Holy Spirit brings us together as one family, no matter our backgrounds, experiences, or beliefs. Every child is important; every contribution matters; every person is needed to make our community work well. This is the heart of belonging in our school: mutual care, shared responsibility, and the hope that every child can flourish in a community where all are honoured.

We use 'The Four A's' in school to underpin everything we do

The Four A's		Opportunities to be in  TEAM ALWAYS
Always Responsible	Prepared, organised, punctual, generous, forgiveness, justice, truthfulness	
Always Respectful	Compassion, kindness, empathy, listening to others, humility, trust, peace, thankfulness	
Always Growing	Open to feedback, continuous learning, perseverance, hope, creativity, wisdom	
Always United	Team spirit, including others, celebrating diversity, courage, friendship, service	

The Four A's show how everyone plays an important part in the school community. By taking responsibility, caring for others, learning from mistakes and including everyone, pupils help create a strong, supportive "team" where each person is valued. This shared commitment builds a sense of belonging, reminding everyone that they matter and that the school works best when all members contribute and feel included.

Guiding Principles

- Inclusive by design: Structures and routines proactively create connection and ease of access.
- Relationships for all: Staff notice the good, however small, and nurture progress with encouragement.
- Proactive behaviour for learning: Calm, predictable, relational approaches support regulation and readiness to learn.
- Community partnership: Parents/carers and local partners are valued co-educators—especially vital in small schools.
- Equity: We remove barriers that disproportionately affect disadvantaged pupils, including those eligible for Pupil Premium.
- Theological framing: Each person matters. We honour gifts and stories and practise restoration when relationships rupture.

Aims

- Strengthen daily attendance and reduce persistent absence through connection and welcome.
- Ensure every pupil has at least two ‘go-to’ adults who know them well.
- Embed Establish–Maintain–Restore (EMR) routines across school (**Establish–Maintain–Restore (EMR)** is a simple way schools support children’s behaviour and wellbeing. It focuses on building positive relationships first, then helping children stay on track, and finally supporting them to recover when things go wrong).
- Deepen family engagement, particularly where barriers exist (work patterns, transport, language, confidence).
- Express our theological vision—one body, many members—so systems and celebrations reflect equal dignity and shared contribution.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Headteacher: Leads strategy; ensures systems, training, and monitoring.

- Belonging Lead (e.g., AHT/SENCO): Coordinates implementation; tracks data; leads staff coaching.
- Attendance Lead: Aligns Belonging and Attendance plans; analyses patterns and initiates early help.
- Class Teachers/Support Staff: Deliver EMR routines; know pupils and families well; log positive contacts.
- Admin/Office Team: Warm front-of-house; proactive communication; welcome new families.
- AAC members: Monitor impact; champion equity and community links.
- Faith Lead/Chaplain: Support theological integration and inclusive worship/ethos activities, ensuring practices remain welcoming to all.

Whole-School (Universal) Practices

A. Daily Welcome & Close

- Two staff greet pupils by name at the gate each morning; birthdays noted from the MIS; positive handovers at the end of the day.
- Calm, predictable morning routines that establish connection (check-ins, smiles, eye contact).
- Language of mutual belonging: The Four A's.

B. EMR Relationship Routines (for all staff)

- Establish: learn interests; anticipate barriers; set a positive tone at the start of the day or lesson.
- Maintain: frequent, tailored encouragement (public or discreet as appropriate); showcase everyone's work.
- Restore: regulated, restorative conversations; timely consequences concluded the same day; clear 'we've moved on' messages.
- Theological application: restoration is reconciliation—repairing relationships with dignity and hope.

C. Curriculum & Representation

- Displays include all children's work; curriculum reflects local cultures and context to reinforce identity and pride.
- Include stories of service, cooperation, and care that embody 'many members, one body,' while remaining inclusive and respectful of diverse beliefs.

D. Community & Parent Events

- Regular, inclusive invitations: church or community services, coffee mornings, 'learn-together' sessions; flexible timings for parents' evenings.
- Opt-in faith/ethos activities are welcoming, never compulsory, and framed around universal values of care, dignity, and service.

Targeted and Specialist Support (Tiered)

Targeted (some pupils/families)

- A key adult is assigned; 2–3 daily positive micro-interactions; check-in/check-out routines.
- Flexible meeting times/venues; outreach to families new to the area or less connected to the local community.
- Use belonging narratives ('You are needed here; your presence strengthens us') to encourage attendance and engagement.

Specialist (few pupils)

- Multi-agency planning; SEMH interventions with clear entry/exit criteria; adapted timetables where necessary—always linked back to belonging/EMR routines.
- Include pastoral as part of coordinated plans, respecting family preferences and beliefs.

Attendance Interface

- Belonging actions sit within the Attendance Plan: early, relational contact; problem-solving conversations; address barriers (transport, uniform, breakfast).
- Weekly review of at-risk pupils; celebrate improved patterns publicly (opt-in) or discreetly per child preference.

- Frame attendance messages around community and contribution ('many members, one body') rather than punishment.

Behaviour for Learning & Restorative Practice

- Behaviour policy aligns with EMR: predictable routines, explicit teaching of expectations, immediate repair/restore cycles.
- Staff meet pupils at their level, identify root causes, co-plan 'next time' strategies, and close the loop before the end of the day where possible.
- Theological lens: we seek restoration over retribution—repairing harm, rejoining community, and affirming dignity.

Pupil Voice and Leadership

- Half-termly pupil panels (randomly selected plus representatives) review belonging (welcome, safety, fairness, representation).
- Play leaders support playground inclusion; 'New to School Buddies' for arrivals. New reception class starters have a Year 6 buddy.
- Opportunities for service and leadership that model mutual care and contribution.

Family Partnership

- Visible presence at the gate; quick conversations normalised; follow-up calls of appreciation as well as concerns.
- Translation/interpretation or community connectors as needed; flexible appointment windows; childcare/refreshments at workshops.
- Home-school contracts shared with families for targeted pupils (attendance, routines, morning transitions). Parent conduct shared with parents via school newsletter every September.
- Offer inclusive, opt-in opportunities for families to explore the school's Christian ethos and how it underpins belonging.

Community Engagement (Small-School Strengths)

- Invite local figures; deliver community event invitations; use local spaces for learning to build pride and shared identity—always with consent and attention to pupil dignity.
- Partnerships with local churches/faith groups emphasise service, inclusion, and welfare.

Transitions

- In-year admissions: same-day welcome pack; buddy allocated; introduction tour; teacher check-in phone calls made in the first week.
- EY/KS moves: teacher handover includes ‘what helps me belong’; family meet-and-greet with flexible slots.
- Where families express specific faith/ethos preferences, incorporate these respectfully into transition planning (where possible and appropriate).

Staff Development & Support

- Induction covers EMR, meet-and-greet routines, restorative language, inclusive display norms, and working with families facing disadvantage.
- Ongoing coaching: brief fortnightly drop-ins on EMR micro-skills and positive noticing; peer observation and feedback.
- Training on integrating theological ethos with inclusive practice (e.g., language of dignity, reconciliation, and service).

Data, Monitoring & Evaluation

- Children questionnaires: Termly pulse check (e.g., 3–5 questions on feeling known, safety, representation).
- Dashboards (termly): attendance by group, positive/negative incidents, restoratives completed same day, % of pupils with two ‘go-to’ adults, participation in clubs/events.

Safeguarding and Wellbeing

- Belonging signals (withdrawal, lateness, non-participation) are early indicators for unmet need, prompting gentle check-ins and, where necessary, safeguarding procedures.

- Our theological commitment affirms safeguarding as the protection of every child's dignity as a valued member of the community.

Communication

- Staff: weekly briefings include 'belonging wins' and upcoming family touchpoints.
- Parents/carers: termly updates on belonging (e.g., 'how we welcome every child,' 'how restorative works here') in the school newsletter
- Pupils: Collective worships reinforce 'everyone belongs here' with pupil-led stories and celebrations and optional ethos reflections on unity and care.

Ethos Inspiration & Application

- We are one community with many members. Each person is needed; each is honoured. We are joined together not by sameness but by shared care, dignity, and purpose.
- Daily welcome practices embody mutual care and recognition.
- Restorative approaches prioritise reconciliation and rejoining the community.
- Curriculum and displays celebrate diverse gifts and stories.
- Service projects and partnerships enact belonging through contribution.