Cuckney C of E Primary School
Anti-Bullying Policy

Dream, Believe, Achieve

'Nothing will be impossible with God' Luke 1:37

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Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council Policy Guidance and Policy for Anti-Bullying 2nd September 2026

This document consists of three separate resources:

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1. Guidance for your school's/setting's Anti-Bullying Policy

Links to KCSiE 2026:

This guidance and associated policy template for Anti-Bullying has been written to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1 September 2026) Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

KCSiE 2026 states that: All staff should be aware of systems within their school or college which support safeguarding, and these should be explained to them as part of a staff induction. This includes '*measures to prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying*'.

Regardless of how a school chooses to define or respond to bullying, policies and procedures should be clearly communicated and understood by pupils, parents/carers, and staff. If incidents do occur, they should be dealt with quickly and effectively.

Incidents of bullying may be considered as 'Child-on-Child Abuse'. Nottinghamshire County Council have developed a 'Child-on-Child' Abuse Policy Guidance and Template document – please see Section 2 for details of who to contact to request a copy of this.

Supporting SEND pupils:

KCSiE 2026 states that '*children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) or certain medical or physical health conditions can face additional safeguarding challenges both online and offline'*. It also states that these children can be *'more prone to peer group isolation or bullying (including prejudice-based bullying) than other children'* and there is a '*potential for children with SEND or certain medical conditions' to be 'disproportionately impacted by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs'* and that they may have '*communication barriers and difficulties in managing or reporting these challenges'.* Schools should be particularly mindful about these children when outlining their reporting procedures in the main body of the Anti-Bullying policy.

Schools should be mindful that some children with SEND may not always recognise that they are experiencing bullying or perhaps displaying bullying behaviours, particularly where there are difficulties with social communication, understanding social relationships or identifying harmful behaviours. In these circumstances, staff may need to proactively identify concerns through observation, regular conversations and partnership working with parents/carers.

Schools should ensure that reporting systems are accessible to all pupils, including those with SEND. Some children may find it difficult to recognise bullying behaviour, communicate their experiences, understand reporting processes, or describe what has happened to them. Schools should therefore consider whether additional adjustments are needed to enable children to report concerns in ways that meet their communication needs and preferences.

Adjustments may include:

- Using visual reporting tools, emotion scales, photos, symbols, Widgit resources, communication boards and/or Comic Strip Conversations.
- Providing alternative methods of reporting, such as worry boxes, email reporting systems, digital forms, trusted adults or one-to-one check-ins.
- Allowing pupils additional time to communicate and process questions.
- Using familiar adults who understand the child's communication preferences and communication style.
- Considering the support of Teaching Assistants, SENCOs, ELSAs, Speech and Language professionals or other trusted staff where appropriate.
- Regularly checking in with identified vulnerable pupils rather than relying solely on self-reporting.
- Ensuring pupils understand what bullying is and how it differs from friendship difficulties, teasing and relational conflict through adapted and accessible teaching materials.

Recommended definition of bullying and 'relational conflict':

Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council recommend the definition of bullying provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face to face or online."

Schools may find it helpful to use the term **'relational conflict'** when discussing friendship fallouts or incidents occurring between pupils that do not fall into the category of bullying. Relational conflict usually involves individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status, the behaviours happen occasionally and could be considered accidental. Usually, following an incident, pupils show remorse and there is a general willingness to make things right or resolve the conflict. Not all relational conflict or falling out leads to bullying, but schools must be aware that some does – we must bear in mind that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.

Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as 'relational conflict' or 'bullying', schools need to address the situation and support the pupils to resolve any negative feelings. Schools must monitor children following a 'relational conflict' to ensure that the situation has been resolved and does not escalate to bullying. Schools must challenge, address, and monitor any incidents of bullying, to ensure the bullying does not continue and that all pupils feel supported (this may include the children involved in the incident as well as any bystanders or witnesses).

Recommended language / Key terminology:

It is important to be mindful about the language we use when referring to children involved in relational conflicts or bullying incidents – terminology like 'victim' and 'bully' may be unhelpful as it can often be interpreted as a label or something that says that's what the child *is* rather than what they've experienced, or what behaviour they have perpetrated/displayed. Wherever possible, we would recommend using strengths-based language that acknowledges the experiences that children have had but also recognises that children's behaviour can change. Some young people may self-identify as a 'victim', but we should try to use language like 'target' or 'child who has experienced bullying behaviour'. Similarly, we should try to avoid language like 'bully' or 'aggressor' – instead we should try to use phrases like 'the child who has displayed bullying behaviour' or 'child who has allegedly perpetrated bullying behaviour'.

This language shift may be particularly important due to the latest evidence and research which shows that bullying tends to be a group behaviour and several different people with different roles can be involved – these roles can then shift depending on the scenario, who is present and the dynamics in the group. It's important for us to acknowledge that very rarely do bullying situations involve *just* a 'target' and a 'perpetrator', and instead there are often 'ringleaders', 'reinforcers', 'assistants' and 'defenders' etc. It is sometimes possible for a perceived 'target' to become the alleged 'perpetrator' if the power imbalance shifts. Please see the following link for further information: Bullying as a group behaviour

Concerns regarding the behaviour of adults towards pupils:

Whilst this guidance and policy template primarily focuses on bullying between children and young people, schools should recognise that some pupils may perceive the behaviour of an adult as intimidating, humiliating, degrading, targeted or repetitive in nature. Schools should ensure that pupils and parents/carers know how to report concerns about the behaviour of adults working within the school community.

It is important to distinguish between child-on-child bullying and concerns relating to the conduct of adults. Allegations, complaints or concerns about staff behaviour towards pupils would not normally be defined or recorded

as bullying incidents within the school's Anti-Bullying procedures. Instead, they should be considered in line with the school's safeguarding responsibilities, staff code of conduct, complaints procedures, disciplinary processes and allegations management procedures where appropriate.

Schools may wish to include a brief statement within their Anti-Bullying Policy confirming that:

- All adults are expected to treat pupils with dignity, respect and professionalism.
- Pupils can report concerns about the behaviour of any adult.
- Concerns will be taken seriously and investigated appropriately.
- Reports relating to adults will be managed through relevant safeguarding, complaints, conduct or disciplinary procedures.
- Appropriate support will be offered to any pupil affected by the behaviour of an adult.

Types of bullying behaviour:

Within the policy template, we include a list of different types of bullying behaviour – and we state:

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling, gossiping.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online / Cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion, posting / sharing socially embarrassing material etc.
- Indirect – can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation.
- Prejudice-related – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist (ableist) in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their sex, religion or beliefs, race/ethnicity/nationality; or because they have a learning or physical disability; or because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling or friend who is. It may include misogyny or misandry and be sexist in nature. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

We have also made specific reference to two more types of bullying behaviour – 'Baiting' and 'False Friendships'.

- Baiting is 'a provocative act used to solicit an angry, aggressive or emotional response from another individual' – 'baiting can be used in bullying both on and offline and it can be used to bully someone to get 'a rise' out of them and it can be used to antagonise those who might be bullying others to get them to bully'. Research shows us that 'sometimes baiting is used secretively to try to get a person to explode in a rage or react negatively/loudly so that they get in to trouble'. Sometimes, children who have SEND may experience baiting from their peers as their triggers may be more well-known amongst the group.
- False friendships 'describe relationships where someone pretends to be your friend, or is your 'friend' sometimes, but actually uses their power to bully you'. Research shows that 'false friendships can sometimes be hard for adults to identify' and that some children may be more likely to experience them if they don't understand what a good friend is.

Contextual Safeguarding and interventions:

Bullying can happen to any child, and it can have a significant impact on their social, emotional and mental health. School staff should support all pupils who have experienced/are experiencing bullying – the nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need.

Pupils involved in bullying incidents, whether they have experienced bullying, displayed bullying behaviour, or witnessed incidents as bystanders, may experience emotional distress, anxiety, low mood, reduced self-esteem, emotional dysregulation, school avoidance, changes in behaviour, self-harm concerns or other mental health and wellbeing difficulties. Staff should remain professionally curious and consider whether additional pastoral, mental health, wellbeing or safeguarding support may be required.

All staff should consider the context within which incidents and/or bullying behaviours occur. Schools should consider the motivations behind the bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety and welfare of the perpetrator. The child who has displayed bullying-type behaviours should also be supported. Schools should consider both risk factors and protective factors when assessing the needs of pupils involved in bullying incidents. Protective factors such as supportive relationships, trusted adults, positive peer networks, engagement with education and participation in wider activities can help promote resilience and reduce future risk. In some circumstances, schools may wish to implement individual safety plans or risk reduction measures to help keep pupils safe whilst support and interventions are ongoing.

Schools should consider whether incidents of prejudice-based bullying or discriminatory behaviour indicate wider safeguarding concerns, vulnerabilities or experiences of harm. Additional safeguarding assessment or support may be required where there are concerns regarding racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia, disability prejudice, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia or other forms of discrimination.

Staff should exercise professional curiosity when responding to incidents of bullying or relational conflict. This means seeking to understand not only what has happened, but also what may be contributing to the behaviour or experience. Staff should consider wider factors such as friendships, peer dynamics, online activity, family circumstances, experiences of discrimination, unmet needs, previous experiences of harm, emotional wellbeing and other contextual safeguarding factors.

Witnessing or being a bystander to bullying incidents may also affect a child's wellbeing, school staff should proactively support those children too in processing their experiences.

Using data and the importance of monitoring:

It is good practice for schools to collect data about bullying and relational conflict – and then to use this data to make whole-school change. When schools implement new reporting strategies or recording systems, they may expect to see an increase in the number of reports. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that there is an increased number of incidents of bullying, instead it may indicate that young people feel better able to report incidents and are more confident that the school will respond and support. Higher reports may also indicate that young people have a greater awareness of behaviours which may be considered as bullying.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) states that 'one of the key aspects of preventing bullying and minimising negative impacts is to have a good understanding of who is being bullied'. The ABA suggest schools gather information so they can 'better understand what issues or trends are emerging that need to be addressed head on'.

It may be appropriate and helpful for schools to collect and monitor the following types of data throughout the academic year: surveys for pupils and parents to spot issues or emerging concerns, audits to assess knowledge and confidence of staff, discussions with pupils and peer mentors to flag 'hot spots' and analysis of key themes / topics of bullying that may indicate pupils need education to address their understanding or prejudices. Data analysis of reports of bullying may also highlight key pupils who are repeatedly experiencing or displaying bullying behaviours – this may then highlight that further safeguarding, or mental health and wellbeing interventions are needed.

Schools may also find it helpful to analyse bullying data by protected characteristic and vulnerability factors, including but not exclusive to SEND, looked after status, young carers and pupils eligible for free school meals. This may support schools to identify any disproportionality in experiences and target preventative work appropriately.

Referencing Banter vs Bullying in your Anti-Bullying policy:

Over the last few years, we have worked with colleagues from Nottingham Trent University to include references to banter in our model Anti-Bullying policy, as it is recognised that some bullying can be passed off as 'just banter'. There is a specific reference to banter within the 'What does bullying behaviour look like?' section of the policy – further information and professional guidance is detailed below.

Banter is an increasingly relevant part of discussions relating to bullying; however, it is important to acknowledge that banter is not inherently bullying and can be an important part of social bonding and friendships. At the same time, we know that some bullying is passed off as 'just banter', and that banter can quickly escalate to inappropriate or harmful exchanges and bullying.

This policy defines 'prosocial banter' as 'playful, typically funny, reciprocal, teasing between friends'. Prosocial banter can occur both online and offline and includes a range of behaviours that may be verbal, physical, or information/message sharing (online). When engaging in prosocial banter, all parties present exchange banter and all share the positive experience. Banter can include some of the bullying behaviours set out in this policy document, so it is important to distinguish between shared positive social bonding and inappropriate banter and bullying.

Schools can make this distinction by identifying:

- The **intention** behind the comment and/or behaviour
    - Was the intention to cause harm? It is important to acknowledge that with banter the intent is typically to be funny or to have a laugh, whereas other aggressive behaviours tend to have less-positive intentions. However, sometimes banter can go wrong, and mistakes can be made if what is intended to be funny is not received in the way it was intended. Judging the intent of banter can be complex and prone to ambiguity. Some individuals may use banter to 'mask' or excuse ill-intentioned interactions. Others may not intend for banter to be problematic, but the banter may be misinterpreted.
- The **content** of the comment and/or behaviour
    - Does everyone understand and agree that comments or actions are banter? Was the banter wanted by the recipient? Banter is more likely to be perceived positively when it happens amongst people who are friends and share an understanding of communication and social boundaries. The social context is important to consider; for example, is it online/offline? Was the comment/behaviour in public (i.e., open for anyone to see) or private settings (i.e., a closed social network such as a WhatsApp group) with known others/strangers? It's important to also consider the size and composition of the audience, as sharing banter with larger audiences who include members outside of friendship groups can cross the line of acceptability.
- The **topic** of the banter
    - Was the topic of the banter appropriate or inappropriate? Is it a topic that the recipient has acknowledged that it is ok to banter about? Was there language, behaviours/actions or online content (e.g., pictures, emojis) used that could be considered objectively offensive such as racist, homophobic, sexist slurs?

Schools can support their pupils by:

1) Providing reporting mechanisms for pupils to encourage and enable them to speak out and address any concerns. These reporting mechanisms will already be listed, in detail, in the main body of your Anti-Bullying policy.
2) Ensuring that pupils are aware of what banter is and that they can distinguish between positive/prosocial banter and bullying. Supporting young people to navigate the complexities of online banter through targeted

lessons and assemblies - this includes promoting and championing positive friendships and social relationships as well as highlighting some of the barriers.

Please see the **Useful Resources section of this document** for the link to our Anti-Bullying Padlet which contains a column of recommended resources to support with the topic of banter (and other Anti-Bullying topics).

Policy requirements:

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that *maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils.* The Independent School Standards Regulations (England Amendment) 2012 state that *the proprietor of an academy or other independent school is required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy and health & safety strategy is drawn up and implemented*.

Some schools choose to include this information in a separate Anti-Bullying policy, whereas others choose to include the information in their behaviour policy. Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council support the view held by the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), that a **separate** Anti-Bullying policy provides greater clarity about a school's Anti-Bullying strategy. A **policy template** is attached to this document (available on pages 9-16), the areas in red are for you to amend and ensure they reflect your school's current practice.

It is good practice to link your school's Anti-Bullying Policy with other key school / setting policies – including:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse policy
- Online Safety policy
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (RSHE) Policy
- Equality Policy

Preventing bullying:

A school's response to bullying should not start at the point at which a child has been bullied, schools should have a variety of strategies in place to promote friendly behaviours and prevent or discourage bullying-type behaviours. '*Schools which excel at tackling bullying have created an ethos of good behaviour where pupils treat one another and the school staff with respect because they know that is the right way to behave' (*Preventing and tackling bullying (publishing.service.gov.uk)).

Schools should:

- Involve parents/carers – ensure that they are aware that the school does not tolerate bullying and that they know what procedures to follow if they believe their child is being bullied or is displaying bullying behaviours. Parents/carers should feel confident that the school will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child (**Please note, even if an incident is not deemed as 'bullying' following an investigation, the pupil(s) and parents/carers may need further support. Please see information about 'relational conflict'**)
- Involve pupils – ensure pupils know how to report bullying and how they can play a part in preventing bullying (including their role as a bystander). Make it easy for pupils to report bullying – they must be assured that they will be listened to, and all reports will be acted on. Pupils should also feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside school including cyber-bullying (**Please note, the Education and Inspections Act 2006 states that "Head teachers have the legal power to make sure pupils behave outside of school premises". Head teachers have the power to discipline their students for any bullying incidents outside of school 'to such an extent that is reasonable'. This includes bullying that happens anywhere off the school premises, on the way to or from school, or online**).
- Regularly evaluate and update their Anti-Bullying approach – e.g., take account of technology developments and be mindful of the global rise in cyber-bullying. It is good practice, as with the

development of all policies, to consult with all main school stakeholders, such as – pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors, and the wider community.

- Follow the school's behaviour policy and implement appropriate interventions and/or sanctions for incidents of bullying.
- Openly discuss differences between people which could 'motivate bullying' e.g., religion & belief, race & ethnicity, disability, gender identity, sex, sexuality, or appearance-related differences. Also discuss different family situations such as looked after children and children with caring responsibilities.
- Provide effective staff training - Staff training should include awareness of prejudice-related bullying, online bullying, SEND vulnerabilities, trauma-informed practice and professional curiosity. Training should also include awareness of harmful online influences, influencers, online communities, misogynistic and discriminatory content, harmful gender stereotypes and attitudes, and other online content which may contribute to bullying, harassment, prejudice or harmful behaviours **(for resources that may be supportive with providing this training, please visit the 'Training Opportunities' column on the Anti-Bullying Padlet – the link is provided in the Useful Resources section of this document)**
- Work with the wider community (such as the police, the Local Authority, or Children's Services) to agree a clearly understood approach to cases where bullying is particularly serious or persistent and where a criminal offence may have been committed.
- Create an inclusive environment – schools should create a safe environment where pupils can openly discuss the cause of their bullying, without fear of further bullying or discrimination.
- Consider reporting mechanisms - schools should consider whether anonymous reporting mechanisms may encourage some pupils to disclose concerns they would otherwise feel unable to share.
- Celebrate success – this is an important way of creating a positive school ethos.
- Promote a culture of mutual respect between children and adults, ensuring that all interactions are positive, professional and supportive.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to discuss trusted adults, professional boundaries and how to raise concerns if they feel uncomfortable about the behaviour of an adult.

2. Useful resources regarding Anti-Bullying and related topics

When creating your Anti-Bullying policy and updating your Anti-Bullying strategy, it may be helpful to refer to the following key documents and websites:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026: Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026: Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying 2017: Preventing bullying - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Equality Act 2010 guidance: Equality Act 2010: guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Education and Inspections Act 2006: Education and Inspections Act 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education guidance 2026: Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education - GOV.UK
- Anti-Bullying Alliance website for information about bullying, Anti-Bullying week, whole school approaches etc.: Anti-Bullying Alliance
- Nott Alone website – separate pages of information for children and young people, parents and carers and professionals: Bullying | NottAlone

We have also created an Anti-Bullying Padlet which has a huge range of resources including research reports, curriculum resources and lesson plans, resources for parents and carers, and links to quality assured training opportunities. This Padlet is available here: Anti-Bullying Padlet and it contains relevant information for all schools and settings across Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council.

If you are a school / setting within Nottingham City and you would like further support or information – please contact: Claire Maclean (Schools and Education Safeguarding Coordinator): Claire.Maclean@nottinghamcity.gov.uk

If you are a school / setting within Nottinghamshire and you would like further support or information - please contact: The Education, Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing Hub (ESHAWH): eshawh@nottscc.gov.uk

3. Anti-Bullying Policy

Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council Policy Template - Anti-Bullying Policy

2nd September 2026

Introduction

At Cuckney C of E Primary School we aim to provide a supportive, caring, and friendly environment which allows all our pupils to learn in an atmosphere which is focussed on improving their life chances and helping them to maximise their potential. We expect our pupils to act safely, and feel safe, in and outside of school – we do not tolerate any form of bullying, and we are committed to preventing and tackling it. We recognise that as children learn and grow together, they may experience fallouts with their peers, but we are committed to supporting our pupils to resolve these 'relational conflicts' and stop them from progressing to bullying behaviours. If an incident of bullying does occur, we believe our pupils, parents/carers and staff should feel confident in reporting it and know that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. Bullying will never be tolerated at our school.

At Cuckney C of E Primary School we encourage open discussions around differences between people, we actively challenge prejudice, and we celebrate diversity. We adopt a contextual safeguarding, trauma-informed and strengths-based approach to bullying and child-on-child abuse, and we are committed to working with families and outside agencies where appropriate.

Whilst this policy primarily addresses bullying involving pupils, we recognise that harmful behaviour can also occur within relationships involving adults and children. Any concerns that a member of staff, volunteer, contractor or other adult may have bullied, intimidated, humiliated, victimised or otherwise caused harm to a pupil will be treated seriously and responded to in line with the school's safeguarding, staff conduct, allegations against staff, and complaints procedures. All pupils have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

Policy Development

This policy has been developed to reflect the most recent Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) Statutory Guidance (1st September 2026) and was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from:

- Members of staff (through staff meetings, consultations, surveys)
- Parents/carers (through written consultations, parents evening meetings, focus groups)
- Pupils (through the school council, circle time in class, surveys)
- Governors (through governor meetings and governor training)
- Other partners (discussions with breakfast clubs, after school providers, local PCSO etc.)

This policy is available:

- Online at at www.cuckneyprimaryschool.co.uk
- From the school office
- Child friendly versions are on display and in welcome packs for new pupils

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at our school are aware that children may bully other children, and that this can happen both inside and outside of school, and online. All staff understand the school's Anti-Bullying strategy and approach and know the important role that they each have in preventing and tackling bullying.

The Head Teacher, Mrs Lisa Crossland has overall responsibility for Anti-Bullying at our school. They are responsible for appointing an Anti-Bullying Coordinator and liaising with the Governing body, parents/carers, the Local Authority, and outside agencies when appropriate.

The Anti-Bullying Coordinator Miss Rebecca Worboys is responsible for:

- Policy development and review (ensuring that pupils, staff, governors, and parents/carers have opportunities to contribute)
- Implementing the policy and monitoring/assessing its effectiveness
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Coordinating Anti-Bullying training and support for staff and parents/carers where appropriate
- Monitoring the effectiveness of strategies for preventing bullying behaviour

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and their Deputy in our school are: Mrs Lisa Crossland and Miss Rebeca Worboys. Safeguarding is the responsibility of all, however all staff, parents/carers and pupils need to be aware of who to report to and how to report any safeguarding concerns.

The nominated Governor with responsibility for Anti-Bullying and Behaviour is Mrs Margaret Lovell.

All staff are expected to model respectful, professional and inclusive behaviour at all times. Staff must not engage in behaviour that could be experienced by a child as intimidating, humiliating, degrading, bullying or discriminatory. Any concerns regarding adult conduct towards pupils must be reported in line with safeguarding procedures.

What is bullying and how does it differ to relational conflict?

At Cuckney C of E Primary School we have adopted the definition of bullying provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance:

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, or psychological. It can happen face to face or online."

We recognise that bullying can take many forms and can affect any child. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups (for example on grounds of race & ethnicity, religion & belief, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, special educational needs, or disabilities, or because a child is adopted, in care or has caring responsibilities). Bullying can be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

However, we also recognise that incidents may occur between pupils, which may not be deemed as 'bullying' but still require support or intervention from trusted adults. These incidents may be referred to as 'relational conflicts' or falling out. Relational conflict differs to bullying in the fact that it is usually between individuals or groups who are relatively similar in power and status (a power balance), and the behaviours or incidents occur occasionally (not repetitive) or occur by accident (not intentional). Usually, following a relational conflict incident, pupils show remorse and there is a general willingness to make things right or to resolve the conflict.

Not all relational conflict or falling out leads to bullying, but our school is aware that occasionally some can, and we are mindful that unresolved bad feelings or relationship problems left unaddressed can be the start of a pattern of behaviour in which the intention becomes to cause harm or distress.

Our school recognises that behaviours exist on a continuum. Relational conflict, inappropriate behaviour, prejudice-related incidents, bullying behaviour and Child-on-Child Abuse are distinct concepts but can be linked. Whilst most incidents of relational conflict will not escalate, unaddressed concerns, harmful attitudes or repeated behaviours may develop into more serious bullying or safeguarding concerns. We are committed to early identification,

intervention and education to prevent escalation and ensure that all pupils receive appropriate support at the earliest opportunity.

Although bullying and relational conflicts can take place between individuals, we recognise that it often takes place in front of others (either physically or virtually), pupils who witness these incidents/behaviours are often referred to as 'bystanders'.

Regardless of whether an incident or situation is deemed as 'relational conflict' or 'bullying', our school will address the situation and support the pupils to resolve any negative feelings. Our school will monitor children following an episode of relational conflict to ensure that the situation has been resolved and does not escalate to bullying. Our school will challenge, address, and monitor any incidents of bullying, to ensure that it does not continue and that all pupils feel supported (this will include the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders, and the wider school community).

What does bullying behaviour look like?

At Cuckney C of E Primary School we consider the context within which incidents and/or behaviours of concern occur. We will consider the motivations behind the behaviours and will take into account the age and stage of development of the pupils involved. Our focus will always be the safety and welfare of all children involved.

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal – name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling and gossiping.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books/belongings, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation, and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online / Cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending abusive or threatening messages, social exclusion, posting or sharing embarrassing or harmful material, image-based abuse, the sharing or threatened sharing of intimate images, AI-generated content, digitally manipulated images or videos, deepfake imagery, nudification technology and other technology-assisted behaviours intended to humiliate, harass, threaten or exploit others.
- Indirect – can include the exploitation of individuals such as 'false friendships', criminal exploitation, sexual exploitation, and radicalisation.
- Prejudice-related – derogatory and discriminatory language and behaviour including that which is racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic and disablist (ableist) in nature. This language and behaviour may be directed towards people because of their sex, religion or beliefs, race/ethnicity/nationality; or because they have a learning or physical disability; or because they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans, or are perceived to be, or have a parent/carer, sibling or friend who is. It may include misogyny or misandry and be sexist in nature. Such language and behaviour are generally used to refer to something or someone as inferior.

Our school recognises that prejudice-based bullying may also constitute a safeguarding concern. Racism, faith-targeted abuse, antisemitism, Islamophobia, disability-based prejudice, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other discriminatory behaviours can significantly affect a child's wellbeing, sense of safety, welfare and educational experience. Such incidents will not be viewed solely as behaviour or equality matters and will be responded to appropriately in line with safeguarding procedures where necessary.

There is no hierarchy of bullying, all forms of bullying are taken equally seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Our school also understands that some behaviour such as 'baiting' or 'false friendships' may constitute as bullying, we will consider the context of all incidents and aim to support all children involved.

Our school understands that banter is an increasingly relevant part of discussions relating to bullying; however, it is important to acknowledge that banter is not inherently bullying, and it can be an important part of social bonding and friendships. At the same time, we know that some bullying in society is passed off as 'just banter', and we know that banter can quickly escalate to inappropriate or harmful exchanges and bullying.

Our school defines 'prosocial banter' as 'playful, typically funny, reciprocal, teasing between friends' that is well intended. Prosocial banter can occur both online and offline and includes a range of behaviours that may be verbal, physical, or information/message sharing (online). When engaging in prosocial banter, all parties present exchange banter and all share the positive experience. Banter can include some of the bullying behaviours set out in this policy document, so it is important to distinguish between shared positive social bonding and inappropriate banter and bullying. School staff will distinguish between banter and bullying by taking careful consideration of the *intention, content and topic* of reported incidents.

Our school recognises that some bullying behaviours and harmful attitudes may be influenced by online content, influencers, peer groups, online communities and wider societal messages. Staff will consider these contextual factors when assessing concerns and planning appropriate support and interventions.

Where does bullying take place?

At Cuckney C of E Primary School we understand that bullying is not confined to the school premises. Bullying can take place outside of school, on the journey to and from school and in the local community. Bullying may also take place online (this is sometimes referred to as cyberbullying). Our school recognises that advances in technology have created new opportunities for bullying and harassment. These may include the creation or sharing of AI-generated images, manipulated photographs or videos, deepfake content, image-based abuse, anonymous messaging and other forms of technology-assisted bullying. Incidents occurring online will be treated with the same level of seriousness as those occurring face-to-face.

We will offer support and guidance to pupils, parents/carers and families who have experienced any type of bullying whether this has taken place inside school, outside of school or online. We are committed to working with outside agencies where appropriate to prevent and tackle all forms of bullying.

We anticipate the full support of parents/carers and families during our investigations of reports of bullying or relational conflicts and request that they work in partnership with our school colleagues to help provide all evidence and context to any reported incidents (particularly when alleged incidents have taken place online). We ask that parents/carers remain vigilant about their children's online activities and behaviour online, and work in partnership with the school to educate children about the importance of online safety.

How to report bullying concerns

At Cuckney C of E Primary School we want pupils, parents/carers, staff, and visitors to confidently report bullying and know that their concerns will be taken seriously. We remain committed to supporting and safeguarding all children involved including the target, the alleged perpetrator, any bystanders/witnesses to the bullying behaviour and the wider school community.

We have clear reporting systems for each group of our school community; the effectiveness of these reporting systems is reviewed throughout the academic year and may be expanded to meet the needs of all members of our community.

Any pupil, parent/carer, member of staff or visitor who has concerns that a child has been bullied, intimidated, humiliated or unfairly targeted by an adult working within the school should report these concerns to the Head Teacher (or Chair of Governors where the concern relates to the Head Teacher) and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead. Such concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding and allegations management procedures.

Pupils, including bystanders/witnesses:

We ask that all pupils report concerns of bullying or bullying behaviour to a member of school staff – this can be any member of teaching or non-teaching staff, including a class teacher, a TA, the Head teacher, a lunchtime supervisor, or a member of the office team. We talk about trusted adults regularly in class and in assemblies to remind our pupils of who they can report concerns to.

The member of staff will listen to the pupil and make an initial note of their concerns; they will then discuss next steps with them and reassure them that they will be supported. The member of staff will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We understand that some pupils may find it difficult to tell a member of staff about their concerns verbally, we therefore have additional reporting mechanisms in place. Our school has a worry box in each classroom where the pupil can put their name/a brief note about their concerns/draw a picture of their concern – these worry boxes are introduced to the pupils at the start of the year, and pupils are reminded of them regularly. Our school also has a designated Anti-Bullying email address – if a pupil feels unable to tell a member of staff about their bullying verbally, they could send an email with their concerns, and these will be followed-up/responded to by the school's Anti-Bullying Coordinator.

Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We recognise that some pupils, including some children with SEND, may require additional support to recognise, understand or report bullying concerns. We will make reasonable adjustments to our reporting systems to ensure they are accessible and inclusive. Pupils may choose to report concerns verbally, through visual communication methods, through a trusted adult, through written or electronic means, or with support from a member of staff who knows them well.

Parents/carers:

We understand that it can be very difficult for a parent/carer to be concerned or hear that their child has been the target of bullying, has experienced bullying behaviour or is an alleged perpetrator of bullying.

We ask that if parents/carers have concerns about their child experiencing or perpetrating bullying, that they contact a member of school staff. Initially we ask parents/carers to contact their child's class teacher (in person, via telephone call or email) to explain their concerns. The class teacher/form leader will take an initial note of the concerns but may ask to schedule a meeting to allow for more time to discuss the concerns in detail. Following the report and/or the meeting, the teacher will make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant members of staff will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

We ask that parents/carers come directly to the school with their concerns rather than discussing them with other members of the school community in person or online. We ask that parents/carers remain vigilant about their child's online and out-of-school activities and that they work in partnership with the school to provide any evidence to allow staff to investigate the matter fully and in a timely manner.

Our school remains committed to supporting pupils and their families in all instances of bullying and relational conflict and will respond to reports promptly. Even if the behaviour/incident which has been reported is deemed 'not bullying' and is thought to be 'relational conflict', school staff will still support the pupils involved and help them to resolve any concerns.

We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR (General Data Protection Regulations). This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.

School staff:

Our staff work closely with our pupils and therefore may notice a change in a pupil's behaviour or attitude that might indicate that something is wrong before receiving a report from a pupil or a member of the school community. If staff have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or are concerned that a pupil is displaying behaviours that may show they are the target of bullying or perhaps perpetrating bullying, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told.

We ask that staff report their concerns to a Designated Safeguarding Lead or directly to the Head teacher. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The member of staff must directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

Visitors:

We ensure that all visitors to our school are aware of our Child Protection and Safeguarding procedures and which staff member they should report any concerns to (the member of staff may differ depending on the purpose of the visit e.g., supply teacher, governor, external agency etc.).

We ask that if a visitor to our school has any concerns about bullying behaviour that they have witnessed, or been told about, that they report their concerns at the earliest opportunity in person to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead/the Head teacher/a member of the Senior Leadership Team. We ask that visitors report their concerns in person by the end of the school day. For example, it would not be appropriate to wait until the following day or leave a written note with concerns. The member of staff receiving the report will take an initial note of the concerns and will then make a formal record of the bullying report on the school's recording system (CPOMs) and other relevant staff members will be alerted. The member of staff will directly alert the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead if the report is deemed urgent or if a pupil is considered at risk.

How our school will respond to reports of bullying

At Cuckney C of E Primary School all reports of bullying or reported concerns of bullying behaviours will be taken seriously and investigated. Even if an incident is deemed 'not bullying' or a 'relational conflict', our school remains committed to supporting all pupils who have been involved and affected.

Our school keeps records of all reports of bullying, this information is stored on our school's recording system (CPOMs). These records are used to identify trends and inform our school's preventative work. Information from these records is discussed regularly at staff meetings to ensure that all staff are kept up-to-date and are alert to any ongoing concerns.

Relevant information relating to bullying concerns may be shared with appropriate staff, professionals and agencies on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding, child protection and information sharing procedures. Decisions regarding information sharing will be proportionate, lawful and recorded appropriately to support the safety and wellbeing of pupils. Where a pupil transfers to another education setting, relevant safeguarding information relating to bullying concerns will be transferred securely and without unnecessary delay in accordance with safeguarding requirements.

Our staff use a contextual approach to safeguarding, and each incident will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Some of our school's responses may include, but may not be limited to:

- Talk to all pupils involved in the reported incident – this may include the target, child who has allegedly displayed bullying behaviour, and any bystanders/witnesses
- Talk to the parents/carers (of the target and/or the child who has allegedly displayed bullying behaviour). We anticipate the full support from parents/carers and request that they provide staff with all available evidence (particularly when alleged incidents have taken place online).
- Our school will take a restorative and education-based approach in order to address the possible root causes for any bullying behaviours. When appropriate, we will implement appropriate sanctions in accordance with our school's behaviour policy. These sanctions will be graded according to the seriousness of the incident but will send out a message that bullying is unacceptable. We may issue bespoke interventions or next steps of support depending on the circumstances and root causes.
- Discuss the report/incident/case with other agencies and organisations when appropriate and make referrals to those organisations when appropriate
- Where concerns indicate wider vulnerabilities, unmet needs or emerging safeguarding concerns, the school may consider Early Help, Family Help or multi-agency support. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will work with children, families and partner agencies as appropriate to secure support at the earliest opportunity.
- Liaise with the wider community if the bullying is taking place off the school premises (e.g., the Police, District Council etc.)
- Keep in touch with the person who reported the incident/behaviour to inform them that action has been taken – this may include a pupil, a parent/carer/guardian, a member of staff or visitor, or another member of the school community. We will endeavour to ensure that all parties are kept informed of progress and any developments, but we will also need to show due regard to GDPR. This may mean, at times, that we are not able to provide or share information or updates.
- Implement a range of follow-up support/interventions appropriate to the situation (this may include informal or formal restorative work with the target and alleged perpetrator, solution-focused meetings, individual or group work with the target, individual or group work with the child who has displayed bullying behaviour, individual or group work with any witnesses/bystanders, group work with the wider-school community etc.)
- Where required, individual safety plans may be developed to reduce risk, support emotional wellbeing and help pupils continue to access education safely. Safety plans will be proportionate to the identified concerns and may be developed in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals where appropriate.
- Consider the emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of all pupils involved, including those who have experienced bullying, displayed bullying behaviour or witnessed incidents. Where appropriate, additional pastoral, mental health, wellbeing or safeguarding support may be arranged.
- Monitor the effectiveness of actions taken and reassess/take more actions if appropriate
- Use a contextual safeguarding approach and professional curiosity to explore the wider circumstances surrounding reported incidents and identify whether additional support, intervention or safeguarding action may be required.
- When assessing concerns and planning support, consider both vulnerabilities and protective factors within a pupil's life. Protective factors may include positive relationships, trusted adults, supportive family networks, positive peer friendships, engagement in school life, community involvement, resilience and individual strengths. These factors will help inform proportionate and child-centred support plans.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there are safeguarding issues or concerns and consider the potential impact of the experiences – a DSL may then liaise with other professionals and Local Authority teams as appropriate (e.g., school counsellor, CAMHS, MASH etc.).

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website and on request from the school office.

Strategies for preventing bullying

At Cuckney C of E Primary School, we are committed to the safety and welfare of our pupils, and therefore we have developed the following strategies to promote friendly and positive behaviours and discourage bullying behaviours. Throughout the academic year, the effectiveness of these strategies is reviewed, and the variety of strategies may be expanded to address specific concerns or meet the needs of all members of our community.

The strategies we use include, but are not limited to:

- Active school council with representatives from each year group
- Anti-Bullying ambassadors
- Taking part in Anti-Bullying Week annually (November)
- Taking part in Safer Internet Day annually (February)
- Robust R(S)HE curriculum for all year groups
- Collaborative work with safeguarding leads, SENCOs and other colleagues and specialists
- Ensure reporting systems, anti-bullying education and pupil voice activities are accessible for children with SEND through the use of adapted resources, visual supports and personalised approaches where required.
- Specific curriculum inputs for online safety and cyberbullying
- Age-appropriate education about harmful online influences, online communities, influencers, discriminatory attitudes, misogyny, harmful gender stereotypes, respectful relationships and critical thinking when accessing online content.
- Themed days to promote equality and tackle prejudice
- End of term / end of academic year celebration events
- Opportunities for pupils to share their voice and opinions – through surveys etc.
- Inclusive displays throughout the school with a diverse range of work, photographs etc.
- Inclusive toys and books throughout the school raising awareness of and celebrating differences
- Positive Play / ELSA support / Lego therapy / counselling for identified pupils
- Specific initiatives for identified individuals or groups
- Parent information board
- Parent/carer events
- Regular staff training and development for all staff (including lunchtime supervisors and staff who support our before and after-school clubs)
- Promoting a culture of mutual respect between pupils and adults, where all members of the school community are treated with dignity, fairness and respect, and where concerns about adult conduct can be raised safely.

Breaches / Complaints

Breaches to this policy will be dealt with in the same way that breaches of other school policies are dealt with, as determined by the Head teacher and Governing Body.

If a parent/carer is not satisfied with our school's actions, we ask that they follow our school's complaint policy and procedures. This is available online from our school website, and on request from the school office.

Links with other policies

You may find it helpful to read this Anti-Bullying policy alongside the other following school policies:

Policy	How it may link
Child-on-child Abuse Policy (Previously named 'Peer-on-peer')	Includes links to bullying – specifically sexualised bullying and exploitation
Behaviour Policy	Includes details about the rewards and sanctions for pupils
Safeguarding Policy	Includes information about child protection procedures and contextualised safeguarding
Online Safety / E-Safety / Acceptable Use Policies	Includes information about children's online behaviour and details about online bullying/cyberbullying
Equality Policy	Includes information about our school's approach to tackling prejudice and celebrating differences. Links to prejudice-related language and crime and the protected characteristics
RSHE / PSHE Policy	Includes information about our school's RSHE programme and how we teach about relationships, friendships, and bullying
Complaints Policy	Includes information about how to make a complaint if you are not satisfied with the school's response

Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed and evaluated throughout the academic year. It is updated annually.

Date approved by the Governing Body: 12th October 2026
Date to be reviewed: October 2027