Brabyns Nursery School

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Last reviewed: September 2026
Review date: September 2027
Review frequency: Annual

1. Introduction

This policy has regard to the Department for Education's guidance, *Preventing and Tackling Bullying*, originally published in 2013 and updated in July 2026. It also takes account of *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* and *Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026*.

The policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Equal Opportunities Policy and Safe and Appropriate Use of Technology Policy.

The school is committed to providing a safe, caring and inclusive environment in which all children are treated with dignity and respect and are protected from bullying, harassment and harmful behaviour.

The school recognises that bullying can take place in person, outside school and online. Children may experience bullying because of their race, religion, culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, special educational needs, family circumstances or other personal characteristics.

In the EYFS, staff recognise that young children are still developing their communication, emotional regulation and understanding of relationships. Staff will therefore consider each child's age, stage of development and individual needs when identifying and responding to repeated or harmful behaviour.

All concerns about bullying will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and responded to in accordance with this policy and the school's safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

2. Aims

The school aims to:

- provide a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for every child;
- promote kindness, respect, empathy and positive relationships;
- ensure children understand that bullying and harmful behaviour are not acceptable;
- identify and respond to concerns promptly and consistently;
- ensure staff understand their responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying;
- provide appropriate support to children experiencing bullying;
- support children whose behaviour has caused harm to understand the impact of their actions and make positive changes;
- recognise that children with additional needs or vulnerabilities may require additional support;
- ensure concerns are considered within the school's safeguarding procedures.

Bullying is not accepted as part of growing up or as something children should simply learn to deal with themselves.

3. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour that is:

- repeated over time;
- intentional or deliberately harmful; and
- involves an imbalance of power, whether physical, social, emotional or otherwise.

Bullying may be:

Physical

Hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, pinching, spitting or deliberately damaging another child's belongings.

Verbal

Name-calling, insulting, threatening, teasing or making deliberately hurtful comments.

Emotional or social

Excluding someone, deliberately isolating them, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships or encouraging others not to play with or include a child.

Discriminatory

Harmful behaviour or language relating to race, religion, culture, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, special educational needs or other protected or personal characteristics.

Sexual or sexist

Unwanted sexualised comments, gestures, language or behaviour, or behaviour intended to humiliate or intimidate someone because of their sex or gender.

Online or cyberbullying

Bullying that takes place through phones, tablets, computers, gaming platforms, social media, messaging services or other digital technology.

This may include sending harmful messages, sharing embarrassing photographs or videos, excluding someone from online groups, spreading rumours, creating fake profiles or deliberately encouraging others to target a child.

Online bullying may also involve AI-generated or digitally altered content, including manipulated images or fake nude or semi-nude images.

4. Hurtful behaviour that is not bullying

Not all unkind or hurtful behaviour is bullying.

In the EYFS particularly, children are developing their communication, emotional regulation, social understanding and ability to manage conflict. A child may behave impulsively, become frustrated, struggle to share or use inappropriate language without understanding the impact of their actions.

Staff will consider:

- the child's age and stage of development;
- the child's individual needs and circumstances;
- whether the behaviour was intentional;
- whether the behaviour is repeated;
- whether there is an imbalance of power; and
- the impact on the other child.

All hurtful behaviour will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately. Where behaviour is repeated, deliberate or involves an imbalance of power, it may constitute bullying and will be managed accordingly.

5. Recognising possible signs of bullying

Children may not always tell an adult that they are experiencing bullying. Staff will therefore remain alert to changes in behaviour or wellbeing.

Possible signs may include:

- becoming unusually quiet, withdrawn or anxious;
- appearing reluctant to attend school or nursery;
- changes in friendships or play;
- becoming upset when arriving or leaving;
- changes in eating or sleeping patterns;
- unexplained injuries or damaged belongings;
- becoming unusually angry or distressed;
- a change in confidence or self-esteem;
- reduced participation or engagement;
- becoming secretive about phones or technology;
- appearing worried about messages or online activity; or
- beginning to display bullying or harmful behaviour towards others.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being bullied. Staff will consider the wider circumstances and speak with the child in an age-appropriate and supportive way.

6. Preventing bullying

We aim to prevent bullying by:

- creating a positive, inclusive and respectful environment;
- modelling kind and respectful behaviour;
- helping children develop positive friendships and relationships;
- teaching children how to recognise and express emotions;
- supporting children to develop appropriate ways of managing conflict;
- providing opportunities for children to develop empathy and understand how their behaviour affects others;
- ensuring children know who they can talk to if they are worried;
- maintaining appropriate supervision;
- responding promptly to concerns;
- working closely with parents and carers;
- providing additional support where children have SEND or other vulnerabilities;
- challenging discriminatory, inappropriate or harmful language and behaviour;
- providing staff with appropriate safeguarding and behaviour training; and
- reviewing patterns of behaviour and concerns to identify any emerging issues.

7. Online bullying and technology

The school recognises that children's experiences outside the setting can affect their wellbeing within it.

Concerns relating to online bullying will be taken seriously and considered alongside the school's safeguarding, behaviour and online safety procedures.

Online bullying may include:

- hurtful or threatening messages;
- deliberately excluding someone from online groups;
- spreading rumours or embarrassing information;
- sharing photographs or videos without permission;
- creating fake accounts or profiles;
- encouraging others to target a child;
- sending or sharing inappropriate or sexualised content; or
- using AI or digital tools to create or manipulate images or other content about a child.

Where a concern involves potentially harmful or sexualised images, staff will follow the school's safeguarding procedures and report the concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy without delay.

Children will receive age-appropriate support and guidance around safe, respectful and responsible use of technology.

8. Responding to concerns

Any concern about bullying should be considered in the context of the school's safeguarding procedures.

Where there is reasonable cause to believe that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, the concern must be reported to the DSL or deputy without delay and managed in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. This reflects the expectation in *Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026* that safeguarding concerns are acted upon immediately and reported to the DSL or deputy without delay.

When a concern is raised, staff will:

1. listen carefully and calmly to the child;
2. reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult;
3. avoid leading questions or making assumptions;
4. never promise to keep a safeguarding concern secret;
5. record relevant information accurately;
6. report the concern to the appropriate member of staff;
7. involve the DSL where there is a safeguarding concern;
8. speak with parents or carers where appropriate;
9. provide support to the child experiencing bullying;
10. address the behaviour of the child or children responsible;
11. monitor the situation to ensure that the behaviour has stopped; and
12. review the effectiveness of any actions taken.

Records will include relevant information about the concern, actions taken and any follow-up required.

9. Supporting children experiencing bullying

Children experiencing bullying will be listened to and supported sensitively.

Support may include:

- providing a trusted adult or key person to talk to;
- helping the child develop confidence and appropriate strategies for managing difficult situations;
- supporting positive friendships and inclusion;
- increasing supervision where appropriate;
- monitoring the child's wellbeing;
- working with parents or carers;
- involving the DSL or other appropriate professionals where required.

The child should never be made to feel responsible for the bullying or expected to resolve the situation alone.

10. Supporting children whose behaviour has caused harm

Children whose behaviour has caused harm will also be supported.

Staff will consider the child's age, stage of development, individual circumstances and any underlying needs.

The response may include:

- helping the child understand how their behaviour affected another child;
- discussing appropriate ways to express feelings and resolve conflict;
- reinforcing positive behaviour and relationships;
- working with parents or carers;
- putting additional support or strategies in place;
- monitoring the child's behaviour and relationships.

Where behaviour indicates a wider safeguarding or welfare concern, this will be referred to the DSL in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

11. Role of staff

All staff have a responsibility to:

- model respectful and inclusive behaviour;
- remain alert to signs of bullying or harmful behaviour;
- take concerns seriously;
- respond promptly and appropriately;
- record and report concerns in accordance with this policy;
- follow safeguarding procedures where appropriate;
- maintain professional curiosity;
- support children to develop positive relationships; and
- contribute to a culture where children feel safe to speak to trusted adults.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and concerns should not be ignored or left for someone else to address.

12. Role of parents and carers

Parents and carers are encouraged to:

- talk regularly with their child about their experiences and friendships;
- be alert to changes in behaviour or emotional wellbeing;
- listen calmly if their child reports something upsetting;
- reassure their child that they have done the right thing by speaking to them;
- contact the school if they have concerns;
- work with the school to support their child;
- monitor their child's use of technology and online platforms in an age-appropriate way; and

- share relevant information that may help the school understand and support their child.

Parents and carers should raise concerns with the school rather than approaching another child or their family directly.

13. Monitoring and review

The school will monitor bullying concerns and review patterns, actions and outcomes to ensure that appropriate measures are effective.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance or the needs of the children within the setting.

The school will continue to promote a culture of kindness, respect, inclusion and positive relationships in which every child feels safe, valued and listened to.