LARKFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Policy date: November 2026

Review date: November 2027

Policy owner: Headteacher | Approval: Governing Body

Learn with Passion – Lead with Kindness – Grow with Resilience

1. Statement of intent

At Larkfield Primary School, every child has the right to feel safe, included, respected and able to learn. Bullying in any form is unacceptable. We will listen, act promptly, protect children from further harm and work with families to secure lasting change. Our response will be firm, fair, child-centred and consistent with our Relationships, Behaviour and Regulation Policy (September 2026).

The Larkfield Way – We Welcome, We Notice, We Teach, We Regulate, We Restore, We Believe – shapes our prevention and response. Our shared expectations are Ready, Respectful and Safe. Restorative work complements, but never replaces, safeguarding action, accountability or proportionate consequences.

2. Legal and national guidance

This policy supports the school's duties under section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to include measures to prevent all forms of bullying in its behaviour arrangements; the Education Act 2002 safeguarding duties; the Equality Act 2010 (including the public sector equality duty); and relevant duties under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004. It should be read alongside statutory Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children, and the SEND Code of Practice, together with DfE non-statutory advice Preventing and Tackling Bullying and Behaviour in Schools.

Not every incident of bullying is a criminal offence, but assault, threats, harassment, sexual offences and hate-related offences may require police involvement. Staff will follow safeguarding procedures and seek advice from the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) where appropriate.

3. What we mean by bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally, often involving a real or perceived imbalance of power. That imbalance may relate to age, strength, popularity, group size, social status, vulnerability, disability or access to technology. Repeated online sharing can cause continuing harm even where the original act occurred once.

Forms of bullying

- Physical: hitting, pushing, intimidation, taking or damaging belongings.
- Verbal: repeated name-calling, threats, insults, mocking or humiliating comments.
- Social or relational: deliberate exclusion, rumours, manipulation of friendships or encouraging others to isolate someone.
- Online (cyberbullying): abusive messages, group chats, impersonation, sharing images or content to embarrass or threaten.
- Prejudice-based or discriminatory: targeting a child because of actual or perceived race, religion or belief, disability or SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, appearance, family circumstances or other difference.
- Sexual bullying or harassment: unwanted sexualised language, comments, gestures, images or conduct; concerns may also amount to child-on-child abuse.

A disagreement, isolated unkind comment or one-off falling-out is not automatically bullying. Nevertheless, single incidents can be serious, harmful or discriminatory and will be addressed. Staff will not dismiss concerns simply because repetition or intent has not yet been established.

4. Prevention: creating a culture where bullying cannot thrive

- Explicitly teach Ready, Respectful and Safe through PSHE, relationships education, assemblies, stories, online safety lessons and daily modelling.
- Teach children about difference, inclusion, respectful friendships, consent, speaking up and the role of witnesses or bystanders.
- Use positive recognition, meet-and-greet routines, clear playground expectations and adult visibility to identify difficulties early.
- Provide trusted adults and accessible reporting routes, including support for pupils who struggle to communicate concerns.
- Monitor hotspots, transitions, playtimes, lunchtimes, clubs and online issues; respond to patterns, not only individual reports.
- Involve pupil voice, families and staff in evaluating school culture and anti-bullying education.

5. Reporting concerns

Children may tell any trusted adult, including a teacher, teaching assistant, lunchtime supervisor, senior leader or the DSL. Parents and carers should contact the class teacher or a senior leader. Staff must pass concerns on promptly and record significant concerns factually on CPOMS in line with school practice. A child who witnesses bullying is encouraged to report it safely, rather than intervene physically.

Children will be listened to without blame, promised appropriate support rather than absolute secrecy, and told what will happen next in language they understand. Where there is immediate danger, staff will act at once and involve emergency services if required.

6. Responding to a report: a clear process

Step 1 – Protect and listen

Ensure immediate safety, offer reassurance, consider supervision or separation arrangements and listen individually to those involved. Do not require the child reporting harm to confront the other pupil. Refer immediately to the DSL where abuse, serious harm, sexualised behaviour or other safeguarding concerns may be present.

Step 2 – Establish the facts

The class teacher or a senior leader will gather separate accounts from pupils and relevant adults, consider witnesses and available evidence, and review any previous incidents. Online evidence should be preserved and handled safely; staff must not ask children to forward indecent images. Decisions will be recorded objectively, including whether the concern is substantiated, unsubstantiated or remains under review.

Step 3 – Inform and plan with families

Parents or carers of children directly involved will normally be contacted promptly, with timing determined by safeguarding considerations. We will explain actions relating to their own child while respecting the privacy of others. A named member of staff will coordinate follow-up.

Step 4 – Respond proportionately

Where bullying is identified, leaders will apply appropriate consequences under the Relationships, Behaviour and Regulation Policy, taking account of severity, repetition, age, understanding, SEND, reasonable adjustments and risk. The policy's four-step process (Reminder; Stop and Think; Logical Consequence and Repair; Formal Discussion) guides ordinary responses, but serious incidents can move directly to senior leadership and safeguarding action. Suspension or permanent exclusion is considered only under the applicable statutory framework.

Step 5 – Review and prevent recurrence

Agree a safety and support plan where needed, identify a trusted adult and schedule check-ins with the affected child and relevant pupils. Monitor for retaliation, renewed exclusion or online continuation. Record outcomes and review whether the bullying has stopped; reopen the matter promptly if concerns persist.

7. Support for children

For a child experiencing bullying, support may include a trusted-adult check-in, safe reporting arrangements, pastoral or emotional support, adjustments to supervision, friendship support, and referrals where appropriate. We will not place responsibility on the child being bullied to resolve the situation or routinely require them to change classes, activities or routines.

For a child who has bullied others, we will set clear boundaries and consequences while teaching empathy, regulation, respectful relationships and safer choices. Where appropriate, staff will consider individual behaviour support plans, SENDCo involvement and family partnership. Restorative conversations are offered only when safe, voluntary and appropriate; they must not pressure a child to forgive or minimise harm.

8. SEND, vulnerability and equality

We recognise that children with SEND, disabilities, communication needs, care experience or other vulnerabilities may be disproportionately exposed to bullying or may find it harder to report. Staff will make reasonable adjustments, use alternative communication methods and consider contextual factors without excusing harmful conduct. Discriminatory incidents will be identified, recorded and addressed, including through education and proportionate sanctions.

9. Online bullying and behaviour outside school

Cyberbullying can happen through games, messaging platforms, social media and group chats outside school hours. Where conduct affects the safety, wellbeing or orderly life of pupils at Larkfield, the school may respond in accordance with its behaviour powers and Online Safety Policy. Parents should retain relevant evidence, report harmful content to platforms and avoid escalating disputes in group chats. Serious threats or suspected crimes may be referred to police.

10. Child-on-child abuse and safeguarding escalation

Bullying may overlap with child-on-child abuse, including sexual violence, sexual harassment, coercion, discriminatory abuse or harmful online behaviour. These concerns must be reported to the DSL without delay and managed under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Staff must never treat abuse as banter or an inevitable part of

growing up. The DSL will consider risk assessments, early help, children's social care and police referrals as appropriate. Support and protection will be considered for all children involved.

11. Roles and accountability

- Governing Body: approve and review the policy; scrutinise anonymised bullying and discriminatory incident trends and the effectiveness of school responses.
- Headteacher: lead implementation, ensure consistent action and staff training, and report trends to governors.
- Senior leaders: coordinate serious investigations, family communication, support plans and follow-up.
- DSL: lead safeguarding responses, referrals and information sharing where risk of harm or abuse is indicated.
- SENDCo: advise on vulnerabilities, accessibility, reasonable adjustments and individual support.
- All staff: model respect, intervene early, report concerns and record significant incidents on CPOMS.
- Pupils: be Ready, Respectful and Safe; include others; seek help and report concerns.
- Parents/carers: raise concerns directly and respectfully, share relevant information and support agreed actions.

12. Recording, monitoring and confidentiality

Significant incidents, decisions, evidence, parental contacts, protective measures and review outcomes will be recorded on CPOMS in factual, non-judgemental language. Leaders will review patterns by type, location, frequency, recurrence and protected characteristics, taking care with confidentiality. Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis and managed under the school's data protection and safeguarding arrangements.

13. Concerns about the school response

Families should first raise unresolved concerns with the class teacher or Headteacher. Where a concern remains unresolved, the school's Complaints Policy sets out the formal route. Safeguarding concerns can be raised with the DSL or appropriate statutory services; the complaints process does not delay necessary safeguarding action.

14. Linked policies and review

This policy should be read with the Relationships, Behaviour and Regulation Policy (September 2026), Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Online Safety Policy, SEND Policy, Equality Information and Objectives, Complaints Policy and relevant staff conduct arrangements. The Governing Body will review it annually or sooner following significant guidance changes or identified need.

Appendix A – Quick response checklist for staff

☐ Ensure safety and listen calmly.

☐ Record and refer safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL.

☐ Gather separate accounts; avoid assumptions and forced mediation.

☐ Agree action, consequences, support and appropriate parent contact.

☐ Record on CPOMS and allocate a named follow-up adult.

☐ Check again that harm has stopped and that there is no retaliation.

Appendix B – Key national references

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 89; Education Act 2002; Equality Act 2010.
- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- DfE, Preventing and Tackling Bullying: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-bullying
- DfE, Behaviour in Schools: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2
- DfE, Bullying at School – The Law: https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school