



Micklands Primary School Anti-Bullying Policy

Publication date: 1st September 2026

Review date: 31st August 2027

Status: Non-statutory

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Statement of intent

Micklands Primary School is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which all pupils can learn and thrive without fear of bullying, harassment or discrimination.

Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will always be taken seriously. The school will work to prevent bullying, identify it early and respond promptly and proportionately when concerns arise.

The school recognises that bullying can take place face-to-face or online, within or outside school, and may be related to prejudice or discrimination. Particular attention will be given to pupils who may be more vulnerable to bullying or less able to report it.

Some behaviour between children may constitute a safeguarding concern or child-on-child abuse rather than, or as well as, bullying. Where this is the case, the school's **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** will take precedence and safeguarding procedures will be followed.

The school will work in partnership with pupils, parents and carers, staff and, where appropriate, external agencies to prevent bullying and support all children involved.

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Online Safety Policy.

1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to relevant legislation and statutory and non-statutory guidance, including:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Education Act 2011;
- Children Act 1989;
- Education Act 2002;
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- DfE, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026;
- DfE, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026;
- DfE, Preventing and Tackling Bullying;
- DfE, Behaviour in Schools;
- DfE, Searching, Screening and Confiscation; and
- UKCIS, Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people.

This policy operates in conjunction with the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- Acceptable Use of ICT Policy and Agreement;
- Equality Policy;
- SEND Policy;
- Searching and Confiscation Policy; and
- Complaints Policy.

2. Definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying often involves an imbalance of power between the person or group displaying the behaviour and the person or group experiencing it. This imbalance may be physical, psychological, social or related to access to information or technology.

Bullying may occur face-to-face or online. Online bullying can occur at any time and can reach a large audience rapidly; a single harmful post, image or message may also be repeatedly shared or viewed and therefore have an ongoing impact.

Not every incident of conflict, unkindness, disagreement or inappropriate behaviour between pupils is bullying. Such behaviour will still be challenged and dealt with appropriately under the Behaviour Policy.

Equally, behaviour does **not** need to meet the definition of bullying before it can constitute a safeguarding concern. A single serious incident may amount to child-on-child abuse and must be dealt with under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Pupils may be particularly vulnerable to bullying because of actual or perceived difference, including disability or SEND, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, family circumstances, being adopted or in care, caring responsibilities, health needs, socioeconomic circumstances or other aspects of identity or experience. The school recognises that children may be targeted because they are perceived to have a particular characteristic, whether or not that perception is correct.

3. Key roles and responsibilities

The governing board will:

- ensure that the school has appropriate measures to prevent and respond to bullying;
- ensure that this policy is implemented fairly and consistently; and
- monitor the effectiveness of the school's approach through information provided by school leaders.

The headteacher will:

- ensure this policy is implemented consistently;
- ensure appropriate systems are in place for recording and responding to bullying;
- ensure staff receive appropriate information and training;
- monitor bullying information for patterns or trends, including prejudice-related bullying; and
- ensure appropriate action is taken where concerns indicate a safeguarding risk.

The DSL will:

- provide safeguarding advice where bullying may constitute or be associated with child-on-child abuse;
- ensure safeguarding concerns are recorded and responded to in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; and
- liaise with external agencies where appropriate.

All staff will:

- model respectful behaviour;
- remain alert to signs of bullying and changes in children's behaviour;
- challenge bullying, discriminatory language and harmful behaviour;
- take pupil reports seriously;
- record and report concerns in accordance with school procedures; and
- follow safeguarding procedures immediately where a concern may involve abuse or risk of harm.

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- treat others with respect;
- report bullying or behaviour that worries them, whether it affects themselves or another pupil;
- seek help from a trusted adult; and
- behave safely and respectfully online.

Parents and carers will be encouraged to:

- report concerns about bullying to the school promptly;
- work with the school to support their child; and
- encourage safe and respectful behaviour, including online.

4. Types of bullying

Bullying can take many forms and may occur in person or online. It may include:

- **physical bullying** – hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or taking belongings or other unwanted physical behaviour;
- **verbal bullying** – name-calling, insults, threats, teasing or offensive comments;
- **relational or emotional bullying** – deliberately excluding, isolating, humiliating, intimidating or manipulating another pupil;

- **online bullying** – bullying through social media, messaging, gaming, images, videos or other digital technology;
- **prejudice-related bullying** – behaviour connected to an actual or perceived characteristic or difference, including race, religion or belief, disability or SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or family circumstances;
- **sexist, sexual, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying;**
- **ableist bullying;**
- **socioeconomic bullying;** and
- bullying related to appearance, health, caring responsibilities or other personal circumstances.

Bullying may involve conduct which is also discriminatory, harassing, threatening, abusive or criminal. Where appropriate, the school will respond under its safeguarding procedures and may involve external agencies.

5. Prevention

Micklands takes a whole-school approach to preventing bullying by creating a culture in which respectful behaviour, inclusion and speaking up are expected and supported.

Prevention includes:

- teaching pupils about respectful relationships, difference, equality and bullying through the curriculum, including PSHE;
- teaching pupils about online safety, respectful online behaviour and how to seek help;
- explicitly teaching and reinforcing the school's expectations for behaviour;
- challenging discriminatory language, stereotypes and prejudicial behaviour;
- promoting positive relationships through assemblies, curriculum activities and pupil leadership;
- ensuring appropriate staff supervision at times and in locations where bullying may be more likely;
- identifying patterns in incidents and responding to emerging issues;
- providing pupils with accessible ways to report worries or concerns;
- working with parents and carers; and
- providing appropriate support to pupils whose needs or circumstances may increase their vulnerability.

Staff will remain alert to group dynamics, social exclusion and changes in friendships as well as overt physical or verbal bullying.

The school recognises that bullying can occur online and outside school and will reinforce safe and respectful behaviour across both physical and digital environments.

6. Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school;
- Asking to be driven to school;
- Unwillingness to attend school;
- Truancy;
- Becoming anxious or lacking confidence;
- Saying that they feel ill in the morning;
- Decreased involvement in school work;
- Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions;
- Missing possessions;
- Asking for money or stealing;

- Cuts or bruises;
- Lack of appetite;
- Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices;
- Becoming agitated when collecting their phone at the end of the day;
- Lack of eye contact;
- Becoming short tempered;
- Change in behaviour and attitude at home.

No single sign necessarily indicates bullying. Staff will use professional curiosity and consider whether changes in behaviour may indicate bullying, abuse, neglect, exploitation, mental-health difficulties or another concern. Where there is a safeguarding concern, the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

7. Staff principles

Staff will:

- take all reports and concerns seriously;
- listen carefully and respond calmly;
- avoid dismissing behaviour as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or an inevitable part of growing up;
- avoid promising confidentiality;
- share information on a need-to-know basis in accordance with safeguarding and data-protection requirements;
- record concerns accurately;
- consider the needs and vulnerabilities of all children involved;
- avoid placing responsibility on a child to resolve bullying themselves; and
- follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy immediately where there is a safeguarding concern.

Staff will distinguish, as far as possible, between conflict, isolated unkind behaviour, bullying and child-on-child abuse. **The absence of repeated behaviour does not prevent an incident from being a safeguarding concern.**

Where staff are uncertain whether behaviour constitutes a safeguarding concern, they will seek advice from the DSL.

8. Bullying and safeguarding

Bullying can be a safeguarding issue. Behaviour between children may constitute child-on-child abuse, including physical abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment, online abuse, abuse in intimate personal relationships, prejudiced or discriminatory abuse, or other harmful behaviour.

Staff will not dismiss harmful behaviour as “banter”, “part of growing up” or simply having a laugh.

Where bullying involves or may involve abuse, significant harm, sexual behaviour, coercion, exploitation, threats, violence, self-generated intimate images or videos, AI-generated or manipulated intimate imagery, or another safeguarding concern, staff will follow the **Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy** immediately.

The DSL will determine the appropriate safeguarding response, including whether advice or referral to local authority children's social care, the police or another agency is required.

This Anti-bullying Policy does **not** create a separate safeguarding reporting or investigation route.

9. Online bullying

Online bullying is treated as seriously as bullying that takes place face-to-face.

It may include abusive or threatening messages, exclusion from online groups, impersonation, sharing humiliating or manipulated content, harassment through online games or social media, or deliberately using digital technology to embarrass, intimidate or harm another person.

Pupils will be encouraged not to retaliate online and, where safe to do so, to preserve evidence such as messages, usernames, URLs or screenshots and report the concern to a trusted adult.

Where online content raises a safeguarding concern, staff will follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Online Safety Policy.

Where the school considers it necessary to search a pupil or electronic device, confiscate an item or examine data, this will be carried out only in accordance with the school's Searching and Confiscation Policy and current statutory guidance.

Staff will not intentionally view, copy, print, save or share suspected child sexual abuse material or nude or semi-nude images of children. Where such material is reported or discovered, staff will follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and seek advice from the DSL without viewing or forwarding the material. Any exceptional decision to view an image will be made only by the DSL or another appropriately trained safeguarding lead in accordance with current safeguarding guidance.

Where appropriate, the school will support pupils and families to report harmful content to the relevant service or platform and will involve the police or other agencies where necessary.

The school's filtering and monitoring arrangements may contribute to the identification of harmful online behaviour. Any concerns identified will be responded to in accordance with the school's safeguarding and online-safety procedures.

10. Responding to reports of bullying

When bullying is reported or suspected, staff will respond promptly and proportionately.

The member of staff dealing with the concern will:

- ensure that any immediate risk of harm is addressed;
- listen to the pupil reporting the concern and reassure them that reporting was the right thing to do;
- establish the basic facts without asking leading or unnecessarily detailed questions;
- record the concern in accordance with school procedures;
- consider whether the matter may constitute a safeguarding concern and involve the DSL where appropriate;
- gather relevant information from pupils, staff or other available sources where appropriate;
- inform relevant parents or carers unless there is a safeguarding reason not to do so;
- determine appropriate action in accordance with the Behaviour Policy; and
- ensure appropriate support and follow-up for the children involved.

Where the behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern, **safeguarding procedures will take precedence over an internal bullying investigation.** Staff will not undertake enquiries which could compromise a safeguarding or police investigation.

Decisions will take account of the age, understanding, SEND and other needs of the children involved, the seriousness and persistence of the behaviour, the impact on the child experiencing it and any previous incidents or patterns.

11. Consequences and restorative action

Where bullying is established, appropriate consequences will be applied in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.

The response will be proportionate and will take account of the seriousness and persistence of the behaviour, the impact on the pupil who has experienced bullying, the age and understanding of the pupils involved, SEND and other relevant circumstances, and any previous incidents.

Consequences will be accompanied by appropriate work to help the pupil responsible understand the impact of their behaviour and prevent recurrence.

Restorative approaches, including an apology or restorative conversation, may be used where appropriate **but will not be imposed on the pupil who has experienced bullying or used where doing so may cause further distress or risk.**

Parents and carers will normally be informed of confirmed bullying and, where appropriate, the steps the school is taking in response. Information about another pupil will only be shared where it is appropriate and lawful to do so, taking account of safeguarding, confidentiality and data-protection requirements.

Serious or persistent bullying may result in more significant consequences under the Behaviour Policy.

12. Support and follow-up

The school will provide appropriate support to pupils who experience bullying and to pupils who display bullying behaviour.

Support for a pupil who has experienced bullying may include:

- regular check-ins with a trusted adult;
- reassurance and opportunities to discuss concerns;
- practical measures to increase their sense of safety;
- support with friendships and peer relationships;
- pastoral or emotional support; and
- referral to external services where appropriate.

Pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour will also be supported to understand the impact of their actions, identify underlying needs or influences, develop more appropriate behaviour and repair relationships where this is safe and appropriate.

Staff will follow up incidents for an appropriate period to ensure that the behaviour has stopped and that pupils feel safe. The frequency and duration of follow-up will reflect the individual circumstances rather than follow a fixed timetable.

Where bullying has had a significant impact on a pupil's wellbeing, attendance or ability to access education, the school will work with the pupil and their parents or carers to identify appropriate support and reasonable adjustments.

Any decision concerning alternative provision or a change of school placement will be considered only where appropriate to the child's individual needs and best interests and in accordance with relevant

statutory processes. **A pupil will not be expected to leave the school simply because they have experienced bullying.**

13. Bullying outside of school

Bullying which takes place outside school, including online, may still affect pupils' wellbeing, safety and education.

Where off-site bullying involving Micklands pupils is reported to the school, staff will consider what action is appropriate under the Behaviour Policy, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Online Safety Policy.

The headteacher may regulate pupils' conduct outside school where permitted by law, including behaviour when pupils are travelling to or from school, wearing school uniform, identifiable as pupils of the school, or where the behaviour could have repercussions for the orderly running of the school, poses a threat to another pupil or member of the public, or could adversely affect the school's reputation.

Safeguarding concerns will be referred through the school's safeguarding procedures regardless of where the behaviour occurred.

Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or presents an immediate risk of harm, the school will consider involvement of the police or other relevant agencies.

14. Monitoring and review

The headteacher and governing board will review this policy at least annually and following significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance or school safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

The school will monitor recorded bullying incidents to identify patterns and trends, including repeated incidents, locations, online behaviour and prejudice-related bullying.

Information from incidents, pupil voice, parent feedback and safeguarding or behaviour monitoring will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of preventative work and identify areas for improvement.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is **31st August 2027**.