# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Little Acorns School

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| **Approved by:** | Chair of the board | **Date:** August 2025 |
| **Last reviewed on:** | August 2026 | |
| **Next review due by:** | August 2027 | |

This policy is based on DfE guidance "Preventing and Tackling Bullying. Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies" and supporting documents "Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools", "Cyberbullying: advice for headteachers and school staff", "Advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying" November 2014. Online Safety Act 2023. It also considers the DfE statutory guidance, "Keeping Children Safe in Education" 2025.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

## 1. Introduction

Little Acorns School is committed to providing a caring, kind, respectful and safe environment. All members of the Little Acorns School community have the right to live, learn and work in a safe, secure and positive environment.

Little Acorns school does not ever condone or allow bullying of any kind within the school (including bullying of children by visitors). It is the task of this school and the wider company to provide safe and nurturing experiences of care and belonging for children who have often suffered highly unpredictable, persecutory, and unpredictable relationships and environments. Bullying in all its forms is counter to the ethos of the work that we conduct in support of these children's positive experience of childhood.

This Policy explains all the forms that bullying can take, and how we can think about countering a child or persons need to bully others. Our Positive Behaviour Management Policy is a useful reference on how to approach behaviours which can be considered unkind, disruptive, and emotionally or physically aggressive. It is of the utmost importance that while addressing bullying behaviours firmly and in a timely fashion, we also maintain an understanding of why a child or person may feel the need to belittle others or highlight inadequacies to protect themselves from their familiar, historic, or perceived threats.

The policy applies to all incidents of bullying between young people whether they occur within or outside the settings including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory. If there are concerns about young people being bullied by visitors, carers, or contractors, these will be addressed through the school's Whistleblowing / Safeguarding Policies.

We will take immediate action, where we believe an individual may be at risk, or it is alleged that an individual is suspected of being bullied or is bullying others. Our primary concern, at all times, is the welfare and safety of all members of our community including children and young people, residents, staff and visitors.

## 2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Create a culture in which bullying of any kind is not accepted by anyone.
- Support all staff to understand what constitutes bullying through regular conversations and CPD to support understanding.
- Ensure all Individuals, staff and parents associated with the Little Acorns School community understand that bullying is completely unacceptable.
- Provide a clear framework including escalation process for dealing with incidents of bullying, ensuring that bullies are dealt with swiftly and firmly.
- Create a culture where individuals should be able to tell if they believe they are experiencing any kind of bullying and feel validated, knowing that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Ensure staff to vigilance in recognising where and if bullying is taking place, and how to deal with it thoroughly and sensitively. Our aim is to promote positive relationships amongst all and to

develop a culture in which individuals are listened to and their concerns taken seriously.

- Develop a proactive 'prevention culture' through the maintenance of conditions where bullying is less likely to flourish and is more easily detected.
- Promote an understanding of the impact of bullying within our community including the wider community

## 3. Legislation and statutory requirements

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying as well as criminal and civil law.

<u>These may include (but are not limited to):</u>

- Education Act 2011.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, particularly Regulation 13: Safeguarding Service Users from Abuse and Improper Treatment.
- DfE guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying' (July 2017).
- Children Act 1989, •Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Human Rights Act 1998 •Equality Act 2010.
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- The Computer Misuse Act 1990

- We also follow current DfE guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (2026) 'Working together to safeguard children' (2024)
- HM Government advice 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2015)

and the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's policies, procedures, guidance and protocols.

Within the School, Little Acorns displays posters with details of how to access Childline if a child feels unable to talk to those around them.

## 4. Scope

### Statement of Intent:

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly, and safe environment for all of our Children so they can learn in a relaxed, safe, and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable in our Service. If bullying does occur, all Children and Young People should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING environment. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell senior members of staff.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

All staff have a duty to report bullying, to be vigilant to the signs of bullying and to play an active role in the school's efforts to prevent bullying. If staff are aware of bullying, they should reassure the children/young people involved and follow the local procedures as outlined in Appendix 1. Parents and carers and community members should look out for potential signs of bullying such as distress, lack of concentration, feigning illness, or other unusual behaviour. Parents and carers should encourage their child not to take out any retaliation. They must support and encourage them to report the bullying to a safe and trusted adult within the school or a member of the senior leadership team. Parents and carers are also encouraged to report any incidents of bullying to the school either in person, or by phoning or emailing. Our Pastoral Manager is available to support; however, all our staff are trained to support and report bullying incidents following this policy.

Children and young people should not take part in any kind of bullying, including the use of mobile phones to record or share incidents of any nature. All children and young people should watch out for potential signs of bullying among their peers, instilling the values of our school as safe, kind and respectful. They should never be bystanders to incidents of bullying and should seek support from a member of staff immediately. If children/young people witness bullying they should support the victim, encourage them to report the bullying and, if possible, accompany them to tell a trusted adult where they will both be supported.

The Senior Leadership Team and Headteacher have overall responsibility for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is followed by all members of staff. The Headteacher and SLT will communicate the policy to the school community and ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) has lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection, including online safety. This includes oversight of the school's filtering and monitoring systems to ensure they are adequate, effective and regularly reviewed, in line with KCSIE 2026 expectations. The SLT team have a responsibility to ensure regular training and discussions are held with all staff to ensure vigilance and a proactive approach to supporting children and young people within our school community. The Senior Leadership Team and Headteacher have a responsibility to ensure that the school upholds its duty to promote the safety and well-being of all young people and instil in the school values of being hardworking, kind, safe and respectful. They must ensure bullying is logged, incidents are reviewed and acted upon swiftly. Bullying trends should be analysed and be reported via governance including actions taken to support children, young people, and families.

We must model to our young people respectful, appropriate and positive relationships through not only our interactions with them directly, but also our interactions with each other. Bullying can happen to anybody, child, or adult. If anyone feels that any person within Little Acorns School is subject to bullying it is their responsibility to act or talk to a senior member of staff if it is not appropriate to speak directly to those involved.

## 6. Definitions

Bullying is defined by the Department of Health, Department for Education as:

*"Deliberately hurtful behaviour, repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied who are powerless to defend themselves".*

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress for the victim.

It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs, and disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs, and email. Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. A feature of bullying in education and residential settings is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority. Bullying can quickly become a

safeguarding matter, and it may on occasion be necessary to record it as a safeguarding concern.

Bullying can be:

- Emotional: Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting. E.g. Hiding books or personal belongings, threatening gestures.
- Physical: Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence.
- Racist: Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
- Sexual: Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
- Homophobic: Because of or focussing on the issue of sexuality.
- Verbal: Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
- Cyber: All areas of internet, e-mail, and chat-room misuse.
- Digital: Threats through social media, SMS or calls, misuse of associated technology such as cameras and voice recorders.
- Bullying may also occur through emerging online harms including the spread of misinformation, disinformation or conspiracy theories which cause distress, exclusion, or reputational damage. Bullying is, therefore:

• Deliberately hurtful
• Repeated, often over a period of time
• Difficult to defend against

## 7. Responding to bullying

### Why it is important for us to respond to Bullying?

Little Acorns School recognises the seriousness of all forms of bullying and the impact causing psychological damage and levels of suicide in young people. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal act in the UK, certain types of harassment; threatening behaviours, or communications can be considered a criminal offence; for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. KCSIE 2026 also highlights the safeguarding risks linked to prolonged absence from education, child-on-child abuse, and online harms. The school will treat persistent bullying which results in absence or withdrawal from education as a safeguarding concern, escalating to the DSL.

If our staff consider that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the police.

### Preventing, identifying and responding to bullying

<u>The school community will:</u>

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others which will be upheld by all.
- Work with staff and outside agencies to identify all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively provide systematic opportunities to develop pupils' social and emotional skills, including their resilience.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (peer on peer abuse).
- Provide a range of approaches for pupils, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Challenge practice which does not uphold the values of tolerance, non-discrimination, and respect towards others.
- Consider all opportunities for addressing bullying in all forms throughout the curriculum and supported with a range of approaches such as through displays, peer support and hearing the children's voices.
- Regularly update and evaluate our approaches to take into account the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Train all staff including teaching staff, support staff to identify all forms of bullying, follow the school policy and procedures (including recording and reporting incidents).
- Take appropriate, proportionate, and reasonable action, in line with existing school policies, for any bullying bought to the schools attention which involves or effects pupils even when they are not on school premises, for example when online etc.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully and those who have been bullied.
- Work with other agencies and the wider school community to prevent and tackle concerns.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive school ethos.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones, and social media positively and responsibly.
- Records of behaviour kept on CPOMS, Incidents of bullying also recorded on CPOMS with the appropriate heading highlighted. The Headteacher, DSL and the rest of the Senior Leadership

Team will look to identify patterns of behaviour, areas of significance and pro-actively respond to those involved.

## Derogatory language

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be tolerated at Little Acorns

School. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and monitored and follow up actions and sanctions,

If appropriate, will be taken for young people and staff found using any such language.

## Involvement of children and young people

We will:

- Regularly discuss children's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all pupils are aware of the range of actions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Involve pupils in anti-bullying campaigns in schools and embedded messages in the wider school curriculum.
- Publicise the details of help lines and websites around school.
- Offer support to pupils who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.
- Through our PSHE plans, themes such as bullying, friendship and behaviour are discussed.
- A flexible approach to the teaching of personal development programmes allowing changes in lesson plans to meet contextual safeguarding requirements including incidents of bullying

## Liaison with parents and carers

We will:

- Make sure that key information (including policies and named points of contact) about bullying is available to parents/carers on the school website.
- Ensure that all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.
- Ensure all parents/carers know where to access independent advice about bullying.

## Signs and Symptoms:

A child may indicate through behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these signs and that they should inquire or investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from a place or room.
- Does not want to go out or spend time with a particular person.
- Is adamant to be chaperoned.
- Changes their usual routine without obvious cause.
- Is unwilling to return school.
- Begins to abscond.
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- Cries uncharacteristically or has nightmares.

- Begins to do poorly in School.
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'.
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises.

- Is bullying others uncharacteristically.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility.

Procedures:

- Report bullying incidents or suspicions to a trusted adult or to a senior member of staff. •In cases of bullying the incidents will be recorded on CPOMS.
- Parents will be notified and called in for meetings should this be necessary.
- In severe cases the Social Worker of our LAC will be informed and will be asked to come for a meeting to discuss the problem. If necessary, the appropriate Kent Education Safeguarding Board will be consulted (LADO, front door)
- An attempt must be made to help the bully to recognise their behaviours as damaging. Where mediation is safe and suitable this will be led by the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher. Where reparation on behalf of the bully is safe, suitable and voluntary this should be recognised and supported.

Outcomes:

- The Bully (Bullies) may be asked to apologise if they have recognised their behaviours, consequences may be appropriate and should be in line with the Behaviour Management Policy.
- In serious and on-going cases suspension or exclusion may be considered in consultation with the Child's parents, carers, or Social Worker. This is only ever as a very last resort.
- If possible, the Children will be reconciled within the group.
- After incidents of bullying, on-going monitoring will be implemented to ensure repeated bullying does not take place. This will be recorded on CPOMS using the category 'Bullying'.
- Bullying will then be addressed as part of the daily briefings agenda to make transparent the wishes of the group and engage the vigilance and protection of the Community. The Bully must not be stigmatised or made to feel persecuted by the group for their actions. This is merely revisiting the bullying gesture upon them.

Remember that if a child is being bullied by another child, we are here to help them both. When a child bullies, they are often very unhappy or angry about something significant. It is our task to protect and care for both parties.

## Appendix 1: Little Acorns School

1. How to report bullying - children and young people

   o Report to a staff member – such as a class teacher or learning support assistant, Rebecca Marshall (DSL), Alison Neal (Head Teacher), Ruth Palmer (SENCO/AH) or any other adult you feel safe talking to.

   o Using the anonymous school bullying reporting box located in the main reception

   o Call Child Line to speak with someone in confidence on 0800 1111

   o Talk to your parents/carers who can support you in telling school staff

   o Speak to a friend/peer and seek support together.

2. How staff report suspected bullying

   o Any bullying incidents or potential bullying incidents should be logged as a behaviour incident on CPOMS

   o When a student has been reported for 3 incidents of conflict within an academic term, or the targeting of the same student 3 times within the year the DSL should be informed, and it can be formally logged on CPOMS under the category of Bullying

   o The school anti- bullying log should be filled in by the DSL, this is kept in the Designated Safeguarding Lead's office. This is tracked through the DSL team and when a student triggers continued student conflict parents are invited into a meeting with the DSL (see below intervention for conflict 3)

   o If a persistent bullying incident is confirmed, then a CPOMS bullying log is created by a member of the DSL Team and a CPOMS report is created by a member of the DSL Team to recognize the significance of the incident as a safeguarding concern.

   o These will be headline figures reported against bullying in the school to governance and to Ofsted as it evidences the persistent nature of bullying.

| | Conflict 1 | Conflict 2 | Conflict 3 |
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| Definition | Incident recorded, low level e.g. name calling | Repeated conflict to include social media | Persistent evidence of bullying |
| Intervention | Restorative conversation with the SLT team | Restorative work guidance and parental engagement | Parental meeting, support plan, SLT intervention, external support |

It is only when all these levels of intervention and support are exhausted would it be logged as "Bullying" on CPOMS. This offers robust opportunity to rehabilitate the views and behaviours of students at Little Acorns School and not brand students bullies without ample opportunity to support students. This does exclude targeted one-off prejudice- based incidents as they sit as an independent log on CPOMS and addressed by actions as directed by DSL.

## 3. Prejudice-based incidents

A prejudice-based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. All prejudice-based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored These will be recorded and reported onto CPOMS and discussed with the DSL.

- o Disability Discrimination
- o Gender Reassignment Abuse
- o Racism
- o Gender Discrimination
- o Religious Discrimination
- o Homophobic Abuse
- o Transphobic Abuse

## 4. School initiatives to prevent and tackle bullying

We use a range of measures to prevent and tackle bullying including:

- o A child friendly anti-bullying policy ensures all students understand and uphold the antibullying policy
- o THRIVE and reflective tutorial sessions to explore bullying; recognizing, responding and reporting and also the impact of bullying on people.
- o The PSHE programme scheme of work enables our children and young people opportunities for students to understand about different types of bullying and what they can do to respond and prevent bullying
- o Class time provides regular opportunities to discuss issues that may arise in class and for form tutors to target specific interventions

- Whole-school and class assemblies help raise students' awareness of bullying and derogatory language
- Difference and diversities are celebrated across the school through diverse displays, books and images. The whole school participates in SMSC events including Anti-bullying week, Black History Month and LGBT History Month
- The school values of kindness and respect are embedded across the curriculum to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible o Stereotypes are challenged by staff and students across the school
- Restorative justice sessions with teachers to provide support to targets of bullying and those who show bullying behaviour. Further clinical interventions to support deeper routed needs to help with low self-esteem and confidence around relationships.
- Students are continually involved in developing school-wide anti-bullying initiatives through consultation with groups such as School Council and form groups and through the antibullying survey
- Working with parents and carers, and in partnership with community organisations, to tackle bullying.