



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



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1. Purpose and commitment

Spring Lane Primary School is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment in which every child can learn, participate and belong. Bullying is not accepted or normalised. All reports and concerns will be taken seriously, considered carefully and responded to promptly and proportionately.

Our approach is rooted in our values of Respect, Resilience and Integrity. We recognise that effective anti-bullying practice is not limited to responding to incidents: it requires a whole-school culture in which positive relationships are explicitly taught, difference is valued, children know how to seek help and adults act consistently when concerns arise.

This policy currently operates as a standalone policy. It will be incorporated into Spring Lane's revised Behaviour Policy when that policy is completed. It should be read alongside the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, SEND Policy and Information Report, Equality Information and Objectives, Online Safety/Acceptable Use arrangements, RSE/PSHE Policy, Complaints Policy and relevant Trust policies.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy has regard to current legislation and national guidance, including:

- the Education and Inspections Act 2006 and the requirement for schools to have measures designed to encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying;
- the Equality Act 2010, including duties relating to discrimination, harassment, victimisation, reasonable adjustments and the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (KCSIE), including expectations relating to child-on-child abuse, online safety and safeguarding responses;
- Department for Education guidance on Preventing and Tackling Bullying;
- Department for Education Behaviour in Schools guidance;

- the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years; and
- statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools, where relevant to online or technology-related behaviour.

Some bullying behaviour may also constitute a criminal offence or a safeguarding concern. Where appropriate, the school will involve or seek advice from external agencies, children's social care, the local authority or police. If a child is at immediate risk of harm, safeguarding procedures take priority.

3. What do we mean by bullying?

There is no single legal definition of bullying. For the purposes of this policy, Spring Lane understands bullying as behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to hurt, intimidate, humiliate, exclude or cause distress to another child, is usually repeated or sustained over time, and commonly involves an imbalance of power.

The imbalance of power may be physical, social, emotional, verbal, relational, based on status or popularity, linked to additional need or vulnerability, or created through access to information, images, technology or a group of peers.

3.1 Forms bullying may take

- Physical – hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or taking belongings, intimidating physical behaviour or deliberately invading personal space.
- Verbal – name-calling, insults, threats, taunting, mocking, offensive comments or repeated unkind remarks.
- Relational/social – deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, encouraging others to reject someone or damaging a child's reputation.
- Emotional/psychological – intimidation, humiliation, coercion, threats, deliberate isolation or behaviour designed to make another child fearful.
- Online/cyberbullying – harmful messages, posts, images, videos, group-chat behaviour, impersonation, exclusion, threats or harassment through digital technology.
- Prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying – behaviour related to actual or perceived race, religion or belief, disability or SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or another aspect of identity or background.
- Sexual or sexist bullying – sexualised comments, jokes, rumours, gestures, unwanted attention or behaviour based on sex or gender stereotypes. Sexual harassment or sexual violence will be treated as a safeguarding matter.

3.2 What may not be bullying

Not every disagreement, friendship difficulty, argument or isolated incident of unkind behaviour is bullying. Children are learning how to manage relationships and conflict, and staff will consider the context, pattern, intent, impact and any imbalance of power before deciding how an incident should be categorised.

However, a serious one-off incident does not need to meet the school's definition of bullying before action is taken. Violence, discriminatory language, sexual harassment, threats, harmful online behaviour or other serious conduct will be addressed through the appropriate behaviour and/or safeguarding procedures.

4. SEND, disability and vulnerability

Spring Lane recognises that pupils with SEND and disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and may experience, communicate or report harm differently. Our SEND approach is based on inclusion, early identification, reasonable adjustments and understanding individual communication, sensory, emotional and learning needs.

Staff must not assume that behaviour arising from a child's SEND is bullying simply because it has affected another pupil. Equally, SEND is not a reason to minimise the impact of harmful behaviour on another child. Staff will consider

both the needs of the child who has been harmed and the needs, understanding, communication and regulation of the child displaying the behaviour.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- make reasonable adjustments to reporting, investigation and restorative processes;
- use visual supports, adapted language, additional processing time or trusted adults to support communication;
- consider whether a pupil understands the impact of their actions and whether unmet need is contributing to the behaviour;
- review Personalised Learning Plans, risk assessments, provision or reasonable adjustments where relevant;
- seek advice from the SENDCo, pastoral team and external professionals; and
- ensure that the pupil who has experienced harm remains safe and supported.

5. Preventing bullying at Spring Lane

Prevention is embedded across school life. Spring Lane will:

- maintain clear expectations for respectful behaviour and explicitly teach children what bullying is, what it is not, and how to seek help;
- use PSHE/RSE, including the SCARF curriculum, to teach healthy relationships, valuing difference, keeping safe, rights and responsibilities and appropriate online behaviour;
- use No Outsiders and wider curriculum opportunities to develop respect for difference, challenge prejudice and ensure children see diversity represented positively;
- teach online safety and ensure pupils understand that standards of respectful behaviour apply online as well as offline;
- use assemblies, class discussion and pupil voice to reinforce belonging, kindness, inclusion and safe reporting;
- provide inclusive play and social opportunities, including through OPAL, and actively monitor areas or times where peer difficulties may be more likely;
- train staff to recognise bullying, prejudice-based incidents, SEND-related vulnerability and child-on-child abuse;
- analyse patterns in behaviour and safeguarding records to identify repeated concerns, vulnerable pupils, locations, times or groups requiring further action; and
- work in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies where additional support is required.

6. Reporting bullying or concerns

Children are encouraged to tell an adult whenever something makes them feel unsafe, worried, excluded or repeatedly upset. A child does not need to be certain that behaviour is 'bullying' before reporting it.

A concern may be raised by:

- the child experiencing the behaviour;
- another pupil or friend;
- a parent or carer;
- a member of staff; or
- another person who has witnessed or become aware of the concern.

Children may speak to their class teacher, teaching assistant, a member of the pastoral or SEND team, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), a senior leader or another trusted adult. Parents and carers should normally contact the class teacher or school office in the first instance, unless the matter is urgent or safeguarding-related.

No child should be discouraged from reporting because they are worried that they will be seen as ‘telling tales’. Retaliation against a child for reporting a concern will be treated seriously.

7. How the school will respond

The response will be child-centred, proportionate and based on the circumstances of the case. The school will avoid making assumptions before the relevant information has been gathered.

1. Ensure immediate safety and wellbeing. Staff will first consider whether any child requires urgent support, medical attention, separation from another pupil or a safeguarding response.
2. Listen and record. The child’s account will be heard carefully. Relevant concerns, actions and decisions will be recorded using the school’s agreed behaviour and/or safeguarding systems, including CPOMS where appropriate.
3. Establish the facts. Staff will speak separately with relevant pupils and, where appropriate, witnesses and staff. Online evidence may be considered where it can be shared safely and lawfully.
4. Assess the concern. Staff will consider frequency, pattern, intent, impact, power imbalance, vulnerability, SEND, protected characteristics, online elements and whether the behaviour may constitute child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern.
5. Agree action. Where bullying is substantiated, appropriate action will be taken in line with the school’s behaviour arrangements. This may include consequences, increased supervision, safety planning, restorative or relational work where appropriate, targeted teaching and support.
6. Support and review. The school will check that the behaviour has stopped, that the child who experienced bullying feels safe, and that any agreed support is effective. Further action will be taken if concerns continue.

8. Safeguarding and child-on-child abuse

Bullying can be a safeguarding issue. KCSIE makes clear that child-on-child abuse can occur inside and outside school and online. Staff must act immediately on safeguarding concerns and report them to the DSL or a deputy in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The school will not dismiss harmful behaviour as ‘banter’, ‘part of growing up’ or something children simply have to tolerate. Particular care will be taken where concerns involve sexual harassment or violence, coercion, serious physical violence, discriminatory or hate-related behaviour, exploitation, threats, sharing of sexual imagery, or a pattern of escalating harm.

9. Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

Spring Lane is committed to eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations. Prejudice-based incidents will be addressed even where they do not form a repeated pattern.

Where behaviour relates to an actual or perceived protected characteristic, SEND, family circumstance, culture, language or another aspect of identity, staff will respond to the immediate incident and consider whether wider education, curriculum work, parental engagement or whole-school action is required. Relevant patterns will be monitored by leaders.

10. Online bullying and behaviour outside school

Bullying can move rapidly between the online and offline worlds. Where online or off-site behaviour affects a pupil's safety, wellbeing, relationships or the orderly running of the school, Spring Lane will respond within the school's lawful powers and safeguarding responsibilities.

This may include behaviour occurring on the journey to or from school, during school-related activities, in the local community, or online outside school hours. Where appropriate, the school may involve parents/carers, another school, the local authority, platform providers or the police.

Pupils and parents should preserve relevant evidence of online bullying where safe to do so and should not respond in a way that escalates the situation. The school will not ask a child to forward illegal or indecent imagery.

11. Supporting the child who has experienced bullying

Support will be tailored to the child and may include:

- a trusted adult and regular check-ins;
- a clear safety or support plan;
- changes to supervision, seating, transitions or unstructured times where appropriate;
- pastoral, nurture, social-emotional or therapeutic support;
- support to rebuild confidence, friendships and participation;
- reasonable adjustments for SEND or disability;
- work with parents/carers and, where necessary, external professionals; and
- ongoing review to ensure the bullying has stopped and the child feels safe.

12. Supporting the child displaying bullying behaviour

Holding a child accountable and supporting them to change are both important. The school will apply appropriate consequences while also seeking to understand why the behaviour occurred and what is needed to prevent recurrence.

Support or intervention may include:

- clear teaching about impact, boundaries and expectations;
- restorative work where this is safe, appropriate and genuinely voluntary for the child who was harmed;
- targeted PSHE, social communication or emotional-regulation work;
- increased adult monitoring or changes to routines;
- parent/carer involvement;
- SEND assessment or review where unmet need may be contributing;
- pastoral or external agency support; and
- a behaviour, support or risk-management plan where necessary.

Restorative approaches will not be used to pressure a child who has experienced bullying into meeting, forgiving or reconciling with another pupil.

13. Consequences

Consequences will be determined in accordance with the school's current behaviour arrangements and will reflect the seriousness, frequency, context and impact of the behaviour. They may range from a proportionate school-based

consequence and restorative/reparative action to suspension in serious cases. Permanent exclusion will only ever be considered in accordance with statutory guidance.

Where a pupil has SEND or a disability, the school will consider relevant needs and reasonable adjustments when deciding its response. This does not mean that harmful behaviour is ignored; it means that decisions are fair, lawful, individualised and focused on preventing further harm.

14. Working with parents and carers

Parents and carers are important partners in preventing and addressing bullying. The school will communicate proportionately with the families of pupils directly involved and will seek to work collaboratively to resolve concerns.

Confidentiality and data-protection duties mean that the school will not normally share details of consequences, SEND, safeguarding information or personal circumstances relating to another child. Parents will, however, be told how the school is responding to concerns affecting their own child and what support or safety measures are being put in place.

Parents should raise concerns directly with the school rather than approaching another child or family. Concerns about the school's handling of bullying may be raised through the school/Trust complaints procedure.

15. Roles and responsibilities

15.1 Local Governing Board

The Local Governing Board provides strategic oversight, ensures appropriate anti-bullying arrangements are in place and holds leaders to account for creating a safe and inclusive school culture.

15.2 Headteacher / Head of School

School leaders are responsible for implementing this policy, ensuring staff understand reporting and response procedures, monitoring patterns and ensuring that bullying is addressed consistently.

15.3 Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL and deputies provide safeguarding oversight where bullying concerns meet or may meet safeguarding thresholds, including child-on-child abuse, online harm and discriminatory or sexual harm.

15.4 SENDCo and Inclusion Team

The SENDCo and Inclusion Team advise on SEND-related vulnerability, reasonable adjustments, communication needs and appropriate support for pupils involved in bullying concerns.

15.5 All staff

All staff must model respectful behaviour, remain alert to signs of bullying, act on concerns, record and report appropriately, and never ignore or normalise harmful peer behaviour.

15.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to treat others with respect, follow school expectations, report bullying or unsafe behaviour and avoid participating in, encouraging, sharing or forwarding harmful content.

16. Recording, monitoring and evaluation

Spring Lane will maintain appropriate records of bullying concerns and responses. Leaders will review information for patterns, including repeated pupils, locations, times, types of bullying, online trends and prejudice-related themes.

Monitoring will inform staff training, supervision, curriculum provision, pastoral support and wider school improvement. Information will be handled sensitively and reported to governors in an anonymised and proportionate form.

The effectiveness of this policy will also be informed by pupil voice, parent/carers feedback, safeguarding information, behaviour data, SEND monitoring and the extent to which pupils report feeling safe, included and able to seek help.

17. Policy review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if there are significant changes to legislation, statutory guidance, school provision or identified need. When Spring Lane's revised Behaviour Policy is completed, the substantive anti-bullying provisions in this document will be incorporated into it and this standalone policy will be reviewed accordingly.

Appendix 1: Staff response guide

When a concern is raised	Staff should	Staff should avoid
Immediate response	Listen calmly; thank the child for telling; check immediate safety; reassure them that the concern will be acted upon.	Promising secrecy; dismissing it as banter; requiring pupils to 'sort it out' themselves.
Recording	Record factual information, including what was reported, who was involved, actions taken and any safeguarding decision.	Using emotive labels or presenting unverified information as fact.
Assessment	Consider pattern, repetition, intent, impact, power imbalance, vulnerability, SEND, discrimination, online elements and safeguarding.	Assuming every conflict is bullying, or assuming repeated harm is merely friendship difficulty.
Action	Follow behaviour and safeguarding procedures; involve leaders/DSL/SENDCo as appropriate; communicate with parents proportionately.	Forcing restorative meetings or disclosing confidential information about another child.
Follow-up	Check the behaviour has stopped; review safety and support; escalate if concerns recur.	Treating the matter as closed simply because an initial consequence has been issued.

Appendix 2: Key questions when deciding whether behaviour is bullying

- What happened, and what is the impact on the child?
- Is there evidence of repetition or an emerging pattern?
- Was the behaviour intended to hurt, intimidate, humiliate, exclude or cause distress?
- Is there an imbalance of power or vulnerability?
- Is the behaviour linked to SEND, disability, a protected characteristic or another aspect of identity?
- Has online behaviour extended or amplified the harm?
- Does the concern indicate child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding risk?
- What does each child need now to be safe, supported and able to participate in school?
- What action will prevent recurrence, and how will we know it has worked?

Appendix 3: Key reference documents

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 89.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Department for Education: Preventing and Tackling Bullying.
- Department for Education: Behaviour in Schools.
- SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years.
- Spring Lane Primary School SEND Policy and SEND Information Report 2026.
- Campfire Education Trust Equality Information and Objectives Statement 2026.