

The Lanes Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Academic Year 2026–2027

Scope	The Lanes Primary School
Last reviewed	October 2026
Review cycle	Annually; sooner if guidance or practice changes
Policy owner	Headteacher / Designated Safeguarding Lead

This policy should be read alongside the school's Safeguarding Policy 2026–2027 and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026–2027.

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1. Introduction and aims

At The Lanes Primary School, we are committed to providing a safe, caring, inclusive and respectful environment in which every child can learn, develop friendships and feel that they belong. Our school rules are: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Your Best. Bullying is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

We expect children to act safely and respectfully in and outside school. We recognise that children may experience friendship difficulties and relational conflict as they grow and learn together. We will help pupils resolve these difficulties and will act promptly where behaviour is harmful, discriminatory, repeated or involves an imbalance of power.

We promote open discussion about difference, challenge prejudice and celebrate diversity. We use a child-centred, trauma-informed, contextual and strengths-based approach. We consider the needs and experiences of children who have experienced bullying, children who have displayed bullying behaviour, and witnesses or bystanders.

The aims of this policy are to:

- make clear that bullying is unacceptable and that reports will be taken seriously;
- help pupils, staff and parents/carers recognise bullying and know how to report it;
- prevent bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying;
- ensure incidents are responded to promptly, consistently and proportionately;
- protect children from harm and identify when bullying may also be child-on-child abuse or indicate wider safeguarding concerns;
- support all children affected and monitor whether interventions have been effective;
- use information about incidents to improve school practice and pupils' sense of safety.

2. Policy development, scope and principles

This policy has been reviewed for the 2026–2027 academic year with reference to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, current Department for Education guidance and the Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council Anti-Bullying Policy Guidance and Template dated 1 September 2025. It is intended to work consistently with The Lanes Primary School Safeguarding Policy 2026–2027 and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026–2027.

The policy applies to pupils, staff, supply staff, volunteers, governors, contractors and visitors. It covers behaviour on school premises, during school activities and visits, on the journey to and from school, and outside school or online where the behaviour affects pupils' safety, welfare, education or the school community. The school will respond to off-site behaviour where its powers and responsibilities allow, taking proportionate action.

Safeguarding takes priority where a concern indicates that a child may be at risk of harm. This policy does not replace the school's safeguarding procedures. Any sexual violence, sexual harassment, serious assault, coercion, exploitation, threats, hate-related incident or other potentially abusive behaviour must be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy without delay.

Consistent with the White Hills Park Trust Safeguarding Policy 2026–2027, all concerns that may constitute child-on-child abuse must be reported promptly to the DSL or deputy and recorded on the school's approved safeguarding recording system, CPOMS. Urgent concerns must be raised verbally with the DSL/deputy without delay as well as being recorded. Staff must not wait for a pattern to emerge before reporting a concern.

The school will consider age, developmental stage, SEND, communication needs, disability, medical conditions, individual circumstances, power dynamics and the context in which behaviour occurs. A child may experience bullying without being able to describe it clearly or show obvious signs. Staff must remain professionally curious and not rely solely on a child making a direct disclosure.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher, Mr Pete Wilkes, has overall responsibility for this policy, ensuring it is implemented, reviewed and communicated, and for liaising with the governing body, parents/carers, the Local Authority and external agencies where appropriate.

Anti-Bullying Coordinator

The Anti-Bullying Coordinator is Miss Natasha Williams and Mrs Emma Langon. The coordinator support the implementation and review of the policy, help ensure reports are recorded and followed up, monitor themes and patterns, and support staff training and pupil/parent engagement. This role does not replace the DSL's safeguarding responsibilities.

DSL and Deputy DSLs

The DSL is Mr Pete Wilkes. Deputy DSLs are Ms Anna Hodkin, Mrs Leah Wignell, Mrs Liz Ireland, Mrs Emma Langon, Ms Jo Gosling and Miss Natasha Williams. Staff must pass safeguarding concerns to the DSL or a deputy without delay. If they are unavailable and a child may be at risk, staff must not delay appropriate action.

All staff

- model respectful behaviour, notice changes in pupils' behaviour or relationships and challenge harmful language and behaviour;
- take every report seriously, listen calmly and avoid dismissing behaviour as 'banter', 'just a joke' or a normal part of growing up;
- record concerns factually and promptly on CPOMS, using the child's own words where possible, and notify the DSL/deputy immediately if there is a safeguarding concern;
- avoid promising confidentiality or conducting an independent investigation into a safeguarding concern;
- follow up and monitor concerns in line with agreed actions.

Governors

The governing body provides oversight of the school's approach and seeks assurance that reports are acted on, pupils are supported and patterns are used to improve provision. The Chair of the Local Governing Body is Mr Andrew Barker; the Safeguarding Governor is Mr Rob Guyler.

Pupils and parents/carers

Pupils are encouraged to treat others with kindness, tell a trusted adult about bullying, and seek help if they witness it. Parents/carers should report concerns promptly, share relevant information and work with the school to support safe and respectful relationships.

4. What is bullying?

The Lanes Primary School adopts the Anti-Bullying Alliance definition recommended by Nottingham City Council and Nottinghamshire County Council:

"Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online."

There is no single legal definition of bullying. The school uses the definition above to support a shared understanding, while recognising that any incident of harm must be addressed even where it does not meet the definition of bullying.

Bullying may be motivated by actual or perceived differences, including race, ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or SEND, appearance, family circumstances, care experience, adoption,

caring responsibilities or other characteristics. Discriminatory language or conduct is unacceptable whether or not it is repeated enough to meet the definition of bullying.

Bullying may involve a group as well as individuals. Roles can include those initiating, encouraging, joining in, watching, sharing content or helping the child affected. Roles may change across situations; the school will consider the whole context rather than labelling children.

5. What bullying behaviour can look like

Bullying behaviour may include, but is not limited to:

- Physical: pushing, hitting, kicking, tripping, pinching, damaging or taking belongings.
- Verbal: name-calling, insults, threats, mocking, repeated teasing, belittling or spreading rumours.
- Emotional or psychological: humiliation, intimidation, deliberate exclusion, manipulation, coercion, threatening gestures or repeatedly undermining a child.
- Online/cyberbullying: hurtful messages, group-chat exclusion, impersonation, repeated unwanted contact, posting or sharing humiliating material, encouraging others to target a child, or sharing content without consent.
- Prejudice-related or discriminatory: racist, religiously prejudiced, sexist, misogynistic, misandrist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic or disablist language or behaviour, including slurs and targeting a child because of a protected characteristic or a perceived difference.
- Sexual or sexist bullying: repeated sexualised comments, unwanted sexualised attention, degrading comments about a child's body or sex, or other behaviour that may also constitute sexual harassment or harmful sexual behaviour.
- Baiting: a provocative act intended to trigger an angry, aggressive or emotional response, including where someone is deliberately provoked and then blamed for their reaction.
- False friendship: pretending to be a child's friend, or being friendly only at times, while using the relationship or power imbalance to control, exploit, humiliate or bully them.
- Indirect or exploitative behaviour: using others to target a child, manipulating friendships, threatening to withdraw friendship to exert control, or exploiting a child's vulnerability.

A single serious incident may not meet the school's definition of bullying, but it may still be a behaviour, disciplinary or safeguarding matter requiring an immediate response. Staff must not wait for repetition before acting to keep a child safe.

The Trust Safeguarding Policy identifies serious bullying, including cyberbullying, as a potential form of emotional abuse where it causes children frequently to feel frightened or in danger. The DSL will consider the frequency, impact, context and any wider pattern, rather than treating the bullying definition as a threshold that must be met before safeguarding action is taken.

6. Banter, relational conflict and friendship difficulties

Banter

Prosocial banter can be playful, mutually understood teasing between friends. Banter is not automatically bullying; however, it can become inappropriate or harmful, and bullying may be excused as 'just banter'. Staff will consider the intention, content and topic of the interaction, whether it was wanted, the relationship and power dynamics, the audience, the impact on the child, and whether the behaviour continued after someone showed discomfort or asked for it to stop.

A child's distress must not be dismissed because another child says they were joking. Racist, sexist, homophobic, disablist or other degrading language is not made acceptable by calling it banter. Staff will explain boundaries, challenge harmful behaviour and take action proportionate to the circumstances.

Relational conflict

Relational conflict can include occasional disagreements or friendship fallouts between children with broadly similar power and status. It may be accidental, with remorse and a willingness to put things right. It is different from bullying, which involves repeated intentional harm and an imbalance of power. However, relational conflict can escalate or become a pattern of bullying if it is not addressed.

The school will address relational conflict, support children to resolve difficulties, and monitor the situation. Restorative conversations may be appropriate where safe and suitable, but they will not be used to pressure a child to meet, reconcile with or accept an apology from another child, particularly where there is a safeguarding concern or a power imbalance.

7. Where bullying can happen

Bullying may happen in classrooms, playgrounds, toilets, corridors, on school transport, during trips, in the local community, on the journey to and from school, or online at any time. Online behaviour can continue beyond the school day and can reach a wide audience or be repeatedly shared.

The school may respond to behaviour outside school where it affects the safety or welfare of pupils or the school community. Online concerns must be managed in line with the Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding Policy and Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy. Staff should not independently search devices or copy, save or forward harmful imagery. Where harmful sexual imagery or other serious online abuse is involved, refer to the DSL immediately.

8. Reporting concerns

Pupils, parents/carers, staff and other members of the school community can report concerns to any trusted member of staff. Pupils do not have to use the word 'bullying' or be certain that the behaviour meets the definition. A concern can be shared verbally, in writing, through a worry box or another accessible route, or by asking someone to speak on the child's behalf.

Pupils should be told that:

- they can speak to their class teacher, a teaching assistant, a member of the inclusion team, the Headteacher, a DSL/deputy or another adult they trust;
- they can report something that happened to them or something they have seen happening to another child;
- adults will listen and take their concern seriously, and will explain what happens next;
- they should tell an adult again if the behaviour continues or they do not feel safe.

Staff must listen, remain calm, reassure the child that they have done the right thing by telling someone, and explain that information may need to be shared with people who can help keep them safe. Staff must not promise secrecy, ask leading questions or make the child repeat their account unnecessarily.

The school recognises that pupils with SEND, disabilities, medical conditions, EAL or communication needs may face additional barriers to reporting. Staff should adapt communication, allow extra time, use appropriate visual or alternative communication methods and check understanding. Concerns must not be discounted because a child cannot explain events fluently or does not show an obvious emotional response.

Where a child may be in immediate danger, or the concern involves serious violence, threats, exploitation, sexual harassment/violence, coercion or another safeguarding issue, staff must contact the DSL or a deputy immediately and follow the Safeguarding Policy. If the DSL/deputy cannot be reached and a child is at risk of harm, staff must take appropriate action without delay, including contacting children's social care or police where necessary.

9. How the school will respond

The school will respond promptly, sensitively and consistently. The response will reflect the nature, seriousness and context of the behaviour, the needs and wishes of the children involved, any power imbalance, previous concerns and the risk of further harm.

1. Make sure any immediate safety needs are met. Separate pupils where necessary and increase supervision or make other temporary arrangements to reduce risk.
2. Listen to the children involved separately, using age-appropriate and accessible approaches. Speak to witnesses where appropriate and avoid asking children to investigate or confront one another.
3. Establish what is known, distinguish facts from reported information and professional judgement, and consider whether the behaviour is bullying, relational conflict, another behaviour concern or a safeguarding matter.
4. Check for patterns, previous incidents, online/offline links, discriminatory motivations, group dynamics, locations/times where behaviour occurs and whether other children may be affected.

5. Consult the DSL or deputy whenever there is a safeguarding concern, repeated behaviour, significant power imbalance, discriminatory abuse, serious threat or violence, sexualised behaviour, coercion or exploitation.
6. Decide on proportionate action, which may include education and support, a behaviour sanction, increased supervision, a safety plan, parent/carers meetings, curriculum work, referral to external services or multi-agency involvement.
7. Communicate appropriately with parents/carers, unless doing so could increase risk to a child or compromise safeguarding or police enquiries.
8. Set a review point and check whether the behaviour has stopped and whether children feel safe.

The school will not require a child to prove their concern before adults take reasonable steps to investigate and protect them. We will not assume that a lack of witnesses means an incident did not happen. Nor will we assume that a child who has displayed bullying behaviour has no safeguarding needs; support and accountability may both be required.

Where a concern is considered to be child-on-child abuse or presents a safeguarding risk, the DSL will consider a documented risk assessment and support plan for all children affected, including the child reporting harm, the child whose behaviour is being addressed, and witnesses or other pupils affected. This will identify a named trusted adult, practical safety measures, supervision and review arrangements. Where relevant, the assessment will consider school transport, transition points, online contact and risks outside school. Plans must be shared with staff who need the information and reviewed when circumstances change.

Where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence, a hate incident/crime or serious safeguarding concern, the school will seek advice from the DSL and relevant agencies, including police or children's social care, as appropriate. The school will preserve relevant information and avoid actions that could compromise an external investigation.

The DSL will consider early help and wider support where a child's needs are emerging, and referral to children's social care and/or police where the level of risk or nature of the allegation requires it. Staff may make a direct referral if the DSL/deputy cannot be reached and a child may be at risk; they must inform the DSL as soon as possible. Concerns must not be closed without appropriate attention, assessment and resolution.

10. Safeguarding, support and follow-up

Bullying may be a form of child-on-child abuse. Where behaviour is abusive, coercive, sexual, violent, exploitative or otherwise indicates risk of harm, the Safeguarding Policy and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy take precedence. The DSL will consider referral, risk assessment, information sharing and support in accordance with those policies and Nottinghamshire safeguarding procedures.

Support will be tailored to the needs and wishes of each child and may include:

Staff should also be alert to changes in mood, behaviour, attendance, relationships or mental wellbeing that may indicate bullying or another safeguarding concern. In line with the Trust policy, concerns about a pupil's mental health must be reported to the DSL for consideration, even where the concern does not initially appear to be a child protection matter.

- regular check-ins with a trusted adult and a clear route to ask for help;
- pastoral support, emotional literacy or wellbeing support, and access to appropriate school or external services;
- practical safety arrangements, such as increased staff visibility, changes to routines or support at transition times;
- support to rebuild confidence, friendships and participation in school life;
- work with the child who displayed the behaviour to help them understand impact, develop safer ways to relate to others and address any unmet needs;
- support for witnesses and bystanders, who may also be distressed or worried about reporting;
- review of any additional needs, communication barriers, vulnerabilities or contextual risks.

The school will not use mediation or restorative approaches where these could place a child at further risk, minimise the harm, or create pressure to forgive or reconcile. The child's safety and wellbeing remain central. Any safety plan will be reviewed and adjusted if the situation changes.

Parents/carers will normally be informed and involved in planning support. Information will only be shared on a need-to-know basis and in line with safeguarding and data-protection requirements. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where information needs to be shared to protect a child.

Information sharing will follow the Trust Safeguarding Policy, including the Information Sharing Duty under section 16LA of the Children Act 2004 where applicable. Relevant safeguarding information may need to be shared with organisations

carrying out safeguarding or welfare functions without parental consent. Decisions to share, limit or withhold information, and the reasons for significant decisions, must be recorded. Staff should consult the DSL promptly where the position is complex; uncertainty about data protection must not delay urgent safeguarding action.

11. Prevention and education

Preventing bullying is a whole-school responsibility. The school will promote a culture where children feel safe, included, respected and confident that adults will act. Prevention strategies include:

- teaching kindness, respectful relationships, empathy, difference, equality, inclusion, consent, boundaries and safe online behaviour through the curriculum, assemblies and pastoral work;
- reinforcing the school rules: Be Kind, Be Safe, Be Your Best;
- teaching pupils what bullying, relational conflict, banter, prejudice and cyberbullying can look like, and how to report concerns;
- challenging discriminatory language and behaviour consistently and addressing the underlying attitudes as well as the immediate incident;
- promoting safe bystander action, including seeking adult help rather than joining in, sharing content or encouraging the behaviour;
- providing accessible reporting routes and reminding pupils regularly who they can talk to;
- ensuring staff understand the policy, safeguarding referral routes and their responsibilities through induction, training and updates;
- working with parents/carers and, where appropriate, the Local Authority, safeguarding partners, health services, police and other agencies;
- reviewing supervision, routines and locations where incidents cluster, and taking action to reduce risk;
- using pupil voice, parent/carer feedback, staff feedback and incident data to identify emerging themes and improve provision.

The school recognises that a rise in reports may reflect greater confidence in reporting or improved awareness, rather than an increase in bullying. Reports will be interpreted alongside other evidence and the outcomes of support and interventions.

12. Parents and carers

Parents/carers who are concerned that their child is experiencing or displaying bullying behaviour should contact the class teacher or school office and ask to speak to the appropriate member of staff. Concerns may also be raised with the Headteacher or DSL. Please share dates, locations, what was said or done, any witnesses, and any relevant messages or screenshots, where available.

The school will listen to concerns, explain the process and keep parents/carers appropriately informed. We may not be able to share confidential information about another child or details of sanctions. We ask parents/carers not to confront other pupils or families directly, post allegations or identifying information on social media, or circulate screenshots/images. Such actions may increase harm and make resolution more difficult.

Where allegations involve child-on-child abuse, parents/carers of the children involved will normally be informed, with the timing and content of communication agreed with the DSL and, where appropriate, safeguarding partners. Information about another child, any external investigation and confidential sanctions will not be shared inappropriately. Parents/carers may not be informed immediately where this could increase risk or prejudice safeguarding enquiries.

If parents/carers remain dissatisfied with the school's response, they may use the school's complaints procedure.

13. Recording, monitoring and review

Bullying and relational conflict concerns will be recorded through the school's agreed systems. Safeguarding concerns must be recorded on CPOMS and brought to the attention of the DSL/deputy in line with the Safeguarding Policy. Records should be factual, timely and child-centred, distinguish fact from opinion, include the child's own words where possible, and record actions, decisions, rationale, follow-up and outcomes.

The school will monitor bullying and relational conflict data throughout the year, considering frequency, location, type, motivation, year group, repeated reports, children repeatedly affected or displaying behaviours, bystander involvement and

whether interventions have worked. Data will be used to identify hotspots, patterns of prejudice, supervision needs, curriculum priorities and children who may need additional safeguarding or wellbeing support. Information will be handled confidentially and shared only where appropriate.

The Headteacher and Anti-Bullying Coordinator will review implementation and effectiveness. The policy will be reviewed annually and sooner if there are changes to legislation, statutory guidance, local procedures or school practice. Pupil, parent/carer, staff and governor feedback will inform review.

14. Breaches and complaints

Bullying behaviour will be addressed under the school's Behaviour Policy and, where relevant, the Safeguarding Policy and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy. Responses may include proportionate sanctions, support, education, increased supervision, safety planning and external referral. The school will consider the child's age, understanding, SEND, individual circumstances and the seriousness and impact of the behaviour.

Serious or persistent bullying, threats, violence, discriminatory abuse or online harassment may require more formal action and involvement of external agencies. A sanction alone may not address the causes or ensure that bullying stops, so follow-up and monitoring are essential.

Complaints about the school's handling of a concern should be raised through the school's Complaints Policy. Concerns about safeguarding practice should be raised with the DSL/Headteacher or through the relevant Trust safeguarding escalation arrangements.

15. Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- The White Hills Park Trust Safeguarding Policy 2026–2027 (as adopted by The Lanes Primary School);
- The Lanes Primary School Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026–2027;
- Behaviour Policy;
- Online Safety and Digital Safeguarding Policy (September 2026);
- Mobile Phone and Smart Device Policy (September 2026);
- Equality Policy;
- Relationships, Health and Education / PSHE arrangements;
- Complaints Policy and Staff Code of Conduct, where relevant.

Key statutory and other guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (DfE, in force from 1 September 2026) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 (DfE) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>
- Preventing and tackling bullying (DfE; page updated July 2026) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-bullying>
- Bullying at school: definition, law and reporting (GOV.UK) – <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school>
- Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – resources for schools, including anti-bullying guidance – <https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/resources/for-schools/>
- Anti-Bullying Alliance – definition of bullying – <https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/tools-information/all-about-bullying/understanding-bullying/definition>
- Equality Act 2010 – <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>
- Education and Inspections Act 2006 – <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

Appendix 1. Quick guide for pupils and families

If you are a pupil

- Tell an adult you trust if someone is hurting, frightening, excluding or repeatedly upsetting you, or if you see it happening to someone else.
- You do not need to know whether it is bullying before you ask for help.
- Keep telling an adult if it continues or you do not feel safe.
- Do not join in, encourage it, or share hurtful messages, photos or videos. Get help from an adult.
- If it happens online, do not forward the content. Tell a trusted adult and follow their advice.

If you are a parent or carer

- Contact the class teacher or school office and explain what your child has told you, including when and where it happened.
- Share relevant evidence safely with the school, but do not circulate it or post about children online.
- Tell the school if your child's wellbeing, attendance, friendships or behaviour changes.
- Work with the school on agreed support and follow-up. If you remain concerned, ask to speak to the Headteacher or use the Complaints Policy.

Policy approval and review

Policy owner	Headteacher / DSL
Reviewed	September 2026
Approved by	Governing Body / delegated committee
Next review	September 2027