

Prevention of Bullying Policy and Procedure

Reviewed by	Charlotte Burdett
Reviewed on	April 2026
Next review	April 2027
Related policies	Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Online Safety / Acceptable Use arrangements; Attendance Policy; Admissions Policy; Parents' Handbook.

April 2026 updates

- Updated legal and guidance references, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, the Online Safety Act 2023, and current independent school standards guidance.
- Strengthened procedures for child-on-child abuse, online bullying, prejudice-based bullying, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, and incidents involving AI-generated or digitally altered sexual or humiliating images.
- Clarified staff reporting, MyConcern recording, DSL escalation, parental communication, risk assessment, support planning, and review/follow-up expectations.

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1. Purpose, scope and ethos

Waldorf Cambridge is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive environment in which every pupil can learn, develop and participate without fear of intimidation, humiliation or harm. Bullying is never acceptable. The school will take all reports seriously, respond promptly, and work in a child-centred way to protect pupils and restore safety.

This policy applies to behaviour by pupils on the school site, during educational visits, at school events, when travelling to and from school where it is reasonable for the school to regulate conduct, and online or off site where the behaviour affects a pupil's safety or wellbeing, the orderly running of the school, or the reputation of the school community.

- promote a culture in which children feel safe to speak and adults act early;
- prevent bullying through strong relationships, curriculum, modelling and supervision;
- identify and address bullying, discriminatory behaviour and child-on-child abuse quickly;
- ensure concerns are recorded, risk assessed and, where necessary, managed as safeguarding matters;
- support pupils who have experienced bullying, pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour, and other pupils affected by an incident;
- work openly and constructively with parents and carers wherever this is safe and appropriate.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy should be read alongside the school's Behaviour and Discipline Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, staff code of conduct, online safety arrangements and any exclusions guidance used by the school.

The policy has been updated with reference to the following legislation and guidance relevant in England at the date of review:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, especially the requirement that the proprietor prevents bullying so far as reasonably practicable through an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- Equality Act 2010, including duties not to discriminate, harass or victimise pupils or prospective pupils because of protected characteristics.
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004, including duties relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and responding where a child may be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.
- Children and Families Act 2014 in relation to SEND and inclusion.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies (DfE).
- Behaviour in Schools (DfE, February 2024).
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation in Schools (DfE, July 2022).
- UKCIS Sharing Nudes and Semi-Nudes: advice for education settings (updated March 2024).
- Online Safety Act 2023 and other relevant criminal law relating to harmful, threatening or harassing conduct and communications.

3. Definitions

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person or group either physically or emotionally. It often involves an imbalance of power. Power may arise from age, status, physical strength, group influence, knowledge, confidence, access to technology, a protected characteristic, or other social factors.

Bullying can be verbal, non-verbal, physical, relational, sexual, prejudicial or online. It may happen face to face, in writing, through images or video, through social media, gaming, messaging, anonymous apps, or through the manipulation of digital images.

Not every disagreement or fall-out is bullying. Single incidents of conflict, friendship difficulties or poor behaviour may not meet the definition of bullying. However, a serious one-off incident may still require a behaviour response and may amount to child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, hate-related behaviour or another safeguarding concern. Staff must therefore focus on the impact, context, vulnerability and risk, not only on whether behaviour is repeated.

4. Forms of bullying and related harmful behaviour

Bullying and related harmful behaviour may include, but are not limited to:

- physical bullying - hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, taking or damaging belongings, or threatening violence;
- verbal bullying - name-calling, insults, taunts, intimidation, humiliating comments, threats or aggressive language;
- social or relational bullying - exclusion, isolation, manipulative friendships, public embarrassment, gossiping, rumour-spreading or encouraging others to ostracise a pupil;
- cyberbullying - abusive or threatening messages, group chat intimidation, anonymous posts, image-based abuse, impersonation, exclusion from online groups, or repeated contact designed to cause distress;
- prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying linked to race, ethnicity, culture, religion or belief, disability, special educational needs, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, home circumstances, care status, adoption, young carer responsibilities or other real or perceived difference;
- sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour, including sexual comments, sexualised insults, coercion, unwanted touching, upskirting, sexist language, pressure within relationships, and online sexual harassment;
- incidents involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images or videos, coercion to create or share such material, threats to distribute images, or AI-generated / digitally altered sexual or humiliating images;
- abuse in intimate personal relationships between children, blackmail, extortion, initiation or hazing behaviour, and conduct encouraging self-harm, violence or other abuse.

Bullying that occurs off site or online will be addressed when there is a clear link to school life, when a pupil's safety or welfare is affected, or when the behaviour risks seriously disrupting the school community.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Proprietor / Trustees and school leadership

- ensure the school has an up-to-date and effective anti-bullying strategy and related safeguarding arrangements;
- promote a culture of safety, inclusion, dignity and respect;
- ensure staff are trained and supervised so they understand both behaviour and safeguarding responsibilities;

- monitor patterns, themes and vulnerable groups, and review practice where required.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies

- advise on whether concerns meet safeguarding thresholds and whether referrals or consultations with external agencies are required;
- oversee risk assessments, safety planning and support plans where bullying is linked to child-on-child abuse or other safeguarding issues;
- ensure appropriate recording, chronology and information sharing.

All staff

- maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here';
- challenge derogatory language, 'banter', bias and low-level harmful behaviour before it escalates;
- listen, reassure, record and report concerns promptly;
- supervise pupils effectively and model respectful relationships;
- never promise absolute confidentiality to a pupil where safeguarding concerns may require information to be shared.

Pupils and parents/carers

- Pupils are expected to treat others with respect, report worries and seek help for themselves or others.
- Parents and carers are encouraged to raise concerns early and work with the school to support safe outcomes.

6. Reporting concerns

Concerns may be raised by pupils, parents, staff or external professionals. Pupils may report verbally or in writing to any trusted adult. Parents may contact the class teacher, pastoral lead, form tutor, DSL, deputy DSL or another appropriate member of staff.

A member of staff receiving a report must:

- take the concern seriously and remain calm;
- listen carefully, avoid leading questions, and make a clear factual record;
- consider immediate safety and separation needs;
- report promptly to the relevant senior lead and to the DSL or deputy DSL where there is any safeguarding element;
- record the concern on MyConcern, or on the school's incident form for immediate transfer onto MyConcern, on the same working day.

7. Responding to incidents

The school's response will be proportionate, child-centred, trauma-informed where possible, and focused on safety, accountability and prevention of recurrence. The needs of the pupil who has experienced harm are the priority.

Immediate response: stop the behaviour, secure safety, provide supervision and medical attention if needed, and preserve evidence where appropriate.

Initial fact-finding: gather accounts separately, identify witnesses, retain screenshots or other evidence, and avoid group confrontation at the outset.

DSL consideration: where behaviour may amount to child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, discriminatory abuse, a crime, or a wider safeguarding concern, the DSL must be involved without delay.

Risk assessment: consider vulnerability, power imbalance, repeat pattern, online reach, the presence of sexual or discriminatory elements, SEND needs, and whether pupils can safely remain in shared spaces or groups.

Parental communication: inform parents/carers of pupils directly involved unless doing so would place a child at additional risk or compromise a safeguarding process.

Plan and implement action: this may include support, supervision changes, restorative work where appropriate, sanctions, curriculum input, safety measures, or referral to external agencies.

Review: check that the bullying has stopped, evaluate impact on all pupils involved, and update plans if concerns continue.

Restorative approaches may be used when they are safe, appropriate and genuinely likely to help. They must never minimise serious harm, force a pupil who has experienced harm into a face-to-face process, or replace safeguarding action where safeguarding thresholds are met.

8. Recording, risk assessment and confidentiality

All concerns, discussions, decisions and reasons for decisions must be recorded. Records should be factual, dated and sufficiently detailed to show what happened, who was involved, what action was taken, and what follow-up is required.

- MyConcern is the school's primary recording system for safeguarding and serious bullying concerns.
- Where a paper or Word-based form is used initially, it must be uploaded or transferred to MyConcern without delay.
- Online incidents should include platform or app, usernames, URLs where available, screenshots and any action taken to secure evidence.
- Where appropriate, the school will complete or update a risk assessment and support plan.
- Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis in line with safeguarding, data protection and the best interests of the child.

Staff must not examine or delete material from a device except in line with school procedures and current guidance on searching, screening and confiscation. Where indecent images of children may be involved, staff must follow safeguarding procedures and the DSL's direction.

9. Support for pupils

Support must be offered to the pupil who has experienced bullying, and also to pupils who have displayed bullying behaviour where this is needed to address underlying causes and reduce future risk.

- For the affected pupil, support may include a trusted adult, pastoral check-ins, safe spaces, a seating or timetable plan, support with friendship and belonging, counselling or therapeutic support, and help with online safety and reporting.
- For the pupil whose behaviour has caused harm, support may include reflective work, behaviour targets, mentoring, restorative work where appropriate, help with emotional regulation, and specialist referral where needed.
- Support should also be considered for bystanders, friendship groups, siblings and classes affected by the incident.

10. Sanctions and outcomes

Sanctions will be fair, reasonable, proportionate and consistent with the Positive Behaviour and Discipline Policy. Sanctions are only one part of the school's response and should normally sit alongside support and preventative work.

- reminder, reprimand or formal warning;
- loss of privileges, changes to routines or increased supervision;
- restorative work, written reflection or reparation;
- separation arrangements within lessons, social times or transport;
- internal consequences or temporary removal from specific activities;
- suspension or permanent exclusion where the behaviour is serious, persistent, or poses a significant risk, and in accordance with the school's behaviour and exclusion arrangements;
- referral to police, children's social care or another external agency where required.

Behaviour linked to a protected characteristic, sexual harassment or violence, image-based abuse, blackmail, coercive behaviour, or serious online abuse is likely to require a stronger response and may trigger safeguarding or criminal processes.

11. Prevention and curriculum

Prevention is most effective when embedded in daily school life. The school will work to create a culture in which respectful relationships are taught, expected and modelled.

- clear behaviour expectations, consistent adult language and visible supervision;
- curriculum work on friendship, respect, consent, boundaries, difference, protected characteristics, online behaviour and how to get help;
- age-appropriate teaching about cyberbullying, harmful online content, group chats, image sharing, sextortion, AI-generated imagery and digital footprints;
- opportunities for pupil voice, upstander behaviour, peer support and restorative community building;
- attention to transitions, unstructured times and places where pupils may feel less safe;
- reasonable adjustments and targeted support for pupils who are vulnerable because of SEND, disability, communication needs, mental health, family circumstances or previous experiences of abuse.

12. Monitoring, training and review

The school will review bullying records, patterns and themes regularly, including any disproportionate impact on pupils with protected characteristics or other vulnerabilities. Findings will inform supervision, curriculum, staff training and policy review.

- All staff will receive regular safeguarding and anti-bullying training appropriate to their role.
- Induction will include child-on-child abuse, online safety, discriminatory bullying and school reporting procedures.
- This policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or school practice changes.

Reviewed by	Charlotte Burdett	Date: April 2026
Approved by	_____	Date: _____

Appendix 1 - Bullying concern / incident form

This form may be completed directly or used to structure the initial MyConcern entry. All safeguarding-relevant incidents should be transferred to MyConcern on the same working day.

Date of report	
Name of person reporting	
Pupil(s) affected / target	
Pupil(s) whose behaviour caused concern	
Location / context / online platform	
Date(s) and time(s) of incident(s)	

Type of behaviour (tick or annotate all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Physical	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal	<input type="checkbox"/> Social / relational	<input type="checkbox"/> Cyberbullying
<input type="checkbox"/> Prejudice-based / discriminatory	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual harassment	<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual violence / harmful sexual behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/> Sharing nudes / semi-nudes or image-based abuse
<input type="checkbox"/> Threats / intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/> Extortion / coercion / blackmail	<input type="checkbox"/> Damage / theft of property	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Possible protected characteristic / vulnerability factor (if relevant):

<input type="checkbox"/> Race / ethnicity	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion or belief	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability / SEND	<input type="checkbox"/> Sex
<input type="checkbox"/> Sexual orientation	<input type="checkbox"/> Gender reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/> Care / adoption / family circumstances	<input type="checkbox"/> Other / unknown

Summary of concern / incident	
Evidence secured (for example screenshots, witness names, device details)	
Immediate action taken	
Was the DSL / deputy DSL informed? If yes, when and by whom?	

Parent / carer contact	
Support and safety plan	

Outcome / sanction / referral	
Review date and reviewer	

Appendix 2 - Checklist for managing a bullying incident

Use alongside the school's safeguarding policy, behaviour policy and MyConcern procedures.

Done	Action
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure immediate safety. Stop the behaviour, separate pupils if needed, and obtain medical help where appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Listen to the pupil raising the concern. Reassure them, do not promise absolute confidentiality, and explain what will happen next.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Make a factual record and upload or transfer it to MyConcern on the same working day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider whether the concern may amount to child-on-child abuse, discriminatory abuse, sexual harassment or another safeguarding issue. Inform the DSL / deputy DSL without delay where relevant.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gather accounts separately from pupils involved and from witnesses. Preserve screenshots or other evidence.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider vulnerability, power imbalance, repetition, online reach, protected characteristics and SEND needs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Inform parents / carers of pupils directly involved unless this would place a child at additional risk or compromise a safeguarding process.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide and record immediate protective actions, support needs and any supervision changes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Agree proportionate consequences and follow-up actions in line with the Behaviour and Discipline Policy.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider whether restorative work is appropriate and safe.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider whether external advice or referral is required, including children's social care, police, Early Help, CAMHS or specialist services.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Set a review date, check that the behaviour has stopped, and record the outcome.

Appendix 3 - Summary table of bullying types

Type	Definition / indicators	Examples	Safeguarding notes
Physical	Use or threat of force, intimidation or damage to belongings.	Hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, damaging property.	May be assault or child-on-child abuse; assess injury, fear and pattern.

Type	Definition / indicators	Examples	Safeguarding notes
Verbal	Words intended to humiliate, intimidate or degrade.	Insults, slurs, taunts, threats, mocking comments.	Challenge early; prejudice-related language should always be recorded and addressed.
Social / relational	Behaviour designed to isolate, shame or control social standing.	Exclusion, rumour-spreading, public humiliation, manipulating friendships.	Can be highly harmful even without physical contact; monitor repetition and group dynamics.
Cyberbullying	Online or digital conduct causing fear, humiliation or repeated distress.	Group chat abuse, anonymous messages, fake accounts, humiliating posts or images.	Preserve evidence; consider off-site jurisdiction, device procedures and online safety support.
Prejudice-based / discriminatory	Bullying linked to a protected characteristic or other perceived difference.	Racist, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, faith-based, disability-related abuse.	May engage Equality Act duties and require stronger whole-school response.
Sexual harassment / harmful sexual behaviour	Unwanted sexual conduct between children, on or offline.	Sexual comments, pressure, upskirting, unwanted touching, sharing sexual content.	Treat through safeguarding procedures with DSL oversight; do not dismiss as banter.
Image-based abuse	Creation, possession, sharing or threatened sharing of intimate or humiliating images.	Non-consensual sharing of nudes, coercion, deepfake sexual image, blackmail.	Follow UKCIS guidance and safeguarding procedures immediately.