



Bottesford Schools Federation

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Purpose and principles

This policy sets out the Federation's whole-school approach to preventing, identifying, reporting, investigating and responding to bullying between pupils. It brings together the strongest elements of the former Infant and Junior School policies and applies one consistent RISE-based approach from Reception to Year 6, adapted for age, development, communication and SEND.

- Bullying is everyone's responsibility.
- Every report will be listened to, taken seriously and acted upon.
- The immediate priorities are safety, safeguarding and stopping the behaviour.
- All harmful behaviour is addressed, even when it does not meet the definition of bullying.
- Responses are fair, proportionate and educational, while remaining clear that responsibility lies with the pupil or pupils who caused harm.
- Safeguarding always takes precedence over restorative work. A harmed pupil will never be pressured to meet, mediate with or forgive another pupil.
- Adults remain calm, factual, respectful and professionally curious.
- The Federation learns from patterns and pupil voice and provides a genuine fresh start once appropriate action is complete.

2. Legal and statutory framework

The governing body and school leaders will keep this policy under review and apply the law and statutory guidance in force at the time. In particular, this policy has regard to:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including the duty to determine measures which encourage good behaviour and prevent all forms of bullying, and the power to regulate relevant conduct outside school.
- Education Act 2002, section 175, and the Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004: duties to safeguard and promote children's welfare and to work appropriately with safeguarding partners.
- Equality Act 2010, including duties not to discriminate, harass or victimise; to make reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils; and the public sector equality duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.
- Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years, including identification of need, participation of children and families, and appropriate support and reasonable adjustment.
- Human Rights Act 1998 and relevant rights under the European Convention on Human Rights, applied proportionately in protecting dignity, safety, privacy and education.
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR when recording, sharing, retaining and reviewing information about incidents.
- Relevant criminal law. Some conduct may constitute assault, theft, harassment, malicious communications, sexual offences or hate crime and may require police or other agency involvement.

Key guidance includes Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; Behaviour in Schools; Preventing and Tackling Bullying; Searching, Screening and Confiscation; the SEND Code of Practice; and current statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion. This is a school policy, not a substitute for safeguarding, HR or legal advice in an individual case.

3. RISE: our shared anti-bullying culture

RISE is the common language for relationships and behaviour across both schools. The values stay constant while expectations for independence, reflection and self-regulation increase with age.

RISE value	What it means in preventing bullying	What adults explicitly teach and model
Respect	Treat every person with dignity; include others; use safe words, actions and online communication.	Notice difference positively, challenge prejudice and listen without humiliation.
Integrity	Tell the truth, report concerns, take responsibility and do the right thing even when others are watching.	Thank pupils for telling; record facts; do not promise secrecy; follow through.
Strive	Keep learning how to manage conflict, friendship and emotions; persist in seeking help until safe.	Teach and rehearse skills, adjust support and keep monitoring until the behaviour has stopped.
Empowerment	Use your voice safely, seek help, support others and help everyone belong.	Give age-appropriate choices, listen to pupil voice and protect pupils from retaliation.

RISE online

Respect: communicate kindly. Integrity: be honest and responsible. Strive: make thoughtful choices and seek help. Empowerment: use technology positively, report harmful content and support others safely.

4. What bullying is - and is not

Federation definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally and involves an imbalance of power. The power imbalance may be physical, social, psychological, online, related to status or numbers, or may build over time.

A serious one-off incident may not meet the usual repeated-pattern definition, but it will still be addressed immediately and may be a safeguarding matter, discriminatory incident, sexual harassment/violence, assault or another serious breach of the Behaviour Policy. Staff must not wait for repetition before acting where harm or risk is significant.

4.1 Conflict, unkindness and bullying

Conflict / friendship difficulty	Unkind or harmful incident	Bullying pattern
A disagreement between pupils with broadly equal power; both may be upset and able to participate in resolution.	A hurtful, unsafe or prejudicial act that must be addressed, even if isolated or accidental.	Intentional or foreseeably harmful behaviour, usually repeated, with a power imbalance that makes it difficult for the targeted pupil to stop it.

Labels are less important than safety and action. Staff should describe observable behaviour and impact, investigate patterns and avoid prematurely labelling a child as “a bully” or dismissing a concern as “just falling out”.

5. Forms and motivations of bullying

- Physical: hitting, kicking, pushing, spitting, unwanted contact, damaging or taking property, blocking movement, forcing another pupil to act, or threats of violence.
- Verbal: name-calling, insults, mocking, threats, intimidation, sexualised comments or repeated remarks about a pupil or their family.
- Social or relational: deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, humiliating someone, manipulating friendships, coercion, encouraging others to reject a pupil or damaging reputation.
- Online/cyber: abusive or threatening messages, posts, images, videos, gaming or group-chat behaviour; impersonation; exclusion; sharing content without consent; or repeated harmful contact.
- Prejudice-related or discriminatory: behaviour connected to actual or perceived race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability/SEND, pregnancy/maternity, or other aspects of identity or circumstance such as appearance, family, adoption, care experience or caring responsibility.
- Sexual bullying, sexual harassment or sexual violence: unwanted sexual comments, jokes, rumours, image sharing, touching, coercion or other sexual conduct. These concerns must be managed under safeguarding procedures and KCSIE.
- Bullying is connected to additional vulnerability, including communication needs, social isolation, mental health, socioeconomic circumstances, young carers, children in care or previously looked-after children.

Bullying can occur face to face or indirectly; during lessons, social times, clubs, visits, journeys to or from school, at home or online. It may involve one pupil, a group, bystanders or pupils who reinforce the behaviour by sharing, laughing, forwarding or deliberately remaining silent when it is safe to seek help.

6. Prevention: creating a culture where pupils belong

- Teach RISE expectations, respectful relationships, consent, boundaries, online safety and how to seek help through PSHE/RSHE, computing, assemblies, stories, drama, circle time and the wider curriculum.
- Teach the difference between conflict, unkindness and bullying without discouraging pupils from reporting any harm.
- Use inclusive books, resources and curriculum content that challenge stereotypes, represent difference positively and promote protected characteristics and British values in an age-appropriate way.
- Participate in Anti-Bullying Week and Safer Internet Day while maintaining prevention throughout the year.
- Ensure every pupil can identify trusted adults and accessible ways to report. Younger pupils may use visuals, feelings check-ins, puppets, drawing or supported communication.
- Provide vigilant supervision, purposeful playground activities and trained pupil helpers such as PALS, Mini Mentors or Sports Leaders. Pupil helpers support friendship and reporting; they do not investigate bullying or carry safeguarding responsibility.
- Map and supervise potential hot spots, including toilets, corridors, playground zones, dining areas, clubs and online spaces that affect school life.
- Use pupil voice, School Council, PALS, surveys, worry systems, attendance information and behaviour records to identify emerging patterns.
- Give specific recognition for inclusive, courageous and respectful choices linked to RISE.
- Train all staff, including lunchtime, supply, temporary and club staff, in definitions, signs, reporting routes, safeguarding and reasonable adjustments.

7. Recognising possible bullying

A pupil may disclose directly, indirectly or through behaviour. The signs below can have many causes; they require curiosity rather than assumption:

- reluctance, anxiety or refusal around school, a route, lesson, club or social time;
- changes in attendance, punctuality, engagement, attainment, friendships, eating or sleep;
- withdrawal, distress, low confidence, tearfulness, irritability, aggression or behaviour that is out of character;
- unexplained injuries or damaged, missing or repeatedly “lost” belongings;
- fear of using devices, sudden deletion of accounts, distress after messages or secrecy around online activity;
- repeated headaches, stomach aches or other non-specific symptoms;
- avoiding particular pupils, places or journeys;
- changes in play, drawings, language or sexualised behaviour;
- a pupil with limited communication appearing dysregulated, fearful or unusually dependent on an adult.

Staff must also notice pupils who may not recognise or be able to explain that they are being bullied because of age, SEND, communication, trauma or vulnerability.

8. Reporting concerns

A pupil can report to any adult in school, directly or through a parent/carer, friend, pupil helper, written note, drawing, worry system or the school's agreed reporting method. Witnesses are expected to seek adult help and should never put themselves at risk. Reports about online or out-of-school conduct should also be made where the behaviour affects a pupil's safety, welfare or school life.

What adults say first

“Thank you for telling me. I am taking this seriously. You have done the right thing. I cannot promise to keep it secret, because I may need to involve people who can help keep you safe. I will explain what happens next.”

- Parents/carers should contact the class teacher, phase leader or a senior leader and share specific dates, behaviours, witnesses and relevant screenshots where available.
- Parents/carers must not approach, question or confront another child. Online content should be preserved rather than redistributed.
- Any member of staff receiving a report must act that day: make safe, record the child's words accurately and pass the concern to the appropriate senior leader/DSL in line with the thresholds below.

9. Federation response pathway

Core pathway

LISTEN -> MAKE SAFE -> SAFEGUARD -> RECORD -> INVESTIGATE -> SUPPORT -> RESPOND
-> MONITOR -> REVIEW

1. Listen and reassure. Speak calmly, take the report seriously, avoid blame and record the pupil's own words. Do not ask leading questions or promise confidentiality.
2. Make it safe. Stop the behaviour, address immediate medical or emotional needs, separate pupils where necessary, protect against retaliation and agree on a trusted adult and practical safety arrangements.
3. Check safeguarding. Consider child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment/violence, discrimination, exploitation, significant violence, threats, self-harm risk, criminal conduct or danger. Refer

immediately to the DSL/deputy where appropriate. Safeguarding procedures override this pathway.

4. Record and notify. Log the concern promptly on CPOMS under the agreed category, including date, time, location, witnesses, exact behaviour/language, impact, action and parent contact. Notify the designated senior leader and DSL as required.
5. Investigate fairly and promptly. Obtain separate accounts; examine patterns and earlier records; speak with relevant adults and witnesses; consider online evidence; distinguish fact, allegation and professional judgement; consider power imbalance, intent/foreseeability, repetition, impact, SEND and protected characteristics.
6. Decide and communicate. A senior leader determines whether the concern is substantiated as bullying, another harmful incident, unresolved or a safeguarding matter. Families are told the conclusion and relevant action, while information about another pupil remains confidential.
7. Support and respond. Put safety/support in place for the pupil harmed and clear boundaries, consequence, teaching and support for the pupil who caused harm. Address bystanders or group dynamics. Restore only when safe and freely agreed.
8. Monitor and review. Set named checks and a review date. Confirm with the harmed pupil that the behaviour has stopped and that they feel safe. Reopen/escalate if concerns continue. Closure is based on safety and evidence, not merely the absence of a further report.

10. Safeguarding and escalation thresholds

Staff must contact the DSL or a deputy without delay where the concern may be child-on-child abuse or otherwise meets safeguarding thresholds. This includes sexual violence or harassment; coercion or controlling behaviour; significant or repeated physical assault; threats to kill or seriously harm; harmful sexual behaviour; sharing nude or semi-nude images; exploitation; serious online abuse; hate-related abuse; or indications that a child is at risk of significant harm.

- The DSL decides safeguarding action and liaison with children's social care, police or other agencies in accordance with local procedures.
- If a crime may have been committed or there is immediate danger, leaders consider police involvement; call 999 in an emergency.
- The school does not investigate in a way that jeopardises a police or social-care enquiry.
- Support is provided to all affected children. The needs of a child who has caused harm do not reduce the protection owed to the child harmed.
- No-consequence or mutual-conflict language must not be used to imply shared responsibility where there is abuse, coercion or a power imbalance.

11. Supporting the pupil who has experienced bullying

- agree an immediate and longer-term safety plan with the pupil and family;
- provide a trusted adult, regular check-ins and accessible reporting;
- adjust supervision, seating, routes, groups, transitions or online arrangements without placing the burden of change unfairly on the harmed pupil;
- offer pastoral, learning mentor, nurture, counselling or external support where appropriate;
- help rebuild confidence, belonging and participation;
- manage missed learning or attendance sensitively;
- protect against retaliation and monitor friendships and online spillover;
- tell the pupil, in age-appropriate terms, that the concern has been addressed and what they should do if anything happens again.

12. Responding to the pupil who has displayed bullying behaviour

The response combines clear accountability with teaching and support. Consequences are applied under the Federation Behaviour, Relationships and Inclusion Policy and may include loss of a related privilege, increased supervision, separation, completing interrupted learning, a logical/restorative

action, an individual behaviour support plan, internal response, suspension or, in the most serious circumstances and where the statutory test is met, permanent exclusion.

- state precisely which behaviour must stop and why;
- hear the pupil's account separately and establish facts;
- make reasonable adjustments without excusing harm;
- help the pupil understand impact, power, prejudice, consent and online permanence as appropriate;
- identify triggers, reinforcement by peers, unmet needs or patterns and involve the SENDCO/Inclusion Lead where relevant;
- teach and rehearse safer choices and set clear, measurable targets;
- involve parents/carers and, where needed, external agencies;
- monitor closely and increase support or consequence if behaviour recurs;
- provide a fresh start once action is completed, while retaining appropriate monitoring.

13. Restorative practice

Restorative work may support accountability and repair but is never an automatic response and never replaces safeguarding, investigation or proportionate consequences.

- First regulate and establish emotional safety.
- Explore what happened, impact and the relevant RISE values without interrogating.
- Agree meaningful repair and teach a better response. A forced apology is not meaningful repair.
- A face-to-face meeting occurs only when risk has been assessed, the harmed pupil freely agrees, both pupils are ready and a trained adult judges it safe.
- Do not use mediation where it could imply shared blame, increase pressure, compromise an investigation or retraumatise a child.

14. SEND, disability and vulnerability

The Federation maintains high expectations and complies with equality and SEND duties. Bullying related to disability or SEND is taken seriously. Pupils with communication differences or cognitive, sensory, social-emotional or physical needs may be at increased risk of being targeted, may report differently, or may need additional teaching to understand impact and boundaries.

Before deciding or escalating a response, STOP

SENSORY? TRIGGER? OVERLOAD? PROCESSING? Consider whether the pupil understood, could communicate, was regulated, had agreed adjustments and can access the proposed reflection or consequence.

- use visual choices, symbols, social stories, drawings, communication aids, extra processing time or a trusted communication partner;
- take care not to interpret distressed behaviour as an unreliable disclosure;
- seek advice from the SENDCO/Inclusion Lead and implement relevant plans and EHC provision;
- make reasonable adjustments to reporting, investigation, support, supervision, reflection and consequence;
- consider whether repeated behaviour indicates unmet or unidentified need and review provision with the pupil and family.

Reasonable adjustment is not lowered expectation. Unsafe or harmful behaviour is addressed, but the route to understanding, accountability, consequence and repair may be adapted.

15. Online and out-of-school bullying

The Federation may respond to relevant conduct outside school, including online, where it is lawful and reasonable to do so - for example, conduct on journeys, visits, clubs, local spaces, gaming, messaging or social media that harms a pupil, threatens staff or pupils, disrupts school, creates a safeguarding concern or adversely affects the school community.

- Preserve evidence: record dates, usernames and URLs and take screenshots where safe; do not forward harmful content unnecessarily.
- Follow safeguarding procedures for sexual images, threats, exploitation, hate incidents or serious harassment.
- Use the Federation's Online Safety, Acceptable Use and mobile-phone arrangements alongside this policy.
- Where appropriate, support families to use platform reporting/blocking tools and consider police or other agency advice.
- Any search, confiscation or examination of a device must follow current law, DfE guidance and Federation procedures.

16. Parents and carers

The Federation works in partnership with families. It will communicate promptly and respectfully, explain the process and review arrangements, listen to relevant evidence and maintain confidentiality about other children.

- Families should listen calmly, reassure their child, encourage reporting and avoid promising a particular outcome before investigation.
- Concerns should be raised with school promptly rather than posted publicly or pursued directly with another child or family.
- The school will normally involve the families of pupils directly concerned when bullying is suspected or substantiated, unless safeguarding considerations require a different approach.
- Families receive information about their own child and the steps taken to promote safety; the school cannot disclose another child's personal information or sanction.
- If a concern remains unresolved, families should first speak with the Headteacher/Executive Headteacher and may then use the Federation Complaints Procedure. Safeguarding referrals or complaints follow the relevant procedure.

17. Roles and responsibilities

Role	Key responsibilities
Governing Body	Approve and review the policy; assure itself that statutory duties are met; scrutinise anonymised patterns, equality impact and effectiveness; hold leaders to account.
Executive Headteacher / Headteachers	Create the culture; ensure consistent implementation, training, resources, family communication and agency liaison; make serious disciplinary decisions within their authority.
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Advise on safeguarding thresholds; lead safeguarding action and referrals; ensure child-on-child abuse is not minimised; coordinate risk and support.
Anti-Bullying / Behaviour Lead and SLT	Coordinate investigations; quality-assure CPOMS records; agree plans; monitor recurrence, hot spots and group patterns; report themes to leaders/governors.
SEND/CO / Inclusion Lead	Advise on communication, disability, unmet need, reasonable adjustments and provision; support review of plans and disproportionate patterns.
All staff	Model RISE; prevent and challenge harmful behaviour; listen, make safe, record, report and follow agreed plans; maintain confidentiality.

Role	Key responsibilities
Lunchtime, club, supply and temporary staff	Intervene safely, report concerns immediately and follow the same pathway; receive a concise induction and relevant pupil information.
Pupils	Show RISE; report harm; support others safely; cooperate honestly with investigations and repair. Pupil helpers refer concerns to adults and do not investigate.
Parents/carers	Reinforce RISE, share concerns promptly, preserve evidence, work with school and avoid confronting another pupil or family.

18. Recording, confidentiality and information sharing

- Significant concerns, all allegations of bullying, discriminatory incidents and follow-up actions are recorded promptly on CPOMS using agreed categories.
- Records are factual, objective and proportionate and distinguish allegation, observed fact, pupil voice, analysis, decision and action. Avoid judgemental labels.
- Each case records a named lead, safety measures, family contact, safeguarding decisions, SEND adjustments, outcome, monitoring dates and closure rationale.
- Information is shared only with those who need it for safety, welfare, investigation or legal duties. No adult promises absolute confidentiality.
- Records are retained and handled in line with the Federation's data protection and retention arrangements.

19. Monitoring, evaluation and review

Leaders will review information at least termly and report anonymised themes to governors.

Monitoring will include:

- type, location, time and duration of incidents;
- repeat concerns, pupils and peer groups;
- online and out-of-school links;
- prejudice-related and discriminatory incidents by characteristic or theme;
- sexual harassment/violence and other safeguarding referrals;
- attendance, exclusion/suspension and lost-learning impact;
- pupils with SEND, children in care/previously looked after, young carers and other vulnerable groups;
- time from report to safety action, investigation, review and closure;
- pupil and parent voice, including whether pupils feel safe and know how to report;
- effectiveness of supervision, curriculum, support, consequence and staff training.

Disproportionality or recurring hot spots prompt changes to provision, environment, curriculum, supervision, support or staff practice - not simply a count of incidents. The policy will be reviewed annually and sooner when legislation, statutory guidance, local safeguarding arrangements or Federation practice changes.

20. Success criteria

- pupils feel safe, known, included and listened to;
- pupils can explain RISE and how to seek help;
- staff use a consistent definition and pathway across both schools;
- reports receive prompt safety action and fair investigation;
- bullying, discriminatory language and sexual harassment are not dismissed as banter;
- pupils harmed receive sustained support and protection from retaliation;
- pupils who cause harm are held accountable and learn safer behaviour;
- reasonable adjustments are understood and implemented;

- monitoring shows that interventions stop recurrence and improve belonging.

Appendix A - Staff quick reference

When a pupil reports bullying

LISTEN -> MAKE SAFE -> SAFEGUARD -> RECORD -> INVESTIGATE -> SUPPORT -> RESPOND
-> MONITOR -> REVIEW

Do	Avoid
Thank the pupil; use their own words; check immediate safety; explain who needs to know; record promptly; consult the DSL/SLT; arrange follow-up.	Do not promise secrecy; question pupils together; demand proof before making safe; minimise as banter; force an apology or mediation; disclose another pupil's sanction; wait for repetition where risk is serious.

Immediate DSL referral: sexual violence/harassment; coercion; significant violence or threats; harmful sexual behaviour; nude/semi-nude image sharing; exploitation; serious online abuse; hate-related abuse; or any concern that a child may be at risk of significant harm.

Appendix B - Investigation and case record checklist

- Reporter and date/time received
- Immediate safety and medical action
- Child's account in their own words
- Alleged behaviour: who, what, where, when, frequency and method
- Witnesses and relevant staff accounts
- Power imbalance, impact, repetition and intent/foreseeability
- Earlier incidents and CPOMS pattern check
- Online evidence and actions to preserve/remove content
- Protected characteristic, discrimination or hate element
- Safeguarding decision and DSL action
- SEND, communication needs and reasonable adjustments
- Parents/carers informed and information shared
- Outcome: substantiated bullying / other harmful behaviour / unresolved / safeguarding matter
- Support, consequence, teaching and safety plan
- Named lead, monitoring dates and pupil/family feedback
- Closure decision and evidence that behaviour has stopped

Appendix C - Age-appropriate reporting and support

Infant provision	Junior provision
Use short concrete questions, visuals, emotion cards, drawings, puppets, supported play observation and familiar adults. Repeat and check understanding. Offer frequent check-ins and close transition/playground supervision.	Use clear written or spoken accounts, timelines, screenshots and pupil voice. Teach group dynamics, online conduct, bystander responsibility and safe reporting. Agree increasing pupil ownership without transferring responsibility for safety.
Simple pupil message: "Tell an adult. We will listen. We will help keep you safe."	Simple pupil message: "Report it, preserve evidence and keep telling a trusted adult until you feel safe."

Appendix D - Key guidance and links

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Preventing and tackling bullying: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-bullying>

Behaviour in schools: advice for headteachers and school staff:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>

SEND Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

Equality Act 2010: advice for schools:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Searching, screening and confiscation at school:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/searching-screening-and-confiscation>

Bullying at school: the law: <https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/the-law>

External support may include the local authority safeguarding partnership, children's social care, police, NSPCC/Childline, Anti-Bullying Alliance, CEOP and specialist services. Staff must use current local referral routes and Federation procedures.