

Belton C of E Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy



September 2026 – August 2027

Updated from the September 2023 policy to reflect current Department for Education guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and the school's wider safeguarding and behaviour arrangements.

Policy owner: Headteacher
Anti-bullying governor: [Confirm current governor]
Approved by: Governing Body
Review date: September 2027

1. Policy statement

Belton C of E Primary School is committed to providing a safe, caring and inclusive environment in which every child and adult is treated with dignity and respect. Bullying is not tolerated.

The school takes all reports of bullying seriously and will respond promptly, fairly and proportionately. Bullying is considered alongside the school's wider safeguarding and behaviour arrangements because repeated or serious bullying can have a significant impact on a child's wellbeing, attendance, learning and safety.

This policy should be read alongside the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Child-on-Child Abuse Policy, Online Safety Policy, Acceptable Use arrangements, Relationships Education/RSE/PSHE Policy, SEND Policy, Equality Policy and Complaints Policy.

2. Definition of bullying

There is no legal definition of bullying. For the purposes of this school, bullying is behaviour which is repeated, intended to hurt someone physically or emotionally, and involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. It may happen face-to-face, online, or through a combination of online and offline behaviour.

The school will use the pupil-friendly STOP message – 'Several Times On Purpose' – to help children understand bullying. However, staff will not dismiss a serious one-off incident simply because it does not meet the school's definition of bullying. A one-off incident may still be misbehaviour, discrimination, harassment, child-on-child abuse or a safeguarding concern and will be responded to appropriately.

Bullying can include:

- physical bullying – hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or taking belongings;
- verbal bullying – threats, insults, name-calling, humiliation or persistent teasing;
- psychological or relational bullying – rumours, exclusion, manipulation or deliberately isolating someone;
- cyberbullying – harmful behaviour using phones, computers, social media, messaging, gaming or other technology;
- prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying – including bullying related to race, religion or belief, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or other protected characteristics;
- bullying based on appearance, health, SEND or vulnerability;
- bullying linked to home circumstances or family background; and
- bullying or harassment directed towards school staff by pupils, parents/carers or other members of the school community.

3. Equality, inclusion and protected characteristics

The school is committed to preventing discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination because of protected characteristics including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The school will challenge racist, religiously discriminatory, sexist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, ableist and other prejudicial behaviour. Concerns involving a protected characteristic will be recorded and monitored so that patterns can be identified.

The school recognises that children with SEND or other vulnerabilities may experience bullying differently or may have additional barriers to reporting it. Staff will make reasonable adjustments to enable children to report concerns and access support.

4. Child-on-child abuse and safeguarding

Bullying can overlap with child-on-child abuse. Where behaviour involves sexual harassment or sexual violence, coercion, exploitation, threats, serious physical harm, discriminatory abuse or other safeguarding concerns, the school will follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy rather than treating the matter solely as a behaviour issue.

- Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.
- A report will not be dismissed because the children are friends, because the behaviour happened online or outside school, or because the behaviour is described as 'banter'.
- The DSL will consider whether other children may also be affected.
- Where necessary, the DSL will make referrals to Children's Social Care and/or the police.
- The school will support both the child who has experienced harm and the child displaying harmful behaviour, while maintaining appropriate safeguarding measures.

5. A whole-school approach to prevention

The school is proactive in preventing bullying and aims to create a culture in which children feel safe to report concerns. Pupils are taught that everyone has the right to be happy, safe, respected and included.

- Pupils are taught to value themselves and others and to be confident and assertive.
- Pupils learn that difference and diversity are positive.
- Pupils are taught what bullying is and the different forms it can take.
- Pupils are taught that reporting bullying is not 'telling tales' or 'snitching'.
- Pupils are taught how to seek help from trusted adults.
- PSHE, Relationships Education, assemblies and the wider curriculum develop self-esteem, empathy, respect and positive relationships.
- Online safety teaching helps pupils understand the risks and responsibilities associated with digital communication.
- Staff receive appropriate safeguarding and behaviour training and are expected to remain alert to signs of bullying.
- Leaders monitor patterns of behaviour and safeguarding information to identify areas requiring further action.

6. Reporting concerns

Children and parents/carers are encouraged to report concerns as soon as possible. Children may tell a trusted adult, ask a friend to report on their behalf, use a worry box or use another reporting route provided by the school.

Parents/carers can report concerns through the class teacher, Headteacher, school office or the school's agreed communication systems.

Where available, the school's anonymous reporting tool may also be used. The school will ensure that current reporting arrangements and links are clearly communicated to pupils and parents.

All staff, governors, volunteers and regular visitors have a responsibility to report concerns. Staff must not investigate an allegation themselves where the concern may be a safeguarding matter.

7. Responding to an allegation of bullying

When a concern is reported, staff will first establish what has happened rather than automatically labelling the behaviour as bullying. The response will consider the seriousness, frequency, intent, impact, power imbalance and context.

1. Listen carefully and take the child seriously.
2. Ensure immediate safety and consider whether medical or other urgent support is required.
3. Record the concern accurately, including the child's words where appropriate.
4. Inform the Headteacher, DSL or other designated lead where required.
5. Speak separately with the children involved rather than requiring children to confront each other.
6. Gather relevant information from witnesses and other appropriate sources.
7. Consider whether the behaviour involves discrimination, harassment, child-on-child abuse or another safeguarding concern.
8. Agree proportionate actions and support.
9. Inform parents/carers where appropriate and safe to do so.
10. Monitor the situation and review whether the action taken has been effective.

8. Investigating bullying

Where bullying is suspected, the school will investigate fairly and sensitively. Children involved will normally be spoken to separately. Witnesses may be spoken to where appropriate.

The school will avoid labelling a child as a 'bully'. Staff will describe the behaviour and its impact and will work to change harmful behaviour. Children displaying bullying behaviour may themselves have additional needs or safeguarding vulnerabilities which should be considered.

All significant incidents and actions will be recorded on CPOMS or the school's appropriate behaviour/safeguarding recording system. Safeguarding concerns will be recorded on CPOMS in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9. Supporting children who experience bullying

- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by reporting the concern.
- Agree a trusted adult and clear route for further reporting.
- Put proportionate measures in place to increase safety.
- Monitor wellbeing, attendance, relationships and engagement with learning.
- Provide pastoral support, social groups, social stories, ELSA or other appropriate support where available.
- Consider reasonable adjustments where SEND or other needs affect the child's ability to report or cope with the situation.
- Keep parents/carers informed at an appropriate stage.
- Check back with the child to establish whether the situation has improved.

10. Supporting children displaying bullying behaviour

The school will hold children accountable for harmful behaviour while recognising that a child displaying bullying behaviour may also have unmet needs or safeguarding vulnerabilities.

- The child will be helped to understand the impact of their behaviour.
- Appropriate boundaries, consequences and restorative approaches may be used.
- The school will consider whether the child has SEND, communication difficulties, emotional needs, trauma or other factors requiring support.
- Parents/carers will be involved where appropriate.
- Where the behaviour is serious or persistent, a risk assessment or individual support plan may be required.
- Where behaviour indicates a safeguarding concern, the DSL will consider whether a referral or specialist support is needed.

11. Sanctions and restorative approaches

Responses will be proportionate, consistent and in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy. Possible responses include restorative work, reflection, apology or repair, loss of privileges or playtime, supervised separation, restrictions on technology use and communication with parents/carers.

Suspension or permanent exclusion may be considered for serious or repeated incidents in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy and statutory guidance.

Sanctions will take account of relevant SEND, disability, vulnerability and other circumstances. A child's additional needs will not excuse harmful behaviour, but they will be considered when deciding how best to respond.

The police may be contacted where behaviour may constitute a criminal offence, where there is serious violence or a serious threat to safety, or where other circumstances make police involvement appropriate.

12. Cyberbullying and online bullying

Cyberbullying is bullying carried out through digital technology, including mobile phones, messaging, social media, email, gaming platforms, websites and other online services. It may happen inside or outside school and can occur outside school hours.

Examples include:

- sending threatening or abusive messages;
- persistent insulting or humiliating comments;
- excluding someone deliberately from online groups;
- sharing embarrassing images or videos;
- impersonation or fake accounts;
- prejudice-based or discriminatory online abuse;
- harmful online challenges or hoaxes; and
- using technology to threaten, intimidate, harass or repeatedly target another person.

When cyberbullying is reported, the school will:

11. advise the child not to respond to abusive messages;
12. encourage the child/parent to preserve evidence, including screenshots, dates and times;

13. consider whether the behaviour breaches school policies or constitutes a safeguarding concern;
14. contact parents/carers as appropriate;
15. take reasonable steps to report harmful content to the relevant platform or service;
16. consider whether specialist online safety advice is needed;
17. consider police involvement where a criminal offence or serious threat may be involved; and
18. monitor the impact on the child and take steps to prevent further harm.

The school will not direct staff to use obsolete or inappropriate reporting routes. Current platform reporting mechanisms and recognised national online safety services will be used.

13. Sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour

Where bullying includes sexualised comments, sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercion, unwanted sexual images or other harmful sexual behaviour, the matter will be managed under the Child-on-Child Abuse Policy and safeguarding procedures.

Such behaviour will not be dismissed as 'banter', 'just having a laugh' or 'part of growing up'. The school will consider the safety and support needs of all children involved and make referrals where required.

14. Bullying outside school

The school recognises that bullying can occur outside the school premises, including on public or school transport, in the local community and online. Where such behaviour affects pupils or the orderly running of the school, the school will consider what action is reasonable and proportionate.

The school may use its disciplinary powers for behaviour outside school where permitted by law and where it would be reasonable to regulate the behaviour. Where the behaviour may be criminal or presents a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will be considered/informed as appropriate.

15. Bullying or harassment of school staff

Bullying or harassment of school staff is unacceptable, whether carried out by pupils, parents/carers, other staff, governors or third parties, and whether it occurs online or offline. The school will respond promptly and support the member of staff affected.

- Incidents involving pupils will be managed under the Behaviour Policy and, where relevant, safeguarding procedures.
- Incidents involving parents/carers will be managed through the school's behaviour, complaints, parental conduct and safeguarding arrangements as appropriate.
- Incidents involving staff will be managed through the Staff Code of Conduct, grievance, disciplinary, safeguarding or other appropriate procedures.
- Staff will have a clear route for reporting concerns and may access recognised trade union support.
- Serious threats, violence or potential criminal offences will be considered for police referral.
- Incidents will be recorded and reviewed so that patterns and wider risks can be identified.
- The school will take reasonable steps to protect staff from repeated intimidation, harassment or bullying.

This section reflects the Department for Education's updated July 2026 guidance on preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff, which expects schools to support, respect and protect staff and to have clear reporting and escalation arrangements.

16. Parents and carers

The school values positive partnerships with parents/carers. Parents/carers are expected to raise concerns respectfully through the school's complaints and communication routes and to support the school's behaviour and anti-bullying expectations.

Where a parent/carer behaves in a threatening, abusive, intimidating or harassing way towards staff, the school may take appropriate action under its parental conduct, complaints and safeguarding procedures. This may include restricting access to the premises where lawful and necessary.

17. Monitoring and trends

The Headteacher and DSL will monitor behaviour and safeguarding records to identify patterns, repeat incidents, locations, times, peer groups and protected-characteristic trends.

- CPOMS behaviour-related records will be audited routinely.
- Class council and pupil voice will be used to identify concerns and areas where pupils may feel unsafe.
- Repeated incidents involving the same pupils will be reviewed to ensure that previous actions have been effective.
- Patterns of prejudice-based bullying will inform equality and curriculum work.
- Online bullying trends will inform online safety teaching and parent guidance.
- Serious or systemic concerns will be reported to governors through appropriate safeguarding/behaviour reporting.

18. Staff training and awareness

Staff will receive appropriate training and updates so that they can recognise bullying, discriminatory behaviour, child-on-child abuse and online harm, and know how to respond.

- Staff will understand the difference between bullying and one-off incidents while knowing that both may require action.
- Staff will know the reporting route to the DSL and Headteacher.
- Staff will understand that bullying can be a safeguarding concern.
- Staff will know how to support children with SEND or communication needs to report concerns.
- Staff will be familiar with the school's online safety and child-on-child abuse procedures.
- Governors will receive appropriate information and assurance about the school's approach.

19. Links to other policies and guidance

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Child-on-Child Abuse Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy/arrangements
- Relationships Education / RSE / PSHE Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy

- Attendance Policy

20. Statutory and related guidance

- Keeping children safe in education 2026 – Department for Education, effective from 1 September 2026.
- Preventing and tackling bullying – Department for Education guidance for schools.
- Preventing and tackling bullying and harassment of school staff – Department for Education, published 9 July 2026.
- Behaviour in schools – Department for Education.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Children and Families Act 2014, where relevant to SEND.
- UKCIS / Department for Education online safety and safeguarding guidance.
- The school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Child-on-Child Abuse Policy.

21. Reporting and support routes

The school will ensure current reporting routes are communicated to children, parents/carers and staff. Local and school-specific contact details should be checked before publication.

Route	Details
Trusted adult / class teacher	Speak directly to a trusted member of staff.
Headteacher / DSL	Report through the school's safeguarding arrangements.
School office / parent communication	Use the school's current telephone/email/messaging arrangements.
Online harm	Use the relevant platform reporting route and seek school/parent support.
Police	Consider where a crime, serious threat or immediate danger is involved.

22. Policy review record

Date	Version	Changes	Approved by
September 2026	2026–2027	Updated from September 2023 policy to reflect KCSIE 2026, current DfE bullying guidance, child-on-child abuse, SEND and equality considerations, online bullying, bullying/harassment of staff, safeguarding recording and current referral arrangements.	Governing Body