



## POLICY DOCUMENT

# Anti-Bullying Policy

*Princess May Primary School's approach to anti-bullying — 2026–2027*

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| <b>Governing Body Representative (GBR)</b> | Kristofer McGhee (Chair of Governors)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Signed by (GBR)</b>                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Date approved</b>                       | 4 September 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Next review due by</b>                  | September 2027                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Related policies</b>                    | Behaviour Policy; Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy; Prevent Duty Policy; Mobile Phone Policy; SEND Policy and SEND Information Report                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Aligned to</b>                          | Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006; the Equality Act 2010; the DfE's non-statutory guidance, Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017); Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 (in force from 1 September 2026); the DfE's statutory guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools (June 2026 edition, in force from 1 September 2026); and the DfE's non-statutory guidance, Preventing and Tackling Bullying and Harassment of School Staff (July 2026) |

## 1. Aims

At Princess May we aim to ensure that our pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied, and we are always looking at ways in which we can improve. Bullying is anti-social behaviour that affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated at Princess May Primary School.

Our anti-bullying strategy is to:

- educate every child to understand what bullying is, in a way that is appropriate to their age and stage of development;
- help every child to exemplify our school values of respect, empathy and determination, through regular work and discussion about difference and tolerance, and celebrating this;
- ensure all children know what to do and who to speak to if they are being bullied, or if they are concerned for a friend or fellow pupil; and
- ensure parents and carers know what to do and who to speak to if they are concerned that their child might be being bullied.

## 2. What is bullying?

Sometimes we get confused about the difference between conflict, or disagreements, and bullying. As part of our anti-bullying strategy, we recognise it's important that our children know the difference, so that we can help make things better:

- bullying is not one-off incidents where someone is mean or unkind to another person;
- bullying is not when someone accidentally hurts another person;
- we all have disagreements or arguments with others at times, and this is normal, but is not bullying;
- someone choosing not to play with you, and playing with others instead, is not bullying;
- sometimes mean things are said, but this is not bullying;
- bullying is when someone harms or hurts another person over and over again; and
- bullying is targeted and repeated harmful behaviour, intended to get power over someone else.

Bullying involves behaviour that is either physically or emotionally harmful, such as taunting, name-calling, making threats, excluding people from groups, hitting, kicking and damaging belongings, directed at individuals because of their gender, race, religion, culture or sexuality. It is harmful for everyone involved — not just the person who is bullied, but also those who stand by — and can lead to a lack of self-esteem, depression, anxiety and physical harm. It is not a one-off; it is when it happens repeatedly. Childline's website has more information about types of bullying.

As a school, we recognise that getting on and falling out with friends is part of growing and developing as an individual. We know that children can get angry or upset with their friends, and that they will sometimes behave in a way that is not thoughtful or kind. Losing your cool, or saying a mean thing once, doesn't necessarily make you a bully, but it does mean you have strayed into a form of behaviour that could be viewed as bullying.

We want to help our pupils learn from their mistakes, so that they are less likely to repeat them. Our aim is to act swiftly on a reported or known incident — for example, where two children fall out and argue, and one calls the other a mean name, a school adult learns of this and talks with both children about what happened; the child who used the unkind name apologises, and the adult monitors the friendship and is satisfied that it was a one-off, unlikely to escalate further.

If behaviour like this goes unchallenged, there is a danger the child will repeat the same mistake. If a child's outbursts are directed at the same individual every time, the chances are they have become a bully without realising it; if the child starts to encourage others to join in because they now have an 'easy victim', things have become very serious.

### 3. Types of bullying

Bullying can take many forms, including cyberbullying via text message or the internet, and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups — for example, on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or by perceived differences:

- emotional — being unfriendly, excluding, or tormenting, such as hiding books or making threatening gestures or looks;
- physical — pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence;
- racist — racial taunts, graffiti or gestures;
- sexual — unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments;
- homophobic, biphobic or transphobic — because of, or related to, a person's sexuality or gender identity, in a negative way;
- gender-based — sexism, stereotyping or misogyny;
- sexist — treating people differently because of their gender;
- religious — because of someone's religion or faith;
- classist — verbal abuse, mimicry, or mocking clothing and belongings;
- disablist — mockery, verbal abuse or physical threats relating to a person's disability;
- verbal — name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours or teasing; and
- cyber — bullying through any area of the internet or online means, such as email, chat group misuse, or mobile phone threats by text message or call.

At Princess May we are committed to standing up to bullying, and to protecting any group or individual who may be vulnerable.

### 4. Online bullying

It is well recognised that bullying can take place in both the real and the online world. Online bullying is common on social media networks, but is not limited to these; any form of media that allows people to communicate can potentially become a vehicle for bullying, including emails, text messages and online gaming.

Parents and carers have an important role to play in protecting their child from online bullying. This may include:

- setting clear rules for the use of technology in the home;
- ensuring parental controls are set on the internet, as well as on individual devices;
- reading the terms and conditions before allowing their child to sign up to a site — the terms and conditions of most social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, do not allow users under the age of 13, and WhatsApp's own minimum age is 16; and
- monitoring their child's use of technology, and ensuring that behaviour which would not be tolerated in the real world is not accepted online — for example, bad language and inappropriate comments are common during online gaming sessions, where children may be wearing headsets and speaking through microphones.

Parents and carers can find more information on our Parents and Carers page, including our Online Safety guide for parents, and via the DfE's advice for parents and carers on cyberbullying.

In line with the DfE's statutory guidance, Mobile Phones in Schools (June 2026 edition), Princess May is a mobile phone-free environment throughout the school day, which reduces the opportunity for cyberbullying to take place using a mobile phone on the school site; see our Mobile Phone Policy for more information.

We recognise that bullying, including online bullying, is not limited to pupils; school staff can also experience bullying and harassment, including online, from pupils, parents or colleagues. The DfE's non-

statutory guidance, Preventing and Tackling Bullying and Harassment of School Staff (July 2026), which replaced the previous 2014 advice for headteachers and school staff, includes updated online safety guidance for staff, and informs how we support any member of staff affected by this.

We recognise that bullying may start online and find its way into school, or vice versa. We will act to deal with all instances of bullying involving our children that we become aware of, including instances that may originate out of school hours, in the online world.

## **5. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Behaviour Lead**

The Behaviour Lead is responsible for:

- promoting good behaviour;
- supporting staff to implement the school Behaviour Policy consistently and fairly;
- teaching Anti-Bullying Ambassadors the skills to support peers during break and lunchtime; and
- promoting positive behaviour between peers through the school's reward system.

### **Lunchtime supervisors**

Lunchtime supervisors are responsible for:

- promoting good behaviour and positive relationships during lunchtime, in accordance with our Behaviour Policy; and
- alerting class teachers if they believe a child is being bullied, or is bullying others.

### **Anti-Bullying Ambassadors**

Anti-Bullying Ambassadors are responsible for:

- promoting good behaviour;
- engaging with peers;
- supporting their peers to experience positive relationships during lunchtime; and
- alerting lunchtime supervisors if they believe a child is being bullied, or is bullying others.

### **School Council**

The School Council is responsible for:

- promoting good behaviour;
- engaging with peers;
- representing their class; and
- sharing the views and opinions of their class at school council meetings.

### **Teaching assistants**

Teaching assistants are responsible for:

- promoting good behaviour and positive relationships throughout the school day, in accordance with our Behaviour Policy; and
- alerting class teachers if they believe a child is being bullied, or is bullying others.

### **Teachers**

Teachers are responsible for:

- promoting good behaviour and positive relationships throughout the school day, in accordance with our Behaviour Policy;
- teaching children about bullying as part of PSHE and computing sessions;

- responding proactively to any child they believe may be the victim of bullying — for example, a child who seems upset, worried, anxious or withdrawn, while remaining mindful that there may be other reasons for such behaviour;
- responding appropriately to families who raise a concern where bullying could be the root cause; and
- monitoring the behaviour of an individual or individuals where instructed to by the Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher or another member of the SLT.

## **Governors**

Governors are responsible for:

- ensuring this policy is applied fairly and consistently across the school;
- monitoring the number of allegations of bullying raised; and
- challenging the school's leadership and staff to eradicate bullying in all its forms.

We all play an important role in standing up to bullying.

## **6. Statutory duty**

Headteachers have a legal duty to draw up procedures to prevent bullying among pupils, and to bring these procedures to the attention of staff, parents and pupils. Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 provides that maintained schools must have measures to encourage good behaviour and to prevent all forms of bullying amongst pupils. For further information, see the DfE's non-statutory guidance, *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (2017).

## **7. Safeguarding, and children who may be at greater risk**

Signs of bullying, especially physical ones, can be hard to identify, as the most frequent forms of bullying in schools are intimidation, threatening behaviour and name-calling. Possible signs include:

- unexpected illness;
- a desire to be with adults, or clinginess;
- crying a lot;
- a lack of appetite;
- reluctance to go to school;
- damaged clothing;
- fear of going out alone, for example to the toilet or playground;
- isolation, depression, being withdrawn, or having fewer friends;
- lower self-esteem and self-confidence;
- absenteeism and a deterioration in school work; and
- being less willing to participate in the classroom or socially.

Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, a bullying incident is addressed as a child protection concern: the DSL is always alerted, and will act in line with our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Prevent Duty Policy, risk assess the incident, and report concerns to Hackney's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), working with them to take appropriate action.

External support can be offered to pupils whether or not a concern is considered a safeguarding matter. Even where safeguarding is not an issue, we may draw on a range of external services to support a pupil experiencing bullying, or to address an underlying issue contributing to a child's bullying behaviour; the Anti-Bullying Alliance's information tool for parents and carers is a useful resource.

## 8. Mental health and wellbeing

Bullying can have significant effects on a child's mental health, including into adulthood; a child's academic achievement, self-esteem and ability to socialise with peers can all be hindered.

Through staff training and the support of our Connect Education counsellor, we are able to spot behaviours that may indicate a child needs help. As a school, we ensure a culture of vigilance that reflects the fact that additional barriers can exist when recognising abuse and neglect in this group of children, including:

- assumptions that indicators of possible abuse, such as behaviour, mood or injury, relate to a child's disability, without further exploration;
- the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately affected by behaviours such as bullying, without outwardly showing any signs; and
- communication barriers, and the difficulty of overcoming them.

At Princess May, we recognise the importance of good mental health to a pupil's behaviour choices, academic attainment, self-esteem, confidence and, in turn, their life chances. For these reasons, we value having Connect Education within our school, who offer optional drop-in sessions for pupils to discuss any concerns they may have.

## 9. Staff induction and training

We place significant emphasis on understanding that all behaviour is a form of communication, and provide regular staff training so that staff understand some of the causes of poor behaviour choices, and have a range of strategies to improve their behaviour management, in and outside the classroom, to support our pupils; see our Behaviour Policy for more information.

At the start of each academic year, staff receive training and induction on the DfE's Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, and must understand their roles and responsibilities as set out in Part 1 of that document.

Staff learn the importance of being able to recognise, and act swiftly on, any incident of bullying, including online and child-on-child abuse, in order to prevent further suffering or significant harm. Regular staff safeguarding updates and training are delivered by the DSL during staff meetings; one useful training tool is a fictional behaviour scenario for staff to discuss and explore — for example, working through how to respond to a pupil who has been quietly excluded from a friendship group's WhatsApp chat, which can be a form of cyberbullying even though it happens outside school hours. Staff are guided to listen non-judgementally, follow our anti-bullying and safeguarding procedures, raise any concern with the DSL, and keep a record of what was said and any action taken.

We also have regard to the DfE's non-statutory guidance, Preventing and Tackling Bullying and Harassment of School Staff (July 2026), which includes online safety guidance to help staff recognise and respond to bullying or harassment directed at them, including online, by pupils, parents or colleagues.

## 10. Preventing and responding to bullying: our whole-school approach

We believe effective anti-bullying practice has two components: preventing bullying incidents, and responding to bullying incidents. Punishing a pupil does not, on its own, end bullying — it is the bullying behaviour, rather than the person doing the bullying, that is not tolerated. We positively encourage all pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and its consequences, and to make a commitment to end the bullying and support the pupil who has been bullied.

Our anti-bullying policy and practice includes a range of strategies, adapted to suit particular incidents, through a whole-school approach, including:

- ensuring the whole school community understands what bullying means, both adults and children;

- making it clear that no bullying of any kind is tolerated;
- allowing children to report incidents without feeling they are telling tales;
- taking incidents seriously, investigating and acting on them using clearly defined procedures;
- systematically recording incidents on CPOMS, to help us review and evaluate policy and practice;
- peer support systems, developing listening and social skills, self-esteem, confidence-building and befriending programmes;
- programmes of lessons in the curriculum, and weekly circle time, for sharing skills and experiences;
- whole-school assemblies, to raise awareness and keep positive peer interactions a consistent theme;
- induction for all new staff;
- an annual whole-school review of procedures;
- training staff to better identify and help vulnerable children, and those who may be more at risk of bullying;
- assertiveness training, aiming to help pupils who are vulnerable to being bullied use verbal and body language that discourages bullying;
- the use of sanctions, which might include removal from class, detention, or a fixed period of internal or external suspension;
- working with parents and carers to promote good behaviour, encourage involvement in the school ethos, and consult on our approach to bullying;
- our Behaviour Policy, which sets out clear guidelines for managing pupil behaviour in class and around the school, including in the playground;
- improving the school grounds, so they provide a safe, secure, active and easily supervised environment;
- monitoring the playground using cameras;
- Connect Education, giving children a safe environment to share their worries and concerns at Talk Time;
- questionnaires for pupils, parents and staff; and
- meetings with the School Council, to gain a sense of the extent and nature of any bullying, and the effectiveness of these procedures.

## **11. Procedures for responding to a bullying incident**

- a bullying incident is reported to a member of staff;
- staff investigate the situation by talking to the children involved, any witnesses, and other staff members;
- the situation is recorded on CPOMS, from the accounts of the children and staff involved;
- SLT respond to the CPOMS report and speak with the pupil whose behaviour is of concern, to ensure they recognise their behaviour and how it affects others, apply an appropriate sanction, guide and support them to change their behaviour, and insist that they take full responsibility for their actions and help them to actively make amends — involving parents and external agencies where necessary;
- the class teacher, SLT or Connect Education respond to the child who has been bullied, hurt or upset by actively listening to their concerns, working with them to restore their self-esteem and confidence, offering support and strategies to deal with unwanted behaviour, protecting the child and ensuring their safety, and involving parents and external agencies as appropriate;
- the curriculum, through PSHE and online safety in computing, provides a foundation for children to explore these issues and helps prevent further incidents;
- the situation is reviewed, where necessary, with the children involved, parents and others as appropriate; and

- the anti-bullying and Behaviour Policies are regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated.

## **12. Links to other policies**

- Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Prevent Duty Policy;
- Mobile Phone Policy; and
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report.

Please support your child and us, and together we will stand up against bullying.