

Anti-Bullying Policy 2026–2027

Grow Together; Learn Together; Feel Loved.

Policy lead	**Mrs Charlotte Gibbins / Designated Safeguarding Lead**
Approval date	October 2026
Review date	September 2027 or sooner if required

1. Our commitment

At Thurlstone Primary School, every child has the right to feel safe, valued and included. Our ethos, Grow Together; Learn Together; Feel Loved, underpins our commitment to ensuring that every child feels safe, valued and included. Bullying is unacceptable. We respond promptly to concerns, take reports seriously and act to protect children from harm. We work with pupils and families to restore safety, dignity and belonging, combining clear boundaries and accountability with curiosity, compassion and restorative practice where safe and appropriate. The safety and wellbeing of children always come first.

2. What we mean by bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. It commonly involves an imbalance of power, which may be physical, social, psychological or linked to vulnerability. Online behaviour can also form part of a pattern of bullying, even when individual incidents appear minor.

Friendship difficulties, occasional disagreements and isolated unkind incidents do not automatically constitute bullying. However, all harmful behaviour will be taken seriously and addressed. A serious single incident may require an immediate safeguarding response, even if it does not meet the definition of bullying.

The school will consider the evidence, context, impact and pattern of behaviour when assessing concerns, rather than applying a label before appropriate enquiries have taken place.

3. Forms of bullying and prejudice

- **Physical**: Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging belongings or using physical intimidation.
- **Verbal and emotional**: Insults, threats, humiliation, spreading rumours, deliberate exclusion or coercion.
- **Online**: Harmful messages, group chats, gaming interactions, sharing images without consent, impersonation or repeated online harassment.
- **Prejudice-related**: Bullying linked to race, religion or belief, disability or SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, appearance, family circumstances or perceived difference.

Discriminatory incidents, including one-off instances of racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or disablist language, will be challenged and recorded as appropriate, whether or not they meet the definition of bullying. Such incidents will be addressed in line with the school's behaviour and safeguarding procedures.

4. Prevention and a culture of belonging

We promote positive relationships through our school values, PSHE (including My Happy Mind), assemblies, Anti-Bullying Week, restorative approaches and pupil voice. Children are encouraged to speak to trusted adults, use classroom worry resources and report unkind behaviour they witness.

Staff supervise areas where concerns are more likely to arise and remain alert to changes in peer relationships. Incidents and concerns are recorded on CPOMS, enabling the DSL team to monitor patterns, identify recurring difficulties or emerging risks between pupils, and inform appropriate safeguarding and behaviour responses. This monitoring supports early intervention, alongside reasonable adjustments and targeted support for pupils with additional needs.

Through these approaches, we aim to foster a culture in which every child feels safe, included and confident that concerns will be heard and addressed.

5. Reporting a concern

Pupils may share concerns with any trusted adult. Parents and carers can contact their child's class teacher or a senior leader.

Staff must act promptly when a concern is raised. They should listen carefully, take the concern seriously, avoid promising secrecy, record information factually and alert the appropriate member of staff. Safeguarding concerns must be passed directly to the DSL without delay. Staff must also record concerns on CPOMS in accordance with school procedures; recording on CPOMS does not replace the need for an immediate verbal report to the DSL.

When a concern is raised, the school will make appropriate enquiries to understand what has happened, consider the context and impact on the children involved, and identify any support or protective action needed. Decisions about whether behaviour constitutes bullying will be based on the evidence, including any patterns of behaviour and potential imbalance of power, rather than a label being applied before the circumstances have been explored. Support and safeguarding action will not be delayed while enquiries are taking place.

All concerns will be considered carefully, and appropriate action will be taken to protect children and address the behaviour.

6. Investigation and decision-making

When a concern is raised, the school will:

- **Prioritise safety:** Acknowledge the report, assess immediate safety and put protective measures in place where needed.
- **Record the concern**: Record the allegation and relevant context, including dates, locations, witnesses and any previous incidents. Preserve relevant online evidence appropriately.
- **Gather information sensitively**: Speak with children separately and sensitively, taking account of their age, communication needs, SEND, disability and other vulnerabilities. Avoid leading questions and do not make assumptions before the circumstances have been explored.
- **Review the evidence**: Consider the available evidence and determine whether bullying is substantiated, another harmful incident has occurred, or the evidence remains inconclusive. A finding that bullying is not substantiated does not mean that no action or support is needed.
- **Agree and record next steps**: Record the rationale for decisions, actions taken, relevant communication with families and a date for follow-up on CPOMS or the agreed school system. Escalate child-on-child abuse and other safeguarding concerns in line with the school's safeguarding procedures.

A senior leader will oversee investigations involving repeated, serious or contested allegations. The headteacher may delegate appropriate fact-finding responsibilities. Any conflict of interest will be managed through the school's senior leadership or governance arrangements.
Throughout the process, the school will consider the needs and safety of all children involved, provide appropriate support and take proportionate action. Safeguarding concerns will be managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

7. Support, consequences and restorative practice

Children who have experienced harm will receive appropriate support to help them feel safe and supported. This may include reassurance, access to a trusted adult, a safety plan where needed and regular check-ins. Support will be reviewed to ensure that children's safety and wellbeing remain a priority.

Children responsible for harmful behaviour will be supported to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility and make safer choices. Appropriate responses may include supported reflection, restorative actions, additional support and proportionate consequences in line with the schools Behaviour and Relationships Policy.

The school will consider each child's individual circumstances, including SEND, disability, medical needs, communication needs and other vulnerabilities. Reasonable adjustments and appropriate support will be provided where necessary. Understanding the reasons behind behaviour does not mean accepting behaviour that harms others.

Restorative conversations may be offered when those involved are ready to participate and it is safe and appropriate to do so. They will never be forced and must not compromise any child's safety, dignity or emotional wellbeing. A child will not be required to meet someone who has harmed them or to forgive them. Restorative approaches will not replace necessary safeguarding action or appropriate consequences.

Suspension and permanent exclusion are serious decisions made by the headteacher in accordance with current statutory guidance and legal requirements. Decisions will take account of individual circumstances, relevant needs, reasonable adjustments and safeguarding considerations.

8. Working with parents and carers

Where an allegation of bullying is made, the school will normally inform the parents or carers of the children directly involved at an appropriate stage, unless doing so would create a safeguarding risk or compromise appropriate enquiries. Communication will be handled sensitively and proportionately, taking account of the circumstances.

The school will explain the process, share relevant information about the findings concerning their own child, outline any support being provided and explain planned follow-up or review arrangements, as appropriate. The school will respect the privacy of all children and will not disclose another child's personal information, individual sanctions or confidential support arrangements.

The school will work with parents and carers to support children's safety and wellbeing and address concerns. If parents or carers remain concerned about how their concerns have been handled, they may raise the matter through the school's complaints procedure.

9. Online incidents and safeguarding

Online behaviour may affect children's safety, wellbeing and relationships in school, even when it occurs outside school hours. This includes behaviour through social media, messaging platforms, online games and AI tools.

Online bullying may involve harmful messages, impersonation, sharing images without consent or using AI to create or manipulate images, videos, audio or messages to humiliate, threaten or target another person. Such behaviour will be taken seriously and assessed in line with the school's behaviour, safeguarding and online safety procedures.

Staff will consider the school's safeguarding duties and the extent of its lawful powers when responding to online incidents. Staff must not routinely view, copy, forward or delete intimate images of children. Concerns involving intimate images, sexualised content or other potential child-on-child abuse must be referred immediately to the DSL and handled in accordance with current safeguarding and online safety procedures.

10. Monitoring, governance and review

All reported concerns, investigation outcomes, decisions, actions and follow-up checks will be recorded consistently. Senior leaders will review patterns, including repeat incidents, locations, groups affected and prejudice-related behaviour, and evaluate whether interventions have been effective in improving children's safety and wellbeing.

Governors will receive anonymised information about trends, prevention work and the effectiveness of the school's response, enabling them to provide appropriate oversight and challenge while maintaining confidentiality.

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier following significant changes to statutory guidance, safeguarding requirements or school practice.

11. Children's contribution

Children at Thurlstone are encouraged to live out our five school values: Show Love and Kindness; Be Brave and Honest; Love Life and Our World; Keep Exploring and Learning; Work and Play Together. These values, alongside our expectations to Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe, encourage children to build positive friendships, include others, think carefully about the impact of their words and actions, and seek help from a trusted adult if they experience or witness bullying.

Children are encouraged to look out for one another and tell a trusted adult if they or someone else is experiencing bullying. Adults are responsible for ensuring that concerns are taken seriously and that appropriate action is taken to keep children safe.

Pupil voice will help inform the school's approach to preventing and responding to bullying. The school will use appropriate opportunities, including pupil surveys and discussions, to gather children's views about safety, friendships, inclusion and confidence in reporting concerns. Feedback will be considered by school leaders to identify patterns, inform actions and evaluate whether children feel safe and supported.

12. Related policies and documents

This policy should be read alongside the school's:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Mobile Technology Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Complaints Procedure
- Staff Code of Conduct