



LEICESTER

THERAPEUTIC SCHOOL

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS THROUGH NURTURE AND MINDSET

Anti Bullying Policy

Policy Owner	Leicester Therapeutic School
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Linked Policies	Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy Child-on-Child Abuse Policy Positive Behaviour Policy Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policies Equality, RSHE/PSHE and Curriculum Policies SEND Information Report Suspensions, Exclusions and Complaints Policies

Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are passionate about providing an inclusive education for children with special educational needs and disabilities. We recognise and celebrate each pupil's individuality and use personalised approaches so that pupils with SEND feel supported throughout the school day. We provide an adapted curriculum and a strong focus on pupils' personal, social and emotional development. SEND is carefully considered throughout all school policies and practices. For more information, please read the school's SEND Information Report.

Safeguarding at Leicester Therapeutic School

At Leicester Therapeutic School, we are committed to providing an environment in which pupils feel safe and secure and are able to access education. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all staff maintain an 'it could happen here' attitude. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of every pupil by protecting them from abuse, neglect, exploitation and bullying. Any concern about something seen, heard or disclosed must be reported immediately to the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) or Headteacher. Safeguarding and pupils' wellbeing are central to all school policies and practice.

Policy Aims

- To meet the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, including Part 3, paragraph 10, by drawing up and implementing an effective anti-bullying strategy.
- To prevent and challenge all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying.
- To ensure proprietors, governors, leaders, staff, pupils and parents understand what bullying is, how it may present and how it must be reported.
- To provide clear, accessible reporting routes that reflect pupils' age, communication needs and SEND.
- To respond promptly, fairly and consistently, protecting the child who has experienced bullying while supporting the child who has displayed bullying behaviour to change.
- To ensure that bullying or child-on-child abuse is never dismissed as banter, part of growing up or just having a laugh.
- To record, monitor and analyse incidents so that patterns, hotspots and emerging risks are identified and addressed.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been updated with reference to:

- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 and the Department for Education's Independent School Standards guidance (April 2026).
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, effective from 1 September 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026.
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies.
- Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education statutory guidance, effective from 1 September 2026.
- The Equality Act 2010.
- The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR.

Definition

There is no single legal definition of bullying. Leicester Therapeutic School defines bullying as behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts another individual or group physically or emotionally. Bullying may involve an imbalance of power and can take place face to face, indirectly, online, on school premises or away from school.

- Is repeated, or forms part of a pattern of behaviour.
- Is intended to cause physical or emotional harm, fear, humiliation, exclusion or distress.
- May involve an imbalance of power arising from age, size, social status, communication, disability, confidence or access to technology.
- May be direct or indirect, obvious or hidden, and may continue outside the school day.
- May be linked to difference or a protected characteristic, but bullying can occur for any reason.

A one-off serious incident may not meet the definition of bullying, but it will still be taken seriously and addressed under the Positive Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and/or Child-on-Child Abuse Policy as appropriate.

Types of Bullying

Bullying may be physical or non-physical and may occur in isolation or in combination. It may cause significant and lasting harm. Forms of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical bullying** - hitting, kicking, pushing, biting, damaging belongings, taking property or threatening physical harm.

- **Verbal bullying** - name-calling, insults, threats, offensive comments, rumours, mocking or repeated teasing.
- **Social or relational bullying** - deliberate exclusion, ostracism, controlling friendships, encouraging others to isolate a child or spreading rumours.
- **Psychological or emotional bullying** - intimidation, humiliation, coercion, manipulation or behaviour intended to reduce confidence and self-esteem.
- **Cyberbullying or online bullying** - harmful messages, posts, group chats, gaming activity, images, videos, impersonation, exclusion, doxxing, manipulated content or AI-generated material used to upset, shame or threaten another child.
- **Prejudice-based or discriminatory bullying** - bullying related to race, nationality, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or SEND. The school will also challenge bullying linked to appearance, health, family circumstances, caring responsibilities or any perceived difference.
- **Sexual bullying and harassment** - sexual comments, jokes, rumours, unwanted conduct, sexualised name-calling or online sexual harassment.
- **Child-on-child abuse** - bullying can be a form of child-on-child abuse and is a safeguarding issue for both the child harmed and the child alleged to have caused harm. Serious violence, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence, coercion, upskirting and the making or sharing of nude or semi-nude images are managed under safeguarding procedures and not solely as bullying.

The school may respond to bullying that occurs away from the premises or online where it affects a pupil's safety, wellbeing, attendance, relationships or ability to learn, or where it has an impact on the orderly running of the school.

Signs and symptoms of bullying

A child may communicate that they are being bullied through words, behaviour, changes in presentation or their use of technology. Staff and parents should consider bullying as a possibility if a child:

- Becomes reluctant to attend school, avoids particular lessons or areas, or develops unexplained attendance difficulties.
- Appears anxious, withdrawn, unusually quiet, distressed, tearful or lacking in confidence.
- Shows an unexplained decline in engagement, progress, concentration or enjoyment of school.
- Has unexplained injuries, damaged belongings, missing possessions or requests for money.
- Has changes in sleep, appetite, toileting, emotional regulation or behaviour.
- Becomes unusually aggressive, disruptive or begins bullying other children.
- Avoids particular pupils, transport, breaktimes or social situations.
- Appears upset after using a phone, gaming platform or online service, becomes secretive about devices or is anxious when messages arrive.
- Talks about running away, self-harm, not wanting to live or feeling unsafe. Any such disclosure requires an immediate safeguarding response.
- Communicates distress through changes in sensory behaviour, communication, repetitive behaviour or presentation that may be linked to their SEND.

These signs are not proof of bullying and may have other causes. Concerns must be recorded, explored sensitively and considered alongside information from the child, family, staff and relevant professionals.

SEND & Bullying at Leicester Therapeutic School

Pupils at Leicester Therapeutic School have a range of needs that may affect social understanding, communication, emotional regulation and their ability to identify or report bullying. Some pupils may not recognise that they are being bullied, while others may not understand that their own repeated behaviour is causing harm. High expectations remain in place, but responses will be adapted to each child's needs and level of understanding.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 recognises that pupils with SEND can face additional safeguarding challenges online and offline. Staff must be alert to:

- The risk that changes in behaviour, mood or injury are incorrectly attributed to a child's disability or condition without further exploration.
- Greater vulnerability to peer isolation, prejudice-based bullying and disproportionate impact without obvious outward signs.
- Communication, cognitive or social-understanding barriers that make recognising, explaining or reporting bullying more difficult.
- The need for accessible reporting methods, including trusted adults, visual supports, communication systems, observation and information from families or professionals.
- The need for close liaison between the DSL, SEND lead/SENCO, key adults and relevant therapists, together with additional pastoral support where required.

Prevention of Bullying

Bullying is best prevented through a whole-school culture that is safe, inclusive, relational and consistently modelled by adults. Leicester Therapeutic School will:

- Maintain a listening culture in which pupils know concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.
- Ensure all staff receive induction and regular training on bullying, child-on-child abuse, prejudice, online safety, recording and reporting procedures.
- Challenge discriminatory language, sexualised language, harmful stereotypes and behaviour dismissed as banter or part of growing up.
- Provide accessible ways for pupils to report concerns verbally and non-verbally, including trusted adults and communication supports.
- Use risk assessment, supervision and environmental review to identify hotspots, transition points and times when pupils may be most vulnerable.
- Teach pupils, through RSHE/PSHE and the wider curriculum, about types of bullying, its impact, bystander responsibilities, how to seek help, respectful relationships and how stereotypes can lead to bullying.
- Teach online safety, including group chats, gaming, social media, image sharing, manipulation of images, AI-generated content, privacy and preserving evidence.
- Engage parents and carers in prevention, online safety and consistent approaches to respectful behaviour.
- Use pupil voice, the Junior Leadership Team and regular check-ins to understand pupils' experiences and perceptions of safety.
- Support both the child who has experienced bullying and the child displaying bullying behaviour, while holding clear boundaries and expectations.
- Use restorative approaches only where safe, appropriate and voluntary. Restorative work will not replace safeguarding action or proportionate consequences.
- Record incidents on CPOMS and review patterns by type, location, time, pupil group and protected characteristic.

Prevention is reinforced through:

- Planned learning in PSHE/RSHE, computing, reading, assemblies and the personal development curriculum.
- National Anti-Bullying Week, Safer Internet Day and age-appropriate campaigns or themed learning.
- Social communication work, emotional literacy, ELSA, friendship support and other needs-led interventions.
- Stories, role play, visual resources and practical teaching adapted to pupils' developmental and communication needs.

- Positive adult modelling, clear routines, consistent boundaries and recognition of kindness, inclusion and respectful behaviour.
- Appropriate input from external agencies and community partners.

Procedures

All concerns must be taken seriously. Staff will distinguish between conflict, unkind behaviour, a one-off incident, bullying and child-on-child abuse. Repeated behaviour is not required before the school acts to protect a child or address harmful conduct.

Where there is immediate danger, serious injury, a threat involving a weapon, sexual harassment or violence, suspected criminal conduct, significant discrimination or another safeguarding concern, staff must inform the DSL or Headteacher immediately and follow safeguarding procedures.

Information will be shared on a need-to-know basis. Children will be listened to separately and staff will not promise confidentiality. The wishes and feelings of the child will be considered, but the school may need to take action to keep children safe.

Early Identification and Support

Staff procedure	Early support for children involved
Record the concern or incident on CPOMS before the end of the working day using factual language. Identify all children involved, the date, time, location, witnesses, behaviour observed or reported, impact and immediate action. Inform the DSL or senior leader immediately where there is a safeguarding risk, serious injury, sexualised behaviour, a threat, discrimination or an online safety concern. Preserve relevant messages, images or other evidence and do not forward harmful material.	Listen calmly and separately to each child. Reassure them that reporting was the right thing to do.
	Put immediate safety arrangements in place, including a trusted adult, safe space, supervision or timetable adjustment.
	Consider communication and SEND needs and use visual or alternative communication support where required.
	Inform parents or carers as soon as appropriate, unless this would create a risk or conflict with safeguarding advice.
	Provide support to the child displaying the behaviour to understand impact, regulate, repair harm and change behaviour.
	Agree monitoring and review arrangements and record all actions, decisions and outcomes on CPOMS.

Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying

Staff procedure	School response
Where bullying is suspected or confirmed, report it immediately to the Headteacher, DSL or senior leader and record it on CPOMS under the correct category. Establish basic facts, but do not conduct a detailed investigation where child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, serious violence, criminal conduct or a significant safeguarding risk is suspected. Follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and preserve online evidence.	Assess immediate safety and complete or update a risk assessment where required.
	Speak to children separately, considering their wishes, feelings, communication needs and understanding.
	Decide whether the matter is conflict, a one-off incident, bullying, prejudice-based behaviour or child-on-child abuse.
	Inform parents or carers and agree how progress will be communicated, subject to safeguarding advice.
	Create a support plan for the child who has experienced bullying, including a trusted adult and follow-up dates.
	Plan support, teaching, boundaries and proportionate consequences for the child who displayed bullying behaviour.
	Use restorative work only where it is safe, appropriate, voluntary and in the best interests of the child harmed.
	Apply sanctions in line with the Positive Behaviour Policy, including suspension or exclusion where appropriate.
	Refer to children's social care, police, health services or other agencies where thresholds are met.
	Inform the placing local authority or SEND case officer where appropriate and lawful.
	Monitor wellbeing, attendance and recurrence; record the outcome and review until the concern is resolved.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Proprietor and Governing Body

- Ensure the school draws up and implements an effective anti-bullying strategy in line with Part 3, paragraph 10 of the Independent School Standards.
- Promote an inclusive culture in which bullying, discrimination and child-on-child abuse are not tolerated.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for implementation, staff training, curriculum coverage and the effectiveness of the school's response.
- Review anonymised bullying data, patterns, actions and impact at least termly.
- Ensure the policy is available to parents and that sufficient resources are provided for prevention and support.

The Headteacher

- Create a culture in which concerns are reported, challenged and addressed promptly and fairly.
- Ensure staff understand this policy, receive regular training and know when concerns must be escalated to the DSL.
- Ensure appropriate investigation, risk assessment, support, communication with families and proportionate action.
- Monitor CPOMS records, repeat incidents, prejudice-based incidents, online concerns and identified hotspots.
- Report relevant patterns and actions to the governing body while maintaining confidentiality.
- Liaise with local authorities, children's social care, police, health professionals and other agencies where necessary.

- Review the policy annually and after a serious incident or significant change in guidance.

The DSL and Senior Leaders

- Provide advice and lead or oversee responses where bullying may also be a safeguarding concern.
- Ensure the child harmed, the child alleged to have caused harm and any other affected pupils receive appropriate support.
- Distinguish bullying from conflict and ensure serious or sexualised behaviour is managed under safeguarding procedures.
- Coordinate risk assessments, support plans, parent communication, agency referrals and review meetings.
- Ensure pupil voice and communication needs are considered throughout the process.
- Use incident data to inform supervision, curriculum, staff practice and whole-school prevention.

All School Staff

- Model respectful behaviour and challenge bullying, discriminatory language, sexualised language and harmful banter.
- Listen to children, take all reports seriously and provide immediate reassurance and safety.
- Record concerns factually on CPOMS before the end of the working day and report them to the DSL or senior leader.
- Preserve relevant online evidence and do not view, copy or forward indecent images.
- Implement agreed support, monitoring and risk-management arrangements.

Pupils

- Treat others with respect and follow the school's behaviour expectations.
- Report bullying or unsafe behaviour involving themselves or another child to a trusted adult.
- Avoid joining in, sharing harmful content or encouraging bullying, and seek adult help as a bystander.
- Take part in support or restorative work where appropriate and safe.

Parents and Carers

- Report concerns promptly to the school and provide relevant information or evidence.
- Avoid confronting another child or family directly and avoid posting about incidents on social media.
- Work with the school on support, online safety, behaviour expectations and review arrangements.
- Use the school's Complaints Policy if they remain dissatisfied with the response.

Voice of the Child

Pupils may report concerns verbally or non-verbally through a trusted adult, visual or communication supports, class check-ins, the Junior Leadership Team, emotional literacy work or another method suited to their needs. A child will not be required to confront another child or take part in restorative work.

Staff will seek the child's views about safety, support and follow-up. Reports will be taken seriously, and the child will be told what can be shared and what the school will do next in a way they can understand.

Recording, Monitoring and Review

- All incidents, concerns, actions, parent contact, support, referrals, outcomes and review dates will be recorded factually on CPOMS.
- Safeguarding information will be stored and shared in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Data Protection Policy and record-retention arrangements.
- The Headteacher and DSL will review data at least half-termly for repeat behaviour, vulnerable pupils, location, time, online patterns, protected characteristics and emerging risks.
- Serious or repeated incidents and the effectiveness of actions will be reported to the governing body in anonymised form.
- Information will be shared only with those who need it to safeguard children and manage the incident. Confidentiality cannot be promised where a child may be at risk.

- Parents may raise concerns through the Headteacher and, if necessary, the school's Complaints Policy. Safeguarding concerns should be reported directly to the DSL.
- This policy will be reviewed annually, after any serious incident and whenever statutory guidance changes.

Supporting Organisations and Guidance

Government and Statutory Guidance

Department for Education: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 - GOV.UK

Department for Education: Independent School Standards guidance (April 2026) - GOV.UK

Department for Education: Preventing and Tackling Bullying - GOV.UK

Department for Education: Relationships Education, RSE and Health Education statutory guidance - GOV.UK

General Anti-Bullying Support

Anti-Bullying Alliance: www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Childline: www.childline.org.uk

Kidscape: www.kidscape.org.uk

NSPCC: www.nspcc.org.uk

The Diana Award: www.diana-award.org.uk

YoungMinds: www.youngminds.org.uk

PSHE Association: www.pshe-association.org.uk

Online Safety and Cyberbullying

UK Safer Internet Centre: www.saferinternet.org.uk

Childnet: www.childnet.com

CEOP Education: www.ceopeducation.co.uk

Internet Watch Foundation: www.iwf.org.uk

Report Remove: www.childline.org.uk/remove

LGBTQ+ and Prejudice-Based Bullying

Stonewall: www.stonewall.org.uk

Schools OUT UK: www.schools-out.org.uk

EACH: www.each.education

SEND

Mencap: www.mencap.org.uk

Council for Disabled Children / SENDIASS: www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

NSPCC safeguarding children with SEND: www.nspcc.org.uk

Changing Faces: www.changingfaces.org.uk

Racism and Hate

Stop Hate UK: www.stophateuk.org

True Vision: www.report-it.org.uk

Show Racism the Red Card: www.theredcard.org

Kick It Out: www.kickitout.org