

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Statement

At The Acorn Nursery School, we are committed to providing a safe, nurturing, and inclusive environment where all children feel valued, respected, and supported. We have a zero-tolerance approach to bullying in any form.

We recognise that young children are still developing their understanding of relationships, behaviour, and emotions. Therefore, our approach focuses on teaching kindness, empathy, and respect, while responding appropriately and sensitively to any behaviour that may cause harm or distress.

This policy is in line with the **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)** requirements, particularly in supporting children's personal, social, and emotional development and promoting positive behaviour.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as: *The repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where there is an imbalance of power.*

Bullying is therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated over time
- Difficult for the victim to defend against

While persistent bullying is less common in early years due to developmental stages, behaviours that could develop into bullying are taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Types of Bullying

Bullying can take different forms, including:

Type of Bullying	Definition
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding others, tormenting behaviour
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings, or any use of violence
Racial	Racial taunts, gestures, or discrimination
Sexual	Inappropriate touching, sexualised language, or gestures
Verbal (direct or indirect)	Name-calling, teasing, sarcasm, spreading rumours
Cyberbullying	Bullying through digital platforms (more relevant to older children but acknowledged)

Aims of the Policy

We aim to:

- Promote a culture of kindness, respect, and inclusion
- Ensure all children feel safe, secure, and valued
- Support children in developing empathy and understanding of others
- Prevent bullying behaviours before they escalate
- Respond effectively and consistently to any concerns
- Work in partnership with parents and carers

Preventing Bullying

We actively promote positive behaviour by:

- Modelling respectful and caring interactions
- Teaching children about feelings, friendships, and differences
- Encouraging sharing, turn-taking, and cooperation
- Supporting children to resolve conflicts appropriately
- Celebrating diversity and individuality
- Creating an inclusive environment where differences are respected

Staff are vigilant and proactive in identifying early signs of unwanted behaviour and intervening appropriately.

Supporting Vulnerable Children

We recognise that some children may be more vulnerable to bullying, including:

- Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)
- Children perceived as different by others
- Children who may be or are perceived to be LGBT

The fact that a child may identify as LGBT is not an inherent risk factor for harm. However, they may be more vulnerable to being targeted.

We are committed to:

- Reducing barriers to inclusion
- Providing a safe and supportive environment
- Ensuring every child has a trusted adult they can approach
- Promoting equality and respect for all

Responding to Bullying Concerns

Any behaviour that appears to be bullying is taken seriously.

Staff will:

- Intervene immediately to stop any harmful behaviour
- Offer reassurance and support to the child affected
- Speak to all children involved in a calm and age-appropriate manner
- Help children understand the impact of their behaviour
- Record the incident in line with nursery procedures
- Inform parents/carers where appropriate

Where incidents are repeated or serious:

- A behaviour support plan may be implemented
- The Nursery Manager will be involved
- External agencies may be consulted if necessary

Recording and Monitoring

We:

- Keep clear records of any bullying concerns or incidents
- Monitor patterns or repeated behaviours
- Review records to identify any emerging issues
- Share relevant information with leadership and governing bodies where appropriate

Partnership with Parents and Carers

We work closely with parents and carers to:

- Share concerns promptly
- Provide consistent support strategies
- Promote positive behaviour at home and in the setting

We encourage open communication and collaboration to ensure the best outcomes for children.

Safeguarding Links

Bullying can, in some cases, be a safeguarding concern. If there is: *Reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm* the incident will be treated as a child protection concern and managed in line with the nursery's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

If anti-bullying procedures are not effective, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Manager will consider further safeguarding actions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Staff:

- Promote positive behaviour and inclusion
- Be vigilant and responsive to concerns
- Record and report incidents appropriately

Manager/DSL:

- Oversee implementation of the policy
- Support staff in managing incidents
- Liaise with external agencies where necessary