



1. Purpose

This protocol aims to ensure that concerns about bullying are:

- Taken seriously and acted upon promptly.
 - Investigated fairly and consistently.
 - Recorded appropriately.
 - Monitored over time to prevent recurrence.
 - Managed in a way that safeguards all children involved.
 - Communicated appropriately with parents/carers and relevant staff.
-

A. Immediate Response

Step 1: Receive the concern

Any member of staff who becomes aware of a possible bullying incident should:

1. Listen calmly and take the child seriously.
2. Reassure the child that reporting was the right thing to do.
3. Avoid promising absolute confidentiality.
4. Establish whether anyone is in immediate danger or distressed.
5. Make an initial factual record as soon as possible (CPOMS).

Staff should avoid:

- Asking leading questions.
- Making assumptions about what happened.
- Asking children to confront each other immediately.
- Labelling behaviour as "bullying" before appropriate investigation.

Immediate safeguarding question

Staff should consider:

Is any child currently at risk of harm, emotional distress, retaliation or ongoing intimidation?

If yes, immediate protective measures should be put in place and the concern referred to the appropriate safeguarding lead in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

B. Initial Assessment

Step 2: Determine whether the concern may constitute bullying

The school should consider whether the behaviour involves:

- **Repetition** or a pattern of behaviour.
- An **intention to hurt, humiliate, intimidate or exclude**.
- A **power imbalance**, whether physical, social, emotional, age-related or online.

Bullying may include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Physical bullying.
- Verbal bullying.
- Social or relational bullying.
- Deliberate exclusion.
- Damage to belongings.
- Threats or intimidation.
- Racist, sexist or discriminatory bullying.
- Bullying related to disability or special educational needs.
- Homophobic, biphobic or transphobic bullying.
- Online or cyberbullying.

Important distinction

A single disagreement, argument or isolated act of unkindness may require intervention but does not automatically constitute bullying.

However, **an isolated incident can still be serious and may require safeguarding or action.**

C. Investigation Procedure

Step 3: Appoint a responsible member of staff

A designated senior member of staff, class teacher, pastoral lead or another appropriate member of staff should coordinate the investigation. In most cases this will be the DSL/DDSL.

The investigating staff member should:

- Remain impartial.
 - Keep clear written records.
 - Speak to children individually where appropriate.
 - Avoid unnecessary repeated questioning.
 - Keep the safeguarding lead informed where necessary.
-

Step 4: Gather information

Speak separately with:

1. The child reporting or experiencing the behaviour.
2. The child or children alleged to have carried out the behaviour.
3. Relevant witnesses.
4. Relevant staff members.

Questions should be open and neutral.

Examples:

- "Can you tell me what happened?"
- "What happened before that?"
- "Who was there?"
- "Has anything like this happened before?"
- "How often has this happened?"
- "How did you feel?"
- "What happened afterwards?"
- "Is there anything else you think I need to know?"

Record:

- Date and time.
 - Location.
 - Children involved.
 - Exact words or actions where relevant.
 - Witnesses.
 - Previous related incidents.
 - Immediate actions taken.
-

D. Risk Assessment

Step 5: Assess the risk

Following the initial investigation, consider:

Risk to the targeted child

- Is the behaviour continuing?
- Is the child afraid to attend school?
- Are there changes in attendance, behaviour or wellbeing?
- Is there a risk of retaliation?
- Are particular locations or times associated with incidents?

Risk relating to the child displaying bullying behaviour

Consider whether there may be:

- Unmet emotional needs.
- Difficulties with relationships.
- SEND-related communication or social difficulties.
- Experiences of bullying themselves.
- Family or external difficulties.

This does **not excuse bullying behaviour**, but it may help identify appropriate support and intervention.

E. Decision and Response

Step 6: Determine the outcome

The investigating staff member should determine whether the evidence indicates:

Outcome 1: Bullying confirmed

The school should:

- Inform relevant staff.
- Record the incident as bullying (CPOMS).
- Put support in place for the child affected.
- Apply appropriate consequences and interventions for the child displaying the behaviour.
- Inform parents/carers as appropriate.
- Monitoring.

Outcome 2: Unkind or inappropriate behaviour, but not bullying

The school should:

- Address the behaviour.
- Apply proportionate consequences.
- Provide restorative or educational intervention where appropriate.

- Monitor relationships to ensure the behaviour does not develop into a pattern.

Outcome 3: Insufficient evidence

The school should:

- Record the concern and investigation.
 - Explain the outcome appropriately.
 - Continue monitoring where there is a possibility of further incidents.
-

F. Support for Children

Step 7: Support the child affected

Support may include:

- A named trusted adult.
- Regular check-ins.
- Increased supervision during vulnerable times.
- Support with friendships and peer relationships.
- Pastoral or emotional support.

The child should know:

Who they can speak to, where they can go, and what adults will do if the behaviour happens again.

Step 8: Intervention with the child displaying bullying behaviour

The school's response should combine appropriate consequences with education and support.

Possible interventions include:

- Clear explanation of the behaviour and its impact.
- Reflection and restorative work where safe and appropriate.
- Social and emotional learning.
- Behaviour targets.
- Increased supervision.
- Support for underlying needs.
- Parental involvement.

Restorative approaches should **not** be used in a way that pressures a child who has experienced bullying to forgive, reconcile or meet with another child.

Step 9: Monitoring questions

Staff should regularly ask:

Child affected

- "How are things going?"
- "Has anything else happened?"
- "Do you feel safe?"
- "Are there particular times or places you are worried about?"
- "Do you feel the situation has improved?"

Staff observations

Record:

- Any further incidents.
 - Changes in friendship groups.
 - Signs of avoidance or anxiety.
 - Retaliation.
 - Changes in attendance or engagement.
-

G. Communication with Parents/Carers

Step 10: Inform parents appropriately

Parents/carers should normally be informed when there is a significant bullying concern involving their child.

Communication should:

- Focus on the child's welfare.
- Explain what the school is doing.
- Avoid sharing confidential personal information about another child.
- Explain arrangements/protocols.
- Provide a point of contact.

The school should avoid disclosing:

- Detailed sanctions given to another child.
- Confidential safeguarding information.

- Personal information about other families.
-

H. Escalation

Step 11: Escalate persistent or serious concerns

Escalate the matter to senior leadership and the designated safeguarding lead where:

- Bullying persists despite intervention.
- There is physical violence.
- There are threats or intimidation.
- There is significant emotional distress.
- There is discriminatory or hate-related behaviour.
- There is online abuse affecting school safety.
- There is a safeguarding concern.
- The child is refusing school or attendance is affected.

Repeated incidents should trigger a review of whether the school's existing interventions are sufficient.

I. Record Keeping (CPOMS)

The school should maintain a confidential bullying record containing:

- Date concern was raised.
- Children involved.
- Nature of the allegation.
- Investigation undertaken.
- Evidence gathered.
- Outcome.
- Actions and interventions.
- Parent/carers communication.
- Monitoring arrangements.

Records should be stored securely in accordance with the school's safeguarding and data protection procedures.

Staff Flowchart

1. A CONCERN IS RAISED

A child, parent/carer, member of staff or other person reports a concern.



2. ENSURE IMMEDIATE SAFETY

- Listen calmly and take the concern seriously.
- Reassure the child that they have done the right thing by speaking up.
- Do not promise confidentiality.
- Consider whether any child is at immediate risk of harm, distress or retaliation.

Immediate safeguarding concern?

YES → Take immediate protective action and inform the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** in line with safeguarding procedures.

NO → **Continue.**



3. RECORD THE CONCERN

Record factual information as soon as possible:

- Who was involved?
- What happened?
- When and where did it happen?
- Who witnessed it?
- Has anything similar happened before?

Do not make assumptions or label the behaviour as bullying before investigating.



4. INFORM THE APPROPRIATE MEMBER OF STAFF

Refer the concern to the appropriate:

Class Teacher / Senior Leader / DSL



5. INVESTIGATE

Speak to children **separately**, using open and neutral questions.

Gather information from:

- Child reporting the concern.
- Child/children alleged to have displayed the behaviour.
- Witnesses.

- Relevant staff.

Check for:

REPETITION + INTENT + POWER IMBALANCE



6. DETERMINE THE OUTCOME

BULLYING CONFIRMED

→ **Record as a bullying incident.**

UNKIND / INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

→ **Address behaviour and provide appropriate intervention.**

INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE

→ **Record the concern and continue to monitor.**



7. TAKE ACTION

SUPPORT THE CHILD AFFECTED

- Agree a trusted adult.
- Put safety measures in place.
- Increase supervision where necessary.
- Provide pastoral or emotional support.
- Ensure the child knows who to speak to if it happens again.

ADDRESS THE BEHAVIOUR

- Apply appropriate consequences.
- Explain the impact of the behaviour.
- Provide appropriate intervention and support.
- Consider underlying needs.
- Use restorative approaches only where safe and appropriate.



8. INFORM PARENTS/CARERS

Where appropriate:

- Explain the concern and actions being taken.
- Provide reassurance about monitoring and support.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding other children.



9. MONITOR

Check for further incidents and speak regularly with the child affected.

Monitor during:

- Playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Transitions.
- Lessons and group work.
- Clubs and other vulnerable times.

REMEMBER

LISTEN → RECORD → INVESTIGATE → ACT → SUPPORT → MONITOR → REVIEW

Any immediate safeguarding concern must be reported to the DSL without delay.