

Pathway Primary Federation



Whittington CE (VA) Primary School and Morda CE (VC) Primary School

"Love of God and others as oneself."

Policy owner	Executive Headteacher
Applies to	Both schools within Pathway Primary Federation
Approved by	Governing Body
Approval date	Autumn 2026
Review date	Autumn 2027, or earlier if guidance changes

1. Purpose and commitment

Pathway Primary Federation is committed to providing a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment in which every child is respected and can learn without fear of bullying. Bullying is unacceptable and will be challenged. Our response is guided by our Christian vision and our core values.

This policy explains how the Federation prevents bullying, enables concerns to be reported, responds consistently and supports everyone involved. It applies during the school day, on educational visits, at clubs and activities, and to behaviour outside school or online where it affects pupils, staff or the orderly life of either school.

2. Legal and statutory framework

This policy should be read in the context of:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006, including the duty to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying;
- Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty;
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004;
- DfE, Preventing and Tackling Bullying (July 2017);
- DfE, Behaviour in Schools (current edition);
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026; and
- the current statutory guidance on relationships education and health education.

This policy links to the Federation's Behaviour, Safeguarding and Child Protection, Equality Information and Objectives, Online Safety, SEND, RSHE, Staff Code of Conduct and Complaints policies.

3. What bullying means

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that is usually repeated over time, intentionally causes physical or emotional harm, and involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. Bullying may be overt or subtle and may occur face to face, indirectly or online.

A disagreement, friendship difficulty or one-off unkind act is not automatically bullying. It will still be addressed under the Behaviour Policy. A single serious incident may also require an immediate safeguarding or disciplinary response.

4. Forms of bullying

Form	Examples
Physical	hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or taking belongings, or threatening physical harm
Verbal	name-calling, insults, threats, taunts, discriminatory language or repeated teasing
Relational or indirect	deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, humiliating someone, coercion or manipulating friendships
Online	harmful messages, posts, images, impersonation, exclusion from online groups or misuse of games and social media
Prejudice-related	behaviour connected with disability or SEND, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, or another actual or perceived characteristic
Sexual or sexist	sexualised comments, harassment, unwanted conduct or behaviour based on sex or gender stereotypes

Bullying may also relate to appearance, health, family circumstances, poverty, being adopted, being in care or previously in care, being a young carer, or association with someone who has a protected characteristic. There is no hierarchy: every form is taken seriously.

5. Signs that a child may need help

Changes may have many causes, but staff and families should be alert to a child who becomes anxious, withdrawn or distressed; avoids school or particular places; has unexplained injuries or damaged belongings; shows changes in attendance, concentration, friendships, eating or sleep; or is unusually secretive about devices. Concerns should be shared promptly and explored sensitively.

6. Prevention

The Federation works proactively to create a culture in which bullying is less likely to occur. We will:

- teach respectful relationships, online safety, consent, difference and inclusion through RSHE, computing, assemblies and the wider curriculum;
- establish clear behaviour expectations and model respectful language;
- make reporting routes visible and accessible to all pupils, including pupils with SEND or communication needs;
- supervise and review locations and times where concerns are more likely to arise;
- listen to pupil voice and work with parents and carers;
- challenge stereotypes, discriminatory language and banter; and
- train staff to identify, record and respond to bullying and child-on-child abuse.

7. Reporting a concern

A pupil can tell any trusted adult in school. They may report for themselves or for someone else, verbally or in writing. Parents and carers should contact the class teacher in the first instance, or a Head of School where the concern is serious or unresolved. Reports will be listened to, recorded and handled sensitively. Staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality, because information may need to be shared to keep a child safe.

No pupil will be criticised for reporting a concern in good faith. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, supports another pupil or participates in an investigation will be treated seriously.

8. Staff response to suspected or reported bullying

1. Ensure immediate safety, listen calmly and reassure the pupil that reporting was right.
2. Record the concern factually on the school's agreed safeguarding/behaviour recording system and notify the relevant senior leader.
3. Gather accounts separately and proportionately from the pupils and any witnesses; preserve relevant online evidence where appropriate.
4. Decide whether the behaviour meets the definition of bullying and whether safeguarding, discriminatory, criminal or online-safety procedures are also required.

5. Agree and implement actions under the Behaviour Policy, taking account of age, SEND, vulnerability, context and proportionality.
6. Inform parents and carers appropriately, unless doing so would place a child at risk; agree support and a review point.
7. Monitor the situation and record the outcome. Escalate if behaviour continues or further information emerges.

9. Safeguarding and external referral

Bullying can be a form or indicator of child-on-child abuse. Sexual violence, sexual harassment, harmful sexual behaviour, coercion, serious threats, exploitation and incidents that may involve significant harm must be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and handled under the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. The DSL will consider referrals to children's social care, the police or other services as appropriate.

Where an incident may constitute a criminal offence, staff must not investigate beyond what is necessary to establish immediate facts and safety. The Executive Headteacher or DSL will decide whether police advice or a report is required. Evidence such as messages or images must be managed carefully and must not be copied or shared unnecessarily.

10. Support and consequences

Support for a pupil who has experienced bullying

- a trusted adult and regular check-ins;
- a safety or support plan where needed;
- help to rebuild confidence, relationships and participation;
- reasonable adjustments and specialist support where appropriate; and
- clear follow-up so the pupil knows what has changed and how to report any recurrence.

Support and accountability for a pupil whose behaviour has caused harm

- a clear explanation of the harm and the behaviour that must change;
- proportionate consequences in line with the Behaviour Policy;
- work to develop empathy, regulation, social understanding and safer choices;
- support for underlying needs without excusing harmful behaviour; and
- carefully planned restorative work only when it is safe, suitable and freely agreed by the pupil harmed.

11. Online and off-site bullying

Online bullying is addressed with the same seriousness as face-to-face bullying. Families are encouraged to retain evidence, use platform reporting and blocking tools, and avoid forwarding harmful material. The school may respond to behaviour outside school where it affects another pupil, poses a threat, damages the school's reputation or disrupts the orderly running of the school, in line with the Behaviour Policy and the law.

12. Equality, SEND and inclusion

The Federation will identify and monitor prejudice-related incidents and patterns. Staff will make reasonable adjustments so pupils with SEND or disabilities can understand expectations, report concerns and participate in support or investigation processes. A child's additional needs may help explain behaviour but do not remove the right of other children to be safe. Responses will balance support, accountability and protection.

13. Roles and responsibilities

Who	Responsibility
Governing Body	Approves the policy, assures itself that legal duties are met and receives anonymised information about patterns, impact and actions.
Executive Headteacher	Ensures consistent implementation across the Federation, appropriate training, recording, resourcing and review.
Heads of School and senior leaders	Lead day-to-day implementation, coordinate investigations and support, and ensure parents and relevant staff are informed.
Designated Safeguarding Lead	Advises on safeguarding risk, child-on-child abuse and external referral, and oversees safeguarding records.
All staff	Model respectful behaviour, remain alert, act promptly, record

Who	Responsibility
	concerns and follow this policy.
Pupils	Treat others respectfully, do not participate in or encourage bullying, report concerns and support a safe culture.
Parents and carers	Share concerns promptly, preserve relevant evidence, work constructively with school and avoid public or online discussion that could identify children.

14. Recording, monitoring and review

Records will distinguish between a reported concern, an investigated incident and confirmed bullying. Senior leaders will review records for recurrence, locations, groups, prejudice-related patterns and the effectiveness of support. Information reported to governors will be anonymised. Personal information will be handled in accordance with the Federation's Data Protection Policy and safeguarding requirements.

This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance, local arrangements or learning from incidents requires it. Pupil, parent and staff views will inform review where appropriate.

15. Complaints

Concerns should first be raised through the reporting route in section 7. If a parent or carer remains dissatisfied with how the school has handled the matter, they may use the Federation's Complaints Policy. A complaint about a safeguarding decision will be managed in accordance with safeguarding procedures.