



The
Daffodil
Project CIC

Anti Bullying and Harassment Policy

THE DAFFODIL PROJECT CIC

Anti-Bullying and Peer-on-Peer Harm Policy

Policy owner: Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead

Applies to: All children and young people, employees, volunteers, agency staff, contractors and visitors

Date adopted: January 2026

Review date: January 2027, or sooner following an incident, change in legislation/guidance or identified safeguarding concern

1. Policy Statement

The Daffodil Project CIC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive, respectful and nurturing environment in which every child and young person is protected from bullying, harassment, intimidation, discrimination and peer-on-peer harm.

Bullying in any form is unacceptable.

Every child attending The Daffodil Project has the right to feel safe, valued, respected and included. Children will be listened to and concerns will be taken seriously regardless of their age, disability, communication ability, additional needs or the way in which they communicate distress.

The Daffodil Project recognises that many of the children and young people attending our provision may have additional vulnerabilities, including autism, ADHD, learning disabilities, communication differences, sensory processing needs, SEMH needs, trauma, anxiety or other additional needs.

Our response to incidents will therefore be **child-centred, safeguarding-led, individualised and proportionate**.

We will consider the needs and circumstances of all children involved while maintaining a clear priority: **every child has the right to be safe**.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- prevent bullying and peer-on-peer harm wherever reasonably possible;
- establish a culture in which bullying is recognised, challenged and reported;
- ensure children know how and where to seek help;
- ensure staff respond promptly and consistently;
- protect children who may be particularly vulnerable;
- provide appropriate support to children who experience bullying;
- understand and address the needs of children displaying bullying or harmful behaviour;
- identify when behaviour constitutes a safeguarding concern;
- ensure appropriate recording, monitoring and escalation;

- work effectively with parents/carers, schools, local authorities and other professionals;
 - promote inclusion, respect, communication and positive relationships.
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3. Scope

This policy applies to behaviour:

- at The Daffodil Project;
- during sessions and activities;
- during outdoor, animal-care, gardening, cooking, creative or therapeutic activities;
- during trips, visits or community activities;
- during transport where this is arranged or supervised by the provision;
- between children attending different sessions where the behaviour relates to their involvement with the provision;
- online or through social media, messaging or gaming platforms where this affects a child's safety or wellbeing at the provision;
- outside the provision where the behaviour becomes relevant to safeguarding a child attending The Daffodil Project.

The policy should be read alongside the organisation's:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
Behaviour and Positive Support Policy
Online Safety Policy
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
SEND Policy
Complaints Policy
Staff Code of Conduct
Whistleblowing Policy
Health and Safety Policy
Incident Reporting Procedures

4. What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, which intentionally hurts, intimidates, humiliates, frightens, excludes or causes distress to another person.

Bullying can involve a real or perceived **imbalance of power**.

That imbalance may relate to:

- physical strength;
- age;
- social status;
- communication ability;
- disability;
- cognitive ability;
- popularity;
- access to information;
- group size;
- confidence;

- technology;
- knowledge of another child's vulnerabilities.

A serious single incident may not meet a traditional definition of repeated bullying but **will still be addressed** and may constitute a safeguarding incident.

Staff must never dismiss harmful behaviour simply because it has happened only once.

5. Forms of Bullying

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

Physical bullying

Hitting, kicking, pushing, pinching, biting, spitting, tripping, damaging belongings, taking possessions, blocking another child's movement or threatening physical violence.

Verbal bullying

Name-calling, insults, threats, mocking, humiliating comments, repeated teasing or deliberately using language intended to upset another child.

Social or relational bullying

Deliberately excluding someone, encouraging others not to interact with them, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, deliberately embarrassing someone or using group dynamics to isolate a child.

Emotional or psychological bullying

Intimidation, threatening behaviour, coercion, manipulation, deliberately frightening someone or repeatedly targeting known anxieties or vulnerabilities.

Cyberbullying

Bullying through:

- social media;
- messaging applications;
- gaming platforms;
- group chats;
- photographs or videos;
- emails;
- voice messages;
- fake accounts;
- sharing private information;
- deliberately excluding someone online.

Prejudice-based bullying

Bullying may relate to actual or perceived:

- disability or additional needs;
- race, ethnicity or nationality;

- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- gender reassignment;
- appearance;
- family circumstances;
- socioeconomic circumstances;
- being in care or previously looked after;
- communication differences;
- medical or developmental needs.

Prejudice-based language will be challenged even where a child states that it was intended as a joke.

6. SEND, Autism and Communication Differences

This section is particularly important within The Daffodil Project.

Children with SEND may be more vulnerable to bullying and may also communicate experiences of bullying differently.

A child may communicate that something is wrong through:

- behaviour;
- withdrawal;
- avoidance;
- aggression;
- changes in attendance;
- refusing to enter a particular area;
- becoming distressed around a particular child;
- changes in eating or sleeping;
- increased repetitive or self-regulatory behaviour;
- loss of previously established skills;
- AAC;
- symbols or pictures;
- signing;
- gestures;
- drawing;
- play;
- changes in emotional regulation.

A child's inability to verbally describe bullying does not mean that bullying has not occurred.

Staff must be professionally curious about significant changes in behaviour.

Where necessary, children must be provided with appropriate communication support, including visual communication, AAC, familiar adults, additional processing time and alternative methods of reporting.

7. Distinguishing Bullying From Dysregulation or SEND-Related Behaviour

The Daffodil Project recognises that not every incident of harmful behaviour is bullying.

A child experiencing sensory overload, emotional dysregulation, communication frustration, trauma response or difficulty understanding social situations may display behaviour that harms or frightens another child.

Staff must therefore consider:

- intention;
- repetition;
- pattern;
- power imbalance;
- communication ability;
- developmental understanding;
- disability and SEND;
- triggers and antecedents;
- whether the child understood the impact of their actions;
- previous incidents;
- the impact on the child who experienced the behaviour.

However, identifying a behaviour as being associated with SEND or dysregulation **does not remove our responsibility to protect other children.**

Reasonable adjustments and understanding must never mean another child is repeatedly exposed to harm.

Where harmful behaviour is linked to additional needs, the response may include changes to staffing, environment, timetable, groupings, communication support, sensory support, supervision or the child's individual support plan.

8. Child-on-Child Abuse

Some behaviour between children goes beyond bullying and may constitute **child-on-child abuse.**

This can include:

- physical abuse;
- serious or repeated violence;
- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- abuse within intimate relationships;
- serious online abuse;
- sharing nude or semi-nude images;
- threatening or intimidating behaviour;
- prejudice-based abuse;
- initiation or hazing-type behaviour.

Staff must not dismiss abusive behaviour as:

“banter”,
“just messing around”,
“part of growing up”,
“boys being boys”,
or
“that’s just how they communicate.”

Where child-on-child abuse is suspected, the matter must be treated as a **safeguarding concern** and referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

9. Prevention

The Daffodil Project believes prevention is more effective than responding only after bullying occurs.

We promote:

- kindness and mutual respect;
- acceptance of difference;
- positive relationships;
- emotional literacy;
- communication skills;
- self-advocacy;
- boundaries and consent;
- cooperative activities;
- social communication;
- restorative conversations where appropriate;
- appropriate online behaviour;
- recognition and reporting of unsafe behaviour.

Children will be taught in ways appropriate to their developmental and communication level.

Staff will actively model respectful communication.

Activities including animal care, gardening, cooking, creative activities and group projects may be used to develop cooperation, empathy, turn-taking, communication and shared responsibility.

10. Staff Responsibilities

All staff and volunteers have a responsibility to:

- remain vigilant for signs of bullying;
- intervene appropriately when unsafe behaviour is witnessed;
- listen carefully to children;
- take reports seriously;
- avoid making assumptions;
- record concerns accurately;
- report concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures;
- protect confidentiality appropriately;
- challenge discriminatory or prejudicial language;
- model respectful behaviour;

- avoid blaming the child reporting bullying;
- monitor children following incidents.

Staff must never instruct a child simply to ignore bullying or deal with it themselves.

11. Reporting Bullying

Children must be able to report concerns in whichever way is accessible to them.

They may report to:

- any member of staff;
- their key adult;
- the Director;
- the DSL or Deputy DSL;
- a parent/carer;
- another trusted professional.

Reports may be made verbally, through AAC, symbols, writing, drawing, behaviour or another communication method.

Parents/carers may raise concerns directly with the provision.

All reports will be taken seriously.

12. Staff Response to a Report

When bullying is reported or suspected, staff should:

1. Ensure immediate safety.

Separate children where necessary and obtain medical assistance if required.

2. Listen.

Allow the child to communicate without pressure or leading questions.

3. Reassure.

Explain that they were right to tell someone and that adults will help.

4. Record.

Create an accurate factual record as soon as possible.

5. Report.

Notify the appropriate senior member of staff and the DSL where safeguarding concerns exist.

6. Assess.

Consider severity, frequency, vulnerability, power imbalance and safeguarding implications.

7. Act.

Put appropriate protective and supportive measures in place.

8. Review.

Monitor whether the behaviour has stopped and whether the child feels safe.

13. Recording

Records should include, where known:

- date and time;
- location;
- children involved;
- witnesses;
- child's account in their own words where possible;
- staff observations;
- injuries or damage;
- previous relevant incidents;
- immediate action taken;
- parents/carers contacted;
- professionals informed;
- safeguarding decisions;
- support provided;
- follow-up actions;
- outcome.

Records must distinguish **fact, observation and professional opinion**.

Patterns of behaviour must be monitored rather than incidents being considered solely in isolation.

14. Risk Assessment

Where bullying is serious, repeated or presents a risk of harm, an individual risk assessment and/or safety plan may be developed.

This may include:

- increased supervision;
- changes to groupings;
- designated safe spaces;
- identified trusted adults;
- environmental adaptations;
- structured transitions;
- sensory support;
- communication support;
- separate arrival/departure arrangements;
- review of staffing ratios;
- changes to activities or timetable;
- individual behaviour support strategies.

Risk assessments must be reviewed following further incidents or significant changes.

15. Supporting the Child Who Has Experienced Bullying

Support may include:

- a trusted key adult;
- increased check-ins;
- emotional regulation support;
- communication support;
- safe spaces;
- social communication support;
- adjustments to sessions;
- reassurance and safety planning;
- liaison with parents/carers;
- liaison with school or other professionals;
- therapeutic support where appropriate.

The child should not routinely be expected to change their activities or lose access to opportunities because another child has bullied them.

16. Supporting the Child Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Children displaying bullying behaviour also require an appropriate response.

Staff will seek to understand:

- what happened;
- why it happened;
- whether there are unmet needs;
- communication difficulties;
- social understanding;
- sensory or environmental triggers;
- trauma or emotional needs;
- learned behaviour;
- difficulties with emotional regulation.

Support may include:

- individual behaviour support;
- increased supervision;
- teaching alternative communication;
- social communication work;
- emotional regulation strategies;
- restorative work where appropriate;
- environmental adjustments;
- work with parents/carers;
- involvement of external professionals.

Understanding the cause of behaviour does not mean accepting continued harm.

Clear boundaries will remain in place.

17. Restorative Approaches

Restorative conversations may be used where appropriate, but **never automatically**.

A child who has experienced bullying will not be required to:

- confront the other child;
- participate in mediation;
- apologise;
- accept an apology;
- sit with the child who harmed them;
- participate in restorative work if they do not feel safe.

Restorative work will only take place when staff consider it safe and appropriate.

18. Consequences and Protective Action

Responses will be individualised, proportionate and consistent with the child's developmental level, SEND and individual support needs.

Actions may include:

- verbal redirection;
- increased supervision;
- changes to activities;
- temporary separation;
- individual support work;
- review of the child's support plan;
- meeting with parents/carers;
- multidisciplinary review;
- changes to attendance arrangements;
- risk assessment;
- safeguarding referral.

In serious circumstances, restrictions or suspension of a placement may be considered where necessary to protect children.

Any decision will take account of safeguarding responsibilities, the child's individual needs and any commissioning arrangements.

19. Parents and Carers

Where appropriate and safe, parents/carers of children involved will be informed about significant or repeated bullying incidents.

The provision will:

- explain what has been reported;
- explain actions being taken;
- listen to relevant information from parents;
- maintain appropriate confidentiality regarding other children;
- agree appropriate follow-up arrangements.

Parents will not normally be provided with confidential information about another child, their diagnosis, circumstances, sanctions or support plan.

20. Online Bullying

Online bullying will be taken seriously where it affects a child attending The Daffodil Project.

Staff may advise parents/carers to preserve evidence such as messages or screenshots rather than deleting it immediately.

Where content presents a safeguarding concern, the DSL will determine whether further action or referral is required.

Children will be supported to understand online safety, privacy, respectful communication and appropriate reporting.

21. Discriminatory and Hate-Related Incidents

Any incident involving discriminatory language or behaviour will be recorded and addressed.

This includes behaviour relating to disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment or another protected or personal characteristic.

Serious or persistent incidents may require safeguarding action and/or referral to external agencies.

22. When Police or Children's Social Care May Be Involved

Some bullying behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or significant safeguarding concern.

Examples may include:

- assault;
- serious threats;
- theft;
- sexual assault;
- sexual harassment;
- stalking;
- repeated harassment;
- hate crime;
- sharing sexual images;
- serious online threats.

Where appropriate, the DSL will consider referral to Children's Social Care, the police or other relevant safeguarding agencies.

Where a child is in immediate danger, emergency services should be contacted.

23. Confidentiality

Information will be shared on a **need-to-know basis** in accordance with safeguarding responsibilities and data protection requirements.

Staff must never promise a child absolute confidentiality.

A child should be told, in an accessible way, that information may need to be shared with adults who can help keep them or another child safe.

24. False or Malicious Allegations

The Daffodil Project will not assume that an allegation is false simply because it cannot immediately be substantiated.

All concerns will be considered fairly.

Where there is clear evidence that an allegation was deliberately fabricated to cause harm, this will be addressed separately and appropriately.

Children will **never be discouraged from reporting concerns because staff fear that an allegation may prove unfounded.**

25. Retaliation

Retaliation against a child who reports bullying, supports another child to report bullying or participates in an investigation is prohibited.

Any retaliation will be treated as a separate incident and may increase the level of safeguarding response.

26. Children Who Cannot Easily Report

Particular attention will be given to children who:

- are non-speaking;
- use AAC;
- have learning disabilities;
- have limited receptive or expressive communication;
- experience high anxiety;
- have previously experienced trauma;
- are looked after or previously looked after;
- have difficulty recognising unsafe behaviour;
- rely heavily upon adults for care.

Staff must not wait for a verbal disclosure before acting where there are reasonable concerns about a child's safety.

27. Allegations Involving Staff or Adults

Where a concern involves the behaviour of an adult towards a child, it **must not be managed under this anti-bullying procedure alone**.

It must immediately be dealt with under The Daffodil Project's safeguarding procedures relating to allegations or concerns about adults working with children.

This includes employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

28. Staff Bullying and Harassment

The Daffodil Project also expects adults within the organisation to treat each other with dignity and respect.

Bullying, intimidation, discriminatory behaviour or harassment between staff members is unacceptable and will be addressed through the appropriate employment, grievance, disciplinary, whistleblowing or safeguarding procedures.

29. Monitoring Patterns

The Director/DSL will periodically review bullying and peer-on-peer incident records to identify:

- repeated perpetrators;
- repeated victims;
- locations where incidents occur;
- particular activities or transition periods;
- prejudice-related patterns;
- online trends;
- staffing or supervision issues;
- environmental triggers;
- whether interventions have been effective.

Where patterns are identified, preventative action will be taken.

30. Staff Training

Relevant staff and volunteers will receive appropriate information and training regarding:

- recognising bullying;
- child-on-child abuse;
- safeguarding procedures;
- SEND and communication;
- prejudice-based bullying;
- online safety;
- recording and reporting;

- responding to disclosures;
- positive behaviour support;
- professional boundaries.

Staff are expected to understand that **safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.**

31. Complaints

Parents/carers who are dissatisfied with how a bullying concern has been managed may raise the matter through The Daffodil Project's Complaints Procedure.

A complaint does not prevent the provision from continuing to take safeguarding action where required.

Safeguarding concerns will not be delayed while a complaint is being considered.

32. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed at least annually.

An earlier review will take place where:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes;
 - a serious incident occurs;
 - safeguarding learning identifies required changes;
 - monitoring identifies patterns or weaknesses;
 - the nature of the provision significantly changes.
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33. Our Commitment

At The Daffodil Project, we recognise that children arrive with different experiences, abilities, communication styles and support needs.

Difference is not a reason for exclusion.

Disability is not a reason for bullying.

Communication difficulties are not a reason for a child to go unheard.

Additional needs are not a reason for harmful behaviour to be ignored.

Our responsibility is to create an environment where children can feel safe enough to learn, communicate, build relationships and develop confidence.

We will listen.

We will act.

We will record.

We will safeguard.

We will work to ensure every child feels that they belong.

Policy Approval

Approved by: Magdalena Van de voort

Role: Director / Designated Safeguarding Lead

Signature: 

Date: 06/01/26

Next review: 02/01/27