



RELATIONSHIP, BEHAVIOUR AND COMMUNICATION POLICY (INC ANTI-BULLYING)

Last reviewed:	October 2025
Next review due:	October 2026

Our forest school philosophy is to:

- Place relationships and a personal sense of safety and security at the heart of our forest school provision.
- Promote compassion and empathy towards one another.
- Promote a sense of community and belonging.
- Listen, be present, and attuned to the children in our care.
- Value the feelings, thoughts, ideas and problems that everyone brings to forest school.
- Recognise that all behaviours are a form of communication.
- Reassure a child that it is okay to express all emotions.
- Be empathetic, even when someone is communicating or expressing behaviours that can feel challenging.
- Reassure a child that it is okay to express all emotions.

This supports a trauma-informed approach (see Bath & North East Somerset Council Trauma Informed Guidance).

By having a high adult-to-child ratio, we can adopt the following approach to create a supportive and inclusive learning community.

All staff are responsible for:

- Prioritising the safety of everyone.
- When a child is overwhelmed or dysregulated, to provide a safe distance between the child and others.
- Safely re-directing emotions (see 'Redirecting big feelings' document).
- Facilitating a process of child-led conflict resolution, where we support the child to safely be in control of the process and its outcome.
- Considering children's individual level of understanding and development stage.

Safety Principles



When children first start at our forest school, we encourage them to join us in creating a group agreement around behaviours that promote a

sense of safety and security. We often use tree cookies to visualise our safety rules.

Over time, we support each child to take ownership of the following safety principles:

Eating

- Wash your hands before eating
- Always sit down when eating
- Tell/indicate to an adult when you want to eat so they can ensure you are safe

Fire

- Stay outside the fire circle unless an adult tells you it is safe to enter

Going outside the forest school boundary (see safety cookies)

- On walks, always wear your high vis jacket (KB site)
- Only leave the forest school site with a member of staff
- Only let an adult open the gate

General

- If an adult says 'STOP!', then stand still.
- If you hear a whistle (3 short beeps), go to your closest adult).

Personal

- We all have our own safety 'bubble'. It is okay to put out your arm, say stop or show others that you don't want them in your space.
- Be careful not to hurt one another. Keep one another safe.
- Be a friend to one other.

Nature

- Look after and take care of our natural environment
- Check with an adult first, before touching and/or putting plants and berries into your mouth (see safety cookies)

Challenges

If a child finds it a challenge to work within these boundaries, we will meet with parents/carers to discuss what adjustments we can make to safely meet the needs of everyone within the forest school setting.

Working with parents/carers

We encourage parents and carers to share any concerns relating to their child's relationships, behaviour and communication and to work in collaboration with us to achieve the aims and safety principles of this policy.

We understand that communication and behaviours may arise from a child's additional needs. We will work closely with the SENCo and parents/carers to better understand the needs of the child and identify appropriate strategies to support the child. We will use objective observation records to help us understand the individual child.

In some cases, we may request additional assistance and support from other professionals, such as an educational psychologist or a child guidance counsellor.

Anti-Bullying Policy

What is bullying? The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines it as: 'The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological. It can happen face-to-face or online.'

Our community is based upon respectful relationships. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment, so that every child can flourish and develop their full potential. We work towards embedding mutual respect and cooperation between both staff and children so that everyone can feel safe and able to thrive in our setting.

We do not tolerate any form of bullying by either a member of staff, child or parent.

Our staff will not tolerate physical or verbal abuse or intimidation from parents.

It is important to remember that the potential for bullying can exist in all nurseries. We must therefore aim:

1. to encourage and enhance the security of the children
2. to recognise the impact of bullying
3. to recognise that bullying can have a knock-on effect on absence from nursery.

Warning signs and symptoms of bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a child is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to nursery
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Diminished levels of self confidence
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping or experiencing nightmares.

How do cases of bullying come to light?

- A member of staff noticing that things are not as they should be
- The victim talking to a member of staff
- Other children talking to a member of staff
- Parents contact the nursery, sometimes requesting that the source of information be kept secret.

Response procedures

How do we react to parents or pupils reporting bullying?

- Make them feel at ease
- Give them time to explain the situation, listen
- Make notes
- Pass no immediate judgement

- Make it clear that the problem will be treated seriously and looked into as a matter of urgency
- Signpost to The Anti-Bullying Alliance for support
- Liaise with the nursery manager who will arrange a meeting to address the allegations or concerns with the parents and develop a suitable plan to address the concern. This may include external mediation.

Consequences of bullying

- If a child is found to be bullying, we will work with the family and potentially other professionals to find the best outcome.
- If a staff member is found to be bullying, they will be asked to leave their employment at forest school in line with the staff code of conduct following an investigation.
- If a parent is found to be bullying after an investigation, which may include mediation, they may be asked to find another setting for their child.

Policies, procedures and risk assessments referred to in this document:

- Safeguarding policy
- Equality, diversity and inclusion policy
- Health and safety (inc COSHH) policy
- Manual handling children and equipment policy
- Communication with parents policy
- Staff code of conduct
- [Redirecting big feelings](#) document

External references:

- [Trauma Informed Guidance - Bath and North East Somerset Council](#)
- [Anti-Bullying Alliance](#)