

Innsworth Preschool Bullying and Harassment Policy

Last Updated: June 2026

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Overview: This policy outlines Innsworth Preschool's proactive strategies to prevent, and robust procedures to respond to, incidents of bullying and harassment.

1.2 Objective: Our goal is to foster a culture where every member of our community feels safe, valued, and respected. We are committed to this in accordance with all statutory and regulatory requirements.

2. Statutory Framework

2.1 Compliance: This policy has regard to the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and relevant UK law.

2.2 Key Legislation:

- The Statutory Framework for the EYFS: Providers must manage behaviour appropriately and must not use or threaten corporal punishment. Physical intervention is used only as a last resort to avert immediate danger or serious property damage.
- The Equality Act 2010: Protection against discrimination and harassment related to protected characteristics.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997: Protection against courses of conduct that amount to harassment.
- The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974: Duty to protect staff welfare.
- Safeguarding Guidance: We have regard to relevant safeguarding guidance (such as Keeping Children Safe in Education) as applicable to our setting type.

3. Definitions

3.1 Early Years Context: We recognise that very young children are still developing social skills and impulse control.

- **Developmental Behaviour:** Hurtful behaviour in the Early Years (e.g. snatching, pushing, biting) is often a result of developmental needs rather than malicious intent. We avoid labelling young children as "bullies."
- **Bullying (Children):** Behaviour that causes physical or emotional harm, intimidation, or distress. We assess this based on the pattern of behaviour, the impact on the child, and the developmental stage or SEND factors of the child involved.
- **Harassment (Equality Act):** Unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic (e.g. race, religion, disability) that has the purpose or effect of violating dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.
- **Harassment (Adults):** A course of conduct (occurring on at least two occasions) which amounts to harassment of another person.
- **Terminology:** We refer to the "child who displayed the behaviour" and the "child impacted" to avoid stigmatising labels.

4. Prevention Strategies

4.1 Operational Controls: We believe prevention is the most effective tool. We implement:

- **Active Supervision:** Staff are deployed to manage "hot spots" and high-risk zones (e.g. Farm zone, transitions).
- **Modelling:** Staff explicitly model respectful language and conflict resolution.
- **Curriculum:** We plan teaching of "kind hands/kind words" and repair strategies.
- **Recording:** We record and review patterns of behaviour (identifying triggers, times, and locations) to justify any necessary escalation.

5. Responding to Incidents Involving Children

5.1 Response Ladder: When incidents arise, staff follow a structured response:

1. **Immediate Stop:** Staff intervene to stop unsafe behaviour and ensure safety.
2. **First Aid & Comfort:** Immediate support is provided to the child impacted.
3. **Regulation:** Calm support is provided to the child who displayed the behaviour.
4. **Fact-Finding:** Brief, non-leading establishment of facts (who, what, where).
5. **Recording:** The incident, antecedent, staff response, and outcome are recorded.
6. **Communication:** Parents are informed (see below).
7. **Escalation:** If repeated or high risk, we implement a Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessment with a review date.

5.2 High-Risk Triggers: Certain behaviours trigger an immediate escalation to the Leadership Team/DSL. These include: injury needing first aid, repeated targeting of a specific child, sexualised behaviour, threats with objects, cruelty to animals, or absconding.

5.3 Confidentiality & Information Sharing:

- **What We Share:** We share the facts about a child's injury, treatment, and the support provided. We share the general steps taken to prevent recurrence.
- **What We Do Not Share:** We do not name the other child involved unless there is a lawful necessity.
- **Access to Records:** Parents may request access to records about their own child, subject to third-party redaction and lawful data protection exemptions.

5.4 Safeguarding Escalation: Where behaviour meets safeguarding thresholds (e.g. significant harm), the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) leads the decision-making. External advice is sought where appropriate, and referrals are made to children's social care (MASH) or the LADO as required.

6. Responding to Adult Incidents (Parents & Staff)

6.1 Parental Misconduct: We treat the harassment of staff with the utmost seriousness.

- **Prohibited Conduct:** Verbal abuse, discrimination, threats, or harassment of staff or other families will not be tolerated.
- **Cyber-Harassment:** We will consider digital evidence provided to us or lawfully obtained (e.g. screenshots) to assess authenticity and context.
- **Staged Response:** Misconduct triggers a staged response: Warning -> Restricted Communications -> Appointment-Only Access -> Suspension/Termination.
- **Safe Handover:** Where a parent is banned or restricted, we will confirm the decision in writing (with reasons and review date) and agree safe child handover arrangements to ensure the child's care is not disrupted.

6.2 Malicious Allegations: We take all allegations of misconduct seriously.

- **Good Faith:** Concerns raised in good faith will never be penalised, even if unsubstantiated. We encourage open reporting.
- **Pattern of Abuse:** However, where there is clear evidence of a pattern of abusive or harassing communications (e.g. threats, defamation campaigns, repeated knowingly false statements) that materially disrupts safe operation, this will be treated as misconduct.
- **Consequence:** Such conduct constitutes a breakdown of the parent partnership and may lead to the termination of the child's place based on the parent's conduct and safety impact.

6.3 Third-Party Harassment: We will not tolerate harassment of our staff by third parties (e.g. delivery drivers, contractors).

- **Action:** We reserve the right to ban any third party from the site and terminate commercial contracts if their conduct is abusive or discriminatory.

7. Consequences

7.1 Principles: All consequences will be proportionate, fair, and recorded with a rationale.

7.2 For Children: We act promptly on all incidents. Repeated patterns are addressed robustly through support, planning, and risk assessment. If risk remains unmanageable despite reasonable adjustments, we may move to a formal placement review.

7.3 For Adults: We operate zero tolerance for adult harassment. Substantiated misconduct leads to warnings, restrictions, bans, or termination of the childcare agreement. For staff, it leads to disciplinary action up to dismissal.

8. Decision Recording

8.1 Defensibility: For repeated incidents, safeguarding escalations, restrictions/bans, or termination recommendations, a formal Decision Note is required. This must include:

- Incident chronology.
- Risk assessment summary.
- Steps taken and support provided.
- Equality Act and SEND considerations (reasonable adjustments tried).
- Rationale for why continued attendance is or is not safe.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 Review Cycle: All reported incidents are monitored by the leadership team to identify patterns. This policy is reviewed annually.

10. Commitment

10.1 Statement: Innsworth Preschool is committed to promoting the emotional safety and rights of every child and staff member. We take a robust, proactive approach to preventing and managing bullying and harassment.

