

# **Behaviour and Relationships Policy and Written Statement of Behaviour Principles**



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*“Quality relationships provide the necessary vehicles for adaption and recovery... every relationship has the power to confirm or challenge everything that has gone before”. Dan Hughes and Louise Bomber - Settling to Learn. (2013)*

As with everything we do at Claregate Primary School, we expect the behaviour and relationships of all members of our community to be excellent. We believe that relationships are a key driver of behaviours and that behaviours are a form of communication. We believe that positive relationships are key in promoting and maintaining the positive behaviours that we promote.

In a school setting, the behaviour of a class or individual pupils will depend largely on the expectations that adults in the school hold and so we work on the simple principle that our expectations of pupils should be clear and consistent at all times.

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## 1. Aims

This policy aims to:

- › Provide a consistent approach to behaviour management
- › Encourage good behaviour and respect for others
- › Outline how pupils are expected to behave
- › Define what we consider to be unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and discrimination
- › Outline our system of rewards and sanctions
- › Secure an acceptable standard of behaviour of pupils
- › Promote, among pupils, self-discipline and proper regard for authority and people who help us
- › Summarise the roles and responsibilities of different people in the school community with regard to behaviour management

## 2. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- › Behaviour and discipline in schools
- › Searching, screening and confiscation at school
- › The Equality Act 2010
- › Keeping Children Safe in Education
- › Use of reasonable force in schools
- › Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school

It is also based on the special educational needs and disability (SEND) code of practice.

In addition, this policy is based on:

- Section 175 of the Education Act 2002, which outlines a school’s duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of its pupils
- Sections 88-94 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, which require schools to regulate pupils’ behaviour and publish a behaviour policy and written statement of behaviour principles, and give schools the authority to confiscate pupils’ property
- DfE guidance explaining that maintained schools must publish their behaviour policy online

## 2. Values and Beliefs

- Child centred approaches, where the child's voice is central and where plans utilise their strengths, resources and qualities are integral to success.
- High levels of nurture and empathy, with containment and structure, support children to feel safe. Children need clear boundaries, predictable routines, consistent expectations and regulated responses to behaviour.
- Natural consequences that can follow certain behaviours should be made explicit, if sanctions are deemed necessary then they should not be of the type that shames and ostracises children from their peers, school community and family, leading to potentially more negative behaviour. Responses to behaviour should ensure that children feel safe and that all needs are met.
- Relational, regulatory and restorative approaches are more effective in supporting the development of internal control and regulation. Not all behaviours are a matter of choice and therefore external control will not be effective in changing behaviour.
- Punitive approaches and exclusion may re-traumatise children and further embed the behaviours causing concern. Theory and research on attachment, neuroscience and adverse childhood experiences advocate the use of relational and restorative approaches.

### 2.1 Viewing behaviour as a learning process

We believe that what we reward, is the behaviour that we will achieve.

At our school, we accept and understand behaviour as a learning process. Children will push limits, boundaries, and societal norms as part of their development. They may also react in different ways to stress, boredom, lack of understanding, over-excitement, and disappointment. At our school staff view that most behaviour mistakes are understandable within context.

This means that we offer support, help and guidance to the children so they can learn from their mistakes and improve for next time just as we would in any area of the curriculum. It is our role, as fully developed adults, to help guide children and young people, to make helpful and positive choices when they can, by listening to them and explaining the impact their behaviour has on others (known as co-regulation).

We know that this is the best way to respond to our children's behaviour and maintain our relationship with them. The approach we strive for is based on the premise of 'connection before correction'.

Sometimes children do not learn from their behavioural interventions and they and sometimes their families actively reject this or have their own normative values which reject the school ethos. This is the point where further interventions will not be successful. The school reserves the right to take higher levels of behaviour sanctions.

## 3. Definitions

Pupils deserve to feel safe at school, and this feeling of safety is maintained most prominently by consistency from adults. In this policy we also refer to 'behaviour for learning'; we define 'behaviour for learning' as the attitudes which pupils show towards their learning and 'behaviour' as the way in which we conduct ourselves at all times.

**Misbehaviour** is defined as:

- Disruption in lessons, in corridors between lessons, and at break and lunchtimes
- Non-completion of classwork or homework
- Poor attitude towards work or relationships with others
- Incorrect uniform

**Serious misbehaviour** is defined as:

- Repeated breaches of the school rules when this is a conscious choice
- Any form of bullying

- Sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration, or sexual assault (intentional sexual touching without consent)
- Sexual harassment, meaning unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, such as:
  - Sexual comments
  - Sexual jokes or taunting
  - Physical behaviour like interfering with clothes
  - Online sexual harassment such as unwanted sexual comments and messages (including on social media), sharing of nude or semi-nude images and/or videos, or sharing of unwanted explicit content
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or discriminatory behaviour
- Vandalism
- Theft
- Fighting
- Smoking/Vaping
- Possession of any prohibited items. These are:
  - Knives or weapons
  - Alcohol
  - Illegal drugs
  - Stolen items
  - Tobacco and cigarette papers
  - Fireworks
  - Pornographic images
  - Any article a staff member reasonably suspects has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence, or to cause personal injury to, or damage to the property of, any person (including the pupil)

*N.B. If you are reading this as a parent/carer, much of this is taken from DFE guidelines and is not common at all in Primary Schools, but we must be clear about these things to be compliant in this policy. This list may not be exhaustive.*

## 4. Bullying

Bullying is wrong and damages individual pupils. We, therefore, do all we can to prevent it, by developing a school ethos in which bullying is regarded as unacceptable.

Bullying is defined as the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. We use **Several Times On Purpose** so children and parent / carers understand what this means. STOP!

Bullying is, therefore:

- Deliberately hurtful
- Repeated, often over a period of time
- Difficult to defend against

We will take a thorough individual and systematic approach to reducing bullying and deal with problems that occur. The result should be that all pupils feel valued and respected at school.

Bullying can include:

TYPE OF BULLYING	DEFINITION
Emotional	Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
Physical	Hitting, kicking, pushing, taking another's belongings, any use of violence
Prejudice-based and discriminatory, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Racial</li> <li>• Faith-based</li> <li>• Gendered (sexist)</li> <li>• Homophobic/biphobic</li> <li>• Transphobic</li> <li>• Disability-based</li> </ul>	Taunts, gestures, graffiti or physical abuse focused on a particular characteristic (e.g. gender, race, sexuality)
Sexual	Explicit sexual remarks, display of sexual material, sexual gestures, unwanted physical attention, comments about sexual reputation or performance, or inappropriate touching
Direct or indirect verbal	Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
Cyber-bullying	Bullying that takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites

Details of our school's approach to preventing and addressing bullying are set out in our anti-bullying policy. Our one-page Anti Bullying Policy is shared with children and can be found in Appendix 3.

Bullying is not to be confused with clumsy language, mutual rough play, ingroup identity issues, or a child who does not want to play with a child because they are doing something else. Much of what is described to us as bullying is children competing during "one-upmanship" conflict, two-sided "tit for tat" disagreements, or a child wanting to play with someone else. These issues still need to be dealt with and are often actually more complex than straight one-sided bullying. (See Appendix 4)

It is essential that parents encourage their children to speak up at school if bullying occurs and that the school fosters an atmosphere of mutual trust so children feel safe to use the worry boxes around school and the worry box on the website.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for reviewing and approving the written statement of behaviour principles (Appendix 1).

The governing board will also review this behaviour policy in conjunction with the headteacher and monitor the policy's effectiveness, holding the headteacher to account for its implementation.

### 5.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for reviewing this behaviour policy in conjunction with the governing board giving due consideration to the school's statement of behaviour principles (Appendix 1). The headteacher will also approve and set the example in processing this policy.

The headteacher will ensure that the school environment encourages positive behaviour and that staff deal effectively with poor behaviour and will monitor how staff implement this policy to ensure rewards and sanctions are applied consistently.

The headteacher will report behaviour incidents and pastoral interventions to the Governing Board.

### **5.3 Staff**

Staff are responsible for:

- Implementing the behaviour policy consistently
- Modelling positive behaviour
- Providing a personalised approach to the specific behavioural needs of particular pupils
- Recording behaviour incidents accurately and in a timely manner

The senior leadership team will support staff in responding to behaviour incidents.

### **5.4 Parents**

Parents are expected to:

- Support their child in adhering to the dress code and “Golden Rules” of the school
- Inform the school as soon as possible of any changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s behaviour
- Discuss any behavioural concerns with the class teacher promptly (home or school issues)
- Support the school in maintaining good behaviour and discipline
- Be good role models themselves
- Support the diversity within our school
- Understand that their child may not give the whole truth first time and when approaching school staff, come to request an investigation or to ask questions, not to demand immediate action on what their child has told them
- Understand that “my child always tells the truth” is unfeasible because all children are capable of giving their version of the truth or selective truth.

## **6. Pupil code of conduct**

Our “Golden Rules” (Appendix 2) are posted up around the school and encourage respect, politeness, good listening, trying hard and moving around school in a sensible manner.

## **7. Consequences**

Consequences are a useful response to behaviours, remembering that some behaviours result in positive consequences. When responding to unwanted behaviour, the consequences we use in our school always have a clear link to the incident and help the child or young person to learn how to behave more appropriately should a similar situation occur, tailoring this to the needs of the individual.

Positive consequences/rewards will involve but are not limited to:

- Verbal praise.
- Positive marking by highlighting successes in pink so the pupils know how to do well next time.
- Stickers, marbles and house points are given out during lessons.

- Lunchtime supervisors give stickers to pupils for following our “Golden Rules” random acts of kindness, helping others or being a good example.
- House points in the form of marbles collected in class – house reward each half term.
- Weekly praise assembly – habits of mind certificates
- KS1 staff award certificates in a termly parent/carer assembly
- Headteacher Award - golden sticker
- SIMS messages to the whole community for significant community achievements

The school may use one or more of the following negative consequences/sanctions in response to unacceptable behaviour:

- Verbal reprimand or explanation about why the behaviour is inappropriate
- Missing parts of playtimes or dinner times to complete work not finished due to lack of effort in class
- Escalation to a more senior member of staff if a verbal reprimand is not being acted upon
- Meeting with parent/carers
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Written parenting or pupil agreement
- In certain circumstances, legal and correctly brokered, implementation of a reduced timetable
- Temporary or periodic exclusion for repeated or serious breaches of school discipline
- In some circumstances referral to
- Referral to a Pupil Referral Unit, Local Authority Inclusion Team, or specialist behaviour setting
- Permanent exclusion in rare and exceptional circumstances as a sanction of last resort

We will use temporary or permanent exclusion as a rare sanction. Exclusion is more likely if a pupil poses a significant risk to staff, pupils or themselves i.e., their behaviour risk cannot be controlled by usual methods.

Exclusion is more likely if the pupil’s behaviour is being normalised or encouraged or if school efforts are ignored by their parents/carers because these issues are more difficult to resolve by usual disciplinary measures. A permanent exclusion will indicate that the pupil needs more specialist provision or a “new start”.

Managed moves can be brokered by the Local Authority if a new start is seen as being best for all. The school will not unilaterally decide this and asking a family to “move on” without this being properly co-ordinated indicates that a school is not following its responsibilities. The school will follow DFE guidelines on managed moves.

N.B. If we feel as though a pupil is a danger to themselves or others, we may supervise them at difficult times (usually lunchtime). This is not necessarily discipline or sanction, it is a Health and Safety assessment and avoidance of risk.

We will not routinely ban a pupil from school trips, visits or after-school activities for poor behaviour in school. However, any Health and Safety issues over-ride other issues. If a pupil’s behaviour is not safe for themselves or others, they will not be permitted to do that activity if the risk outweighs the benefit. If a pupil’s behaviour is poor during non-statutory schooling e.g., an after-school club, the school reserves the right to ask that pupil not to attend for a specific period of time. There will be no refund on monies paid if this is the case because we do not get a refund from external clubs.

## 7.1 Taking a Restorative Approach

Applying a restorative framework following conflict or when incidents have taken place can be hugely successful in promoting understanding and learning. This approach supports children to develop greater understanding, empathy and take responsibility for their actions and their consequences.

Using a restorative framework for maintaining boundaries and working with behaviours which are not acceptable involves working with the child to consider the following:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking?
- How were you feeling?
- Who else has been affected by this?
- What do you need, and what needs to happen now, so that the harm can be repaired?

This framework needs to be embedded in everyday interactions and classroom practice, from making time to talk, the PSHE curriculum and circle time.

Following incidents where harm has been caused, time needs to be spent sharing understanding and coming to an outcome which helps to repair relationships. This involves an encounter between those involved where a restorative exploration is used. There are a variety of structures for this type of restorative work including; restorative mediation, problem-solving circles and restorative conferencing.

Following the use of a restorative exploration it can be helpful for the adults to reflect on;

- What was the behaviour communicating?
- How are the unmet needs being addressed?
- What skills does the child need to develop?
- What additional learning opportunities are in place to enable this?
- What suggestions do the children have to support the repairing of the relationship?

When it is felt that an encounter between those harmed and those who have been harmed is not deemed to be beneficial it can be helpful to use restorative exploration with the child who has harmed individually. This needs careful support and judgement from the adult as they need to ensure the child feels safe and secure and does not experience shame.

Children who have experienced trauma may find it hard to connect with their own feelings and think about the feelings of others. A helpful way forward will be to focus on supporting the child to repair the relationship, including restorative action.

Pastoral leads can support other members of staff as well as lead on complex restorative encounters and individual restorative explorations.

## 7.2 Zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and sexual violence

The school will ensure that all incidents of sexual harassment and/or violence are met with a suitable response, and never ignored.

Reports of sexual violence and sexual harassment are likely to be complex and, therefore, require difficult professional decisions to be made, often quickly and under pressure. Guidance from the DfE is clear that it does not attempt to provide (nor would it be possible to provide) detailed advice on what we should do in any or every particular case; it provides effective safeguarding practices and principles for us to consider in our decision-making process.

Ultimately, all decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis. The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and deputies will take the leading role and will use their professional judgement, supported by other agencies, such as children's social care and the police as required.

Pupils are encouraged to report anything that makes them uncomfortable, no matter how 'small' they feel it might be.



The school's response will be:

- Proportionate
- Considered
- Supportive
- Decided on a case-by-case basis

The school has procedures in place to respond to any allegations or concerns regarding a child's safety or wellbeing. These include clear processes for:

- Responding to a report
- Carrying out risk assessments,

And where appropriate, to help determine whether to:

- Manage the incident internally
- Refer to early help
- Refer to children's social care
- Report to the police

Please refer to our Safeguarding policy for more information and see the flow chart in Appendix 3.

### **7.3 Off-site behaviour**

Negative consequences and sanctions may be applied where a pupil has misbehaved off-site when representing the school, such as on a school trip or on the way to or from school. If online bullying occurs off site and evidence is given to the school of this, the school will mediate with both sets of parents/carers and between children. IT solutions may be part of the advice given e.g. blocking. The school reserves the right to inform the Police if laws have been broken and the school feels as though an external view is sought.

### **7.4 Malicious allegations**

Where a pupil makes an allegation against a member of staff and that allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the school will discipline the pupil in accordance with this policy.

Where a pupil makes an allegation of sexual violence or sexual harassment against another pupil and that allegation is shown to have been deliberately invented or malicious, the school will discipline the pupil in accordance with this policy.

In all cases where an allegation is determined to be unsubstantiated, unfounded, false or malicious, the school (in collaboration with the local authority designated officer, where relevant) will consider whether the pupil who made the allegation is in need of help, or the allegation may have been a "cry for help". If so, a referral to children's social care may be appropriate.

The school will also consider the pastoral needs of staff and pupils accused of misconduct.

Please refer to our Safeguarding policy and Managing Allegations Policy for more information on responding to allegations of abuse against staff or other pupils.

## **8. Behaviour management**

### **8.1 Classroom and playground management**

Teaching and support staff are responsible for setting the tone and context for positive behaviour within the classroom. We expect pupils in classrooms to be "on task", to work hard and to avoid disturbing others while they work.

Staff will:

- Create and maintain a stimulating environment that encourages pupils to be engaged
- Display the school “Golden Rules” and their own classroom expectations where these apply
- Develop a positive relationship with pupils, which may include:
  - Greeting pupils individually in the morning/at the start of lessons
  - Establishing clear routines and expectations
  - Communicating expectations of behaviour in ways other than verbally
  - Highlighting and promoting good behaviour
  - Concluding the day positively and starting the next day afresh
  - Having a plan for dealing with low-level disruption
  - Using Collective Worship for important moral messages from established world religions and assemblies for important safety or behaviour messages
  - Using positive consequences as detailed in this policy

## **Playground management**

Behaviour logs show that the time of the day when there are most behaviour incidents is lunchtime. We ask children to play within physical boundaries, without hurting each other and being mindful of those in their vicinity.

We stop rough and overly physical play because it escalates. This includes pushing games, grabbing clothing, pushing or pulling each other or shouting aggressively.

We expect adults to intervene when children do not follow this rule.

The expectations for behaviour at lunchtime are the same as at other times of the school day and staff are expected to uphold the rules using the positive and negative consequences systems, this includes during wet playtimes in class where the room is treated as a classroom not a playground.

### **8.1 Behaviour expectations and pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)**

The culture at Claregate Primary School consistently promotes high standards of behaviour and provides the necessary support to ensure all pupils can achieve and thrive both in and out of the classroom. This includes considering how our whole-school approach meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND so that everyone can feel they belong to our school community and high expectations are maintained for all pupils.

Some behaviours are more likely to be associated with particular types of SEND, such as a pupil with speech, language and communication needs who may not understand verbal instructions. The behaviour will often need to be considered in relation to a pupil’s SEND, although it does not follow that every incident of misbehaviour will be connected to their SEND.

All pupils’ behaviour must be managed effectively, whether or not the pupil has underlying needs. When a pupil is identified as having SEND, the graduated approach should be used to assess, plan, deliver and then review the impact of the support being provided.

Where necessary and proportionate, we will seek advice and observations from outreach services and we will often cooperate with external agencies who wish to observe in school (usually from medical or speech services).

Staff will, as far as possible, anticipate likely triggers of misbehaviour and put in place support to prevent these. This could include:

- short, planned movement breaks for a pupil whose SEND means that they find it difficult to sit still for long
- adjusting seating plans to allow a pupil with visual or hearing impairment to sit in sight of the teacher

- adjusting uniform requirements for a pupil with sensory issues or who has severe eczema
- training for staff in understanding conditions such as autism

Any preventative measure should take into account the specific learning needs of the individual.

## 8.2 Positive Handling and Physical restraint

At Claregate Primary School we make sure we are aware of our duties of care and follow the law. The law states that it is permissible to use reasonable force to prevent committing an offence, injuring themselves or others, or damaging property, and to maintain good order and discipline in the classroom.

The use of physical intervention techniques is only one aspect of co-regulation and is usually the last resort when it is deemed absolutely necessary. It may resolve a short-term situation, but the long-term aim must be to help the child or young person to be able to self-regulate during times of stress.

If physical interventions are necessary, the actions that we take aim to use the minimum amount of force necessary for the minimum amount of time necessary. Where physical intervention is needed, this is recorded on MyConcern and reported immediately to the head teacher.

See Positive Handling Policy which gives justification and circumstances surrounding this.

## 8.3 Confiscation

**Any prohibited items (listed in section 3) found in pupils' possession will be confiscated.** These items will not be returned to pupils.

We will also confiscate any item which is harmful or detrimental to school discipline. These items will be returned to pupils after discussion with senior leaders and parents, if appropriate.

Searching and screening pupils is conducted in line with the DfE's [latest guidance on searching, screening and confiscation](#).

## 8.4 Pupil support

The school recognises its legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 to prevent pupils with a protected characteristic from being at a disadvantage. Consequently, our approach to challenging behaviour may be differentiated to cater to the needs of the pupil.

The school's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Coordinator and/or the Inclusion Leader will evaluate a pupil who exhibits challenging behaviour to determine whether they have any underlying needs that are not currently being met.

Where necessary, support and advice will also be sought from specialist teachers, an educational psychologist, medical practitioners and/or others, to identify or support specific needs.

When acute needs are identified in a pupil, we will liaise with external agencies and plan support programmes for that child. We will work with parents to create the plan and review it on a regular basis.

## 8.5 Safeguarding

The school recognises that changes in behaviour may be an indicator that a pupil is in need of help or protection. We will consider whether a pupil's misbehaviour may be linked to them suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm or neglect. Where this may be the case, we will follow our child protection and safeguarding policy.

## 9. Pupil transition

To ensure a smooth transition to the next year, pupils have transition sessions with their new teacher(s). In addition, staff members hold transition meetings.

To ensure behaviour is continually monitored and the right support is in place, information related to pupil behaviour issues may be transferred to relevant staff at the start of the term or year.

## **10. Training**

Claregate staff are provided with training on managing behaviour and restorative conversations, as part of their induction process and as part of continuing professional development. Some staff will be trained in 'Team teach' positive handling methods

## **11. Monitoring arrangements**

This behaviour policy will be reviewed by the headteacher and full governing board annually. At each review, the policy will be approved by the headteacher.

The written statement of behaviour principles (Appendix 1) will be reviewed and approved by the full governing board annually.

## **12. Links with other policies**

This behaviour policy is linked to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Exclusions policy
- Positive Handling Policy
- Anti Bullying Policy

## Appendix 1

### Claregate Primary School

#### Written statement of behaviour principles

- We expect the behaviour of pupils at Claregate School to be exemplary and outstanding
- Good behaviour for learning and discipline is central to good teaching
- We value and recognise acts of respect and consideration to others such as politeness
- Our school motto “Inspire tomorrow today ...” inspires staff to educate and build independent behaviour traits that will benefit them in future life
- Every pupil should understand they have the right to feel safe, valued and respected, and learn free from the disruption of others
- Every pupil should understand that they have a part to play in this and will be held to account where there is poor behaviour
- We will ensure that all pupils, staff and visitors are free from any form of discrimination, intimidation, violence or threat
- We recognise the importance of “protected characteristics” and will champion equality and diversity principles
- Staff and volunteers set an excellent example to pupils at all times
- Rewards and sanctions are used consistently by staff, in line with the behaviour policy
- The behaviour policy is understood by pupils and staff
- Pupils are helped to take responsibility for their own actions and be independently good even if an adult is not present
- Families are involved in behaviour incidents to foster good relationships between the school and pupils’ home life
- In the Early Years we believe in and instil in the pupils that they should have “kind hands, kind feet and kind words”
- Exclusions will only be used as a last resort, and permanent and fixed-term exclusions will be conducted in line with DfE requirements

The governing board also emphasises that violence or threatening behaviour will not be tolerated in any circumstances.

This written statement of behaviour principles is reviewed and approved by the full governing board bi-annually

## **Appendix 2 – Golden rules - to be added**

## **Appendix 3 – One page Anti Bullying Policy - to be added**

## **Appendix 4 - Socialisation, In-group Identity, Interpersonal Relationships and Unkindness (guide for parent carers).**

The language that we use to describe pupils interpersonal relationships is extremely important. The blanket term bullying can be “she looked at me in a funny way” or could be something as serious as assault requiring hospitalisation. When we discuss these issues, it is vital that we acknowledge the level of seriousness and the level of intervention that is required.

Many issues arise from the way that pupils socialise. Many pupils play physically without a lot of talking or oral communication. In these scenarios, pupils often vie for physical dominance or status as skilful. Competition is often tangible (which is fine if you win and isn't if you lose) or seek dominance and don't get it. These are the “slings and arrows” of life and nobody has a right to be the “top dog”. Status is also an ever-shifting concept.

Others play in a group and a clear social hierarchy emerges, with pupils taking on different roles. Leadership such as who chooses which games to play and which person is allowed to play can cause upset and friction. “In group identity” and creating strong bonds by leaving another pupil out is very hurtful to pupils. This can be bullying if it carries on over a period of time. It is however usually transient and short-lived with the “in group” shifting and changing rapidly.

The most common year groups for these issues are years 2 to 4 when pupils are making and losing friends on almost a daily basis. This is human nature and is present in all schools. That does not mean that we will not intervene, try to influence friendships or be influential. We always try to shape good friendships in school. Understanding the needs of others, turn-taking and sharing is a developmental issue. Pupils are not born with this - they learn and develop this over time through strong adult role models and behavioural strategies. Tolerance, understanding and a sense of justice develop as time goes by and at different rates for different pupils.

We are committed as a school to shaping positive socialisation and mitigating the effects of in-group problems and parents/carers should contact us to tell us how their pupil is feeling, without feeling that it is necessarily a disciplinary matter or a complaint. We are wise and experienced practitioners, and we will listen to each case and decide how best to intervene. All concerns will be logged centrally so we can monitor patterns of behaviour and follow up incidents no matter how minor they may appear. Acorns grow into trees!