

Handling incidents of bullying and harassment in schools

Incident occurs

Staff member reports bullying or harassment (may involve pupils, parents, colleagues, or others)

Initial response

Support affected staff by directing them to appropriate support (employee assistance programme or trade union representative)

Check relevant policy:

- Staff member is alleged perpetrator → staff behaviour policy or code of conduct
- Pupil is alleged perpetrator → school behaviour policy
- Parent is alleged perpetrator → parental code of conduct or home school agreement or social media policy

Determine if incident meets bullying or harassment criteria in school policy (behaviour policy should define violence)

Consider whether police involvement is required (Refer to [NPCC guidance](#) or [Police.uk](#))

Decide investigation lead

- If victim **is not** headteacher or nominated lead → they manage the case with support from governing body and trustees, as outlined in school policies
- If victim **is** headteacher or nominated lead → check what is appropriate under school policies

Consider nature of incident, pupil and parent involvement, and proportionality of response

Follow staff behaviour policy or code of conduct

Can the case be resolved informally with victim's agreement?

If not, consider:

- formal procedures, such as disciplinary action
- [Acas mediation](#)

For serious misconduct, consider referral to [TRA](#)

Bullying or harassment by a pupil:

- Resolve under school behaviour policy, involving victim where appropriate
- Apply sanctions that are fair, consistent, and proportionate

If escalation is necessary:

- Consider police involvement if the incident could be a criminal offence
- Repeated harassment of two or more incidents can be reported - **do not delay reporting to gather evidence**

Bullying or harassment by a parent:

- Resolve as appropriate using mediation, verbal or written warnings, barring from the school site or reporting to police

If an incident becomes a coordinated campaign (for example, there are serial complaints from a parent):

- Refer to complaints guidance for [academies](#) and [maintained schools](#)