

Excel Learning Trust

Anti-Bullying Policy - Secondary Phase

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Renewal Date:	July 2028

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This policy sets out how our secondary schools prevent, identify and respond to bullying so that all pupils feel safe, respected and able to learn.
- 1.2 This policy should be read alongside the Trust's Behaviour Policy – Secondary Phase, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Equalities Policy, and Online Safety Policy.
- 1.3 This policy supports the Behaviour Policy's aim of ensuring:
 - A calm, orderly and disruption-free learning environment
 - High expectations of behaviour and respect
 - Consistent responses to unacceptable behaviour, including bullying and discriminatory behaviour
- 1.4 Bullying is not tolerated in any form. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.
- 1.5 The school recognises that bullying may constitute peer-on-peer abuse and will be addressed within the school's safeguarding framework in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

2. Aims

- 2.1 The aims of this policy are to:
 - Prevent bullying through a whole-school culture of respect and inclusion
 - Ensure all pupils understand what bullying is
 - Provide clear procedures for reporting and responding to bullying
 - Ensure consistent responses and appropriate sanctions
 - Provide support for both victims and perpetrators
 - Ensure compliance with statutory guidance and safeguarding responsibilities.

3. Legislative and Guidance Framework

- 3.1 This policy is informed by legislation and guidance including:

- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- Behaviour in Schools (2024) guidance from the Department for Education
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) guidance from the Department for Education
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) statutory safeguarding guidance from the Department for Education
- Searching, Screening and Confiscation (2022) guidance
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

- 3.2 In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), the school recognises that bullying can be a form of peer-on-peer abuse and may overlap with safeguarding concerns such as sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour, discriminatory abuse or exploitation.
- 3.3 All staff understand that safeguarding and child protection are everyone's responsibility and that concerns about bullying must be considered in the context of a pupil's wider safety and welfare.
- 3.4 The school also fulfils duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

4. Links to the Behaviour Policy

- 4.1 This policy complements the school Behaviour Policy by:
- Defining bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
 - Using the same systems of expectations, rewards and sanctions
 - Supporting the Behaviour Policy's focus on safe and inclusive environments
 - Applying reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND
 - Following Behaviour Policy procedures where sanctions are necessary.
- 4.2 Serious bullying incidents may also involve safeguarding procedures under the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

5. Definition of Bullying

- 5.1 Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that is:
- Repeated, or likely to be repeated.
 - Intended to hurt or harm
 - Involves a power imbalance (physical, social, psychological or online).
- 5.2 Bullying involves repeated, intentional behaviour that causes harm, distress, or intimidation to another person, often where there is an imbalance of power. While isolated incidents of unkind or inappropriate behaviour will still be addressed under the Behaviour Policy, they are not classified as bullying unless the behaviour is persistent or forms a pattern over time.

5.3 Bullying may include:

Verbal bullying

- Name-calling
- Threats
- Insults
- Racist, sexist, homophobic or transphobic language

Physical bullying

- Hitting
- Pushing
- Kicking
- Damage to property

Social or relational bullying

- Excluding others
- Spreading rumours
- Public humiliation

Cyberbullying

- Abuse through social media
- Online harassment
- Sharing images without consent
- Group messaging exclusion or harassment

Prejudice-based bullying related to:

- Race
- Religion
- Disability
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Special educational needs.

Such incidents may also be recorded as prejudice-related incidents.

6. Signs of Bullying

6.1 Staff should be alert to indicators including:

- Withdrawal or anxiety
- Unexplained injuries
- Missing belongings
- Changes in attendance
- Decline in academic performance
- Reluctance to attend school

- Changes in behaviour.

6.2 Any concerns should be reported to the relevant pastoral staff or safeguarding team.

6.3 Staff should also be alert to indicators that bullying may be linked to wider safeguarding concerns, including:

- Sudden changes in friendships or peer groups
- Evidence of controlling or coercive peer behaviour
- Sexually inappropriate language or behaviour
- Pupils sharing or requesting sexual images
- Signs of online exploitation or grooming.

Where these indicators are present, staff must follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

7. Preventing Bullying

7.1 The school adopts a whole-school preventative approach, including:

Culture and ethos

- Promoting respect and kindness through the school behaviour expectations
- Clear communication that bullying is unacceptable
- Positive role modelling by staff.

Curriculum - Bullying prevention is addressed through:

- PSHE and Relationships Education
- Assemblies
- Tutor time programmes
- Online safety education.

Student voice

- Student Leadership involvement
- Pupil feedback
- Peer support where appropriate.

Staff training - Staff receive training on:

- Recognising bullying
- Responding effectively
- Safeguarding links
- Recording incidents
- Trust-wide emotion coaching

Online safety - Education about responsible digital behaviour and cyberbullying is embedded across the curriculum.

8. Reporting Bullying

8.1 Pupils can report bullying to:

- Any member of staff
- Form tutor or pastoral staff
- Progress Leader
- Safeguarding team
- Senior Leadership Team
- Safeguarding@ email address

8.2 Parents and carers can report concerns via:

- Contacting pastoral staff
- Emailing the school
- Speaking to the safeguarding team.

All reports will be taken seriously.

9. Responding to Bullying

9.1.1 When bullying is reported, the school will:

a) Investigate -

Staff will:

- Gather statements
- Speak to all pupils involved
- Review evidence where appropriate.

b) Record - Incidents will be recorded according to school behaviour and safeguarding procedures.

c) Respond

Responses may include:

- Restorative conversations
- Sanctions in line with the Behaviour Policy
- Parental contact
- Pastoral interventions
- Referrals to external agencies

All bullying incidents must be recorded in line with school behaviour and safeguarding procedures. Where there is a safeguarding element, the concern must also be recorded on the school's safeguarding system to ensure appropriate oversight by the safeguarding team.

d) Monitor

All stakeholders will work collaboratively to support the student.

e) Staff

- Record and monitor incidents, patterns of behaviour, and outcomes of interventions to ensure appropriate action is taken.
- Provide support to the students involved and review progress regularly to assess whether the intervention is effective.
- Communicate with parents/carers and relevant staff to ensure concerns are shared and monitored consistently.

f) Students

- Report concerns about bullying to a trusted member of staff and seek support when needed.
- Engage with agreed support strategies or interventions put in place to help resolve the situation.
- Respect others and contribute to creating a safe and inclusive environment.

g) Parents/Carers

- Inform the school of any concerns about bullying and share relevant information that may help staff understand the situation.
- Work collaboratively with the school to support agreed strategies or interventions.
- Monitor their child's wellbeing and maintain communication with the school regarding progress.

h) Safeguarding Screening

When bullying is reported, staff will consider whether the behaviour may constitute peer-on-peer abuse under safeguarding guidance.

Concerns that involve sexual harassment, sexual violence, exploitation, hate incidents or significant harm will be referred immediately to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and managed in accordance with the school's Child Protection Policy and KCSIE.

10. Sanctions

10.1 Sanctions will follow the school's Behaviour Policy and may include:

- Warnings
- Detentions
- Removal from lessons
- Reflection
- Suspension

- Permanent exclusion (in serious or repeated cases).

- 10.2 Sanctions will be proportionate, consistent and fair, and decisions will be made in line with Department for Education guidance using the balance of probabilities standard. This means the school will determine what is most likely to have happened based on the available evidence.
- 10.3 Due to data protection and confidentiality requirements, the school will not share specific sanctions or outcomes for other students involved in a bullying incident. However, parents/carers will be assured that the matter has been investigated and addressed in line with the school's Behaviour Policy.

11. Support for Victims

11.1 Support may include:

- Pastoral support
- Mentoring
- Check-ins with staff
- Support plans
- Safeguarding intervention if required.
- External agency referrals

Where bullying impacts a pupil's wellbeing or safety, the school may consider Early Help support or safeguarding intervention to ensure the pupil's needs are addressed. The school will endeavour to make pupils feel safe and supported following incidents.

12. Support for Pupils Who Bully

12.1 The school aims to change behaviour as well as apply sanctions.

Support may include:

- Behaviour mentoring
- Restorative work
- Reflection tasks
- Behaviour contracts
- Referral to pastoral or external support services.

13. Cyberbullying

13.1 The school recognises that bullying may occur online.

13.2 Where cyberbullying impacts pupils or the school environment, the school may apply sanctions under the Behaviour Policy where behaviour occurs:

- On school premises
- While travelling to/from school
- Online where it affects the school community.

13.3 This reflects the school's authority to address behaviour beyond the school gate, as outlined in the Behaviour Policy. Where it impacts the calm and inclusive culture within school.

14. Safeguarding

- 14.1 The school recognises that some bullying incidents may constitute peer-on-peer abuse, which is addressed in Keeping Children Safe in Education.

This can include:

- Sexual harassment
 - Sexual violence
 - Harmful sexual behaviour
 - Discriminatory or prejudice-based bullying
 - Online abuse or exploitation
 - Coercive or controlling peer behaviour.
- 14.2 Staff must never dismiss abusive behaviour between pupils as “banter” or part of growing up.
- 14.3 Where a safeguarding risk is identified:
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will be informed immediately
 - Concerns will be recorded on the school’s safeguarding system
 - Appropriate action will be taken, which may include early help, pastoral support, risk assessment or referral to external agencies.

15. Monitoring and Evaluation

- 15.1 The school will monitor bullying through:
- Behaviour records
 - Safeguarding logs
 - Pupil surveys
 - Parental feedback.
- 15.2 Senior leaders will review data regularly to ensure effective prevention and response.

16. Roles and Responsibilities

- Principal - Ensure the policy is implemented consistently.
- Senior Leaders - Monitor bullying incidents and ensure appropriate responses.
- Staff - Challenge bullying and report concerns promptly by:
 - Challenging and reporting bullying promptly
 - Recording incidents accurately
 - Giving consideration as to whether bullying behaviour may represent peer-on-peer abuse
 - Reporting safeguarding concerns immediately to the DSL in accordance with KCSIE.
- Pupils - Treat others with respect and report bullying.
- Parents and carers - Work with the school to address concerns.