Anti–Bullying Policy

GoCreate Taunton CIC

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our young people so they can live and learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable. If bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectiively. We are a TELLING company. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. This policy has been writen with reference to the DfE guidance on Preventng and tackling bullying and should be read in conjuncton with the behaviour policy.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It might be motiivated by actual differences between children, or perceived diffferences. Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously the first priority but emotiional bullying can be more damaging than physical; educators and adults have to make their own judgements about each specific case.

Bullying can be:

Emotiional - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding possessions, threatening gestures)
Physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
Racist - racial taunts, graffit, gestures
Cyber – bullying via technology
Sexual/sexist - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
Homophobic - because of, or focussing on the issue of sexuality
Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, ostracising children

Homophobic Bullying

Homophobic bullying usually occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender people. Schools have a legal duty to ensure homophobic bullying is dealt with in schools. It may be this type of bullying is hard to identiify because it may be going on in secret. Sometiimes pupils may not want to tell about it in case their sexuality is presumed due to the bullying and it may not be an issue they have dealt with themselves.

Bullying around Race, Religion or Culture

GoCreate Taunton CIC believes in promoting an environment based on a respectful and tolerant understanding of the diverse culture in our community both locally and natonally. We wish to create an ethos where racist bullying rarely happens and is dealt with seriously, acknowledging in a faith school that all faith communitiies are equally valued through education, practice and shared humanity.
Any racist incidents are immediately referred to the Head teacher who will follow the "Guidelines and Procedures for dealing with Racist Incidents."

Prevention

We will use various methods for helping young people to prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- writing a set of rules
- signing an anti-bullying contract
- writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to them
- making up role-plays
- having discussions about bullying and why it mattters

Reactiive Strategies

Sanctions will be fair, proportiionate, consistent, and reasonable and take account of Special Needs. Once details are obtained, the purpose should always be that an explanation is given to the bully to reinforce that their actiion is inappropriate in order that the likelihood of re-occurrence is reduced.
Bullies should always be held to account for their behaviour. Facing up to the consequences of why their actions were inappropriate, and to understand the repercussions of their actions and given the chance to make amends. The victiim should be given strategies appropriate to their needs which may include; peer mentoring, extra supervision, befriending, counselling or support group work.

Signs and Symptoms

A young person may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a young person:

- is frightened at any time
- does not want to take part in activitiies with others
- changes their usual routine
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning
- begins to do poorly in school work
- has clothes torn or property damaged
- has possessions go "missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or young people
- stops eating

- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Young people who are bullying need to learn diferent ways of behaving. We all have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Procedures

Report bullying incidents to the DSL. The DSL will investigate the incident and decide on the next best course of action. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staf and social workers will be informed and a meeting will be held. If necessary and appropriate, other authoritiies will be consulted.
The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly.
An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour.

Sanctiions

Sanctions available should depend on the severity of the situatiion and be hierarchal. All cases should be treated individually depending on the effect and circumstances. Actions can be changed but feelings are a personal issue. Those investigating should judge the situatiion using their own professional feelings as well as those of the victiim. They may not always be punitive. Sanctiions could include:

- Parents contacted
- Mediatiion with victiim
- Restoratiive Justiice programs: Restorative practiice plays a large part in preventiing and helping to resolve the conflict.

After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be continuously monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

CYBER-BULLYING?

At GoCreate Taunton CIC we believe that using ICT as a means of bullying is relatively new but incredibly worrying as it reduces the anonymity of the bully, is increasingly diffiicult to stop, but has the capacity to reach a massive audience. When cyberbullying is reported to staff they should try to obtain physical evidence from texts or emails in order to have substantiated evidence. It is vital that staff follow the same reactiive strategies and procedures as outlined further in this document. Sanctiions should be the same as for other types of bullying. As the clarity of cyberbullying may be distorted; there may be many bystanders who become participants and they may not see themselves as being part of the bullying, however, they are stll involved and must be instructed that their involvement may accentuate the level of torment for the victiim.

There are many types of cyber-bullying. Although here may be some of which we are unaware, here are the more common.

1. Text messages —that are threatening or cause discomfort - also included here is "bluejacking" (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using "Bluetooth" wireless technology)
2. Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras - images sent to others to make the victiim feel threatened or embarrassed.

3. Mobile phone calls — silent calls or abusive messages; or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible.
4. Emails — threatening or bullying emails, ofen sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name.
5. Chatroom bullying — menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in web-based chatroom.
6. Instant messaging (IM) — unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversatiions online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger) or Yahoo Chat – although there are others.
7. Bullying via websites/social media — use of blogs and personal websites.

Sexting:

Whilst professionals refer to the issue as 'sexting' there is no clear definitiion of 'sexting'. Many professionals consider sextng to be 'sending or posting sexually suggestiive images, including nude or semi-nude photographs, via mobiles or over the Internet.' Yet when young people are asked 'What does sexting mean to you?' they are more likely to interpret sexting as 'writing and sharing explicit messages with people they know'. Similarly, many parents think of sexting as flirty or sexual text messages rather than images.

On this basis this advice introduces the phrase 'youth produced sexual imagery' and uses this instead of 'sexting.' This is to ensure clarity about the issues this advice addresses.
'Youth produced sexual imagery' best describes the practice because:

- 'Youth produced' includes young people sharing images that they, or another young person, have created of themselves.
- 'Sexual' is clearer than 'indecent.' A judgement of whether something is 'decent' is both a value judgement and dependent on context.
- 'Imagery' covers both still photos and moving videos

Technology allows the user to bully anonymously or from an unknown locatiion, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Cyber-bullying leaves no physical scars so it is, perhaps, less evident to a parent or teacher, but it is highly intrusive and the hurt it causes can be very severe.
Young people are particularly adept at adapting to new technology, an area that can seem a closed world to adults.

Our students should be taught how to:

- Understand how to use these technologies safely and know about the risks and consequences of misusing them.
- Know what to do if they or someone they know are being cyberbullied.
- Report any problems with cyberbullying.
- If they do have a problem, they can talk to the school, parents, the police, the mobile network (for phone) or the Internet Service Provider (ISP) to do something about it.

At GoCreate Taunton, we take this bullying as seriously as other types of bullying and, therefore, will deal with each situatiion individually. The sanctiions agreed throughout the home/school/company are to be used as sanctions for cyberbullies in the same way as any other act of bullying. An episode may result in a simple verbal warning. It might result in further agreed sanctiions. Clearly, more serious cases will result in further sanctions.

Advice for students

The internet can be a fantastic resource but it can also be a dangerous place if you don't keep yourself safe and secure online. It is important to remember that not everyone you may meet on the internet will be who they say they are. So think very carefully about how you use the internet. Never give out your passwords or any private information for example. You must certainly never agree to meet anyone you've

met online – always speak to your parents if you are asked to do so. The internet is also a place where bullying can easily occur. You need to think very carefully about any of the pictures or videos that you post of yourself. This includes items that you may send via text message. If you every receive any kind of abuse online you must tell someone about it, your parents, a teacher or a friend for example.

If you're being bullied by phone or the Internet

Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent, or call an advice line.
Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible.
Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
Don't give out your personal details online - if you're in a chatroom, watch what you say about where you live, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to your carer or teacher as evidence.
If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender.
There's plenty of online advice on how to react to cyberbullying.

Text/video messaging

You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number. To find out how to do this, visit www.wiredsafety.org.

If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider.
Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages. Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
Don't delete messages from cyberbullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence. Text harassment is a crime. If the calls are simply annoying, tell a teacher, or carer. If they are threatening or malicious and they persist, report them to the police, taking with you all the messages you've received.

Phone calls

If you get an abusive or silent phone call, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then hang up or turn your phone off.
Once they realise they can't get you rattled, callers usually get bored and stop bothering you.
Always tell someone else: a teacher, key worker, or carer. Get them to support you and monitor what's going on.
Don't give out personal details such as your phone number to just anyone. And never leave your phone lying around. When you answer your phone, just say 'hello', not your name. If they ask you to confirm your phone number, ask what number they want and then tell them if they've got the right number or not. Use your voicemail to vet your calls. A lot of mobiles display the caller's number. See if you recognise it. If you don't, let it divert to voicemail instead of answering it. And don't leave your name on your voicemail greeting. You could get an adult to record your greetiing. Their voice might stop the caller ringing again. Almost all calls nowadays can be traced.
If the problem continues, think about changing your phone number.
If you receive calls that scare or trouble you, make a note of the times and dates and report them to the police. If your mobile can record calls, take the recording too.

Emails

Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted emails ('flames') — the sender wants a response, so don't give them that satisfaction.
Keep the emails as evidence. And tell an adult about them.
Never reply to someone you don't know, even if there's an option to 'unsubscribe'. Replying simply confirms your email address as a real one.

Web bullying
If the bullying is on a website, tell a teacher or parent/carer, just as you would if the bullying was face-to-face – even if you don't know the bully's identty.
Serious bullying should be reported to the police - for example threats of a physical or sexual nature. Your carer or teacher will help you do this.

Chat rooms and instant messaging
Never give out your name, address, phone number, or password online. It's a good idea to use a nickname. And don't give out photos of yourself.
Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know. Remember it might not just be people your own age in a chat room.
Stick to public areas in chat rooms and get out if you feel uncomfortable.
Tell your carers if you feel uncomfortable or worried about anything that happens in a chat room.
Think carefully about what you write; don't leave yourself open to bullying.
Don't ever give out passwords to your mobile or email account.

Three steps to stay out of harm's way

1. Respect other people - online and off.
2. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including their phone numbers and passwords. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm – and ignore them.
3. 'Do as you would be done by.' Think how you would feel if you were bullied? You're responsible for your own behaviour – make sure you don't distress other people or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

Signed by:

Jenny Keogh

CEO GoCreate Taunton Date: 11th September 2025

This policy is reviewed annually and may be amended at any point. Due date for review 25 Sept 2026.