

Anti-Bullying Policy

All children and young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

All pupils should feel able to tell and when bullying behaviour is brought to our attention, prompt and effective action will be taken. We are a **TELLING** alternative provision. This means that **anyone** who is aware of any type of bullying that is taking place is expected to tell a member of staff immediately.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986
- Communications Act 2003
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Education Act 2011
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'
- DfE (2018) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2021)'
- DfE (2020) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following provisions policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- E-Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- PSHE Including RSE and Health Education Policy
- Exclusion Policy

What is Bullying?

Bullying is defined as deliberately hurtful or offensive behaviour, usually repeated over a period that intentionally hurts, harms, humiliates or causes distress to an individual or group of people.

"Bullying behaviour abuses an imbalance of power to repeatedly and intentionally cause emotional or physical harm to another person or group of people. Isolated instances of hurtful behaviour, teasing or arguments between individuals would not be seen as bullying" (Torfaen definition 2008)

Bullying can take place in the classroom, playground, toilets, on the journey to and from alternative provision, on residential trips and cyberspace. It can take place in group activities and between families in the local community. Next Steps ED CIC will respond to all bullying reports that are made whether the bullying takes place within alternative provision or outside of alternative provision time.

The main types of Bullying are: -

Verbal

Which may include name-calling, ridicule, threats of physical violence and hurtful personal comments ranging across a broad spectrum that may include references to intelligence, appearance and physical strength, as well as racial, religious, cultural, sexual, sexist, gender, cross-gender, homophobic, special educational needs, and disability issues together with personal circumstances such as being adopted or being a carer for others. Verbal bullying may be communicated directly by spoken comments and written notes, and by cyber-technology (social websites, mobile phones, text messages, images and email).

Physical

This may include deliberate jostling, physical violence, pushing, kicking, hitting, punching, slapping or any form of violence.

Indirect

For example, when groups of pupils' acts with the intention of excluding individuals from their friends or normal situations, tormenting, spreading rumours, being unfriendly (e.g. hiding bags or books)

Cyber

All areas of internet misuse, such as nasty and/or threatening emails, misuse of blogs, gaming websites, internet chat rooms and instant messaging, mobile threats by text messaging & calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities.

Although not an exhaustive list, common examples of bullying include:

- Racial bullying
- Homophobic bullying
- Bullying based on disability, ability, gender, appearance or circumstance

Next Steps ED CIC is committed to preventing and responding effectively to the bullying of protected and vulnerable groups of children including disabled children / children with SEN, those who are or perceived to be LGBT, race and religion targeted, sexist and sexual bullying in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Why is it Important to respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be bullied. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are carrying out the bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Alternative provisions have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying.

Objectives of this Policy

- All directors, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should understand what bullying is.
- All directors and teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the alternative provision policy is on bullying and follow it when bullying is reported.
- All pupils and parents should know what the alternative provision policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises.

The aim of the Anti-Bullying Policy is to ensure that pupils learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed will pupils be able to fully benefit from the opportunities available at the Company.

As an alternative provision we take bullying seriously. Pupils and parents should be assured that they will be supported when bullying is reported, and bullying will not be tolerated.

All pupils, parents and staff are urged to assist us in combating bullying, in order to make the provision a safe and pleasant environment for all.

Signs and symptoms of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from alternative provision. Pupils must be encouraged to report bullying in alternative provisions.

Many children and young people do not speak out when being bullied and may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and should investigate if a child:

- is frightened of walking to or from alternative provision
- doesn't want to go on the alternative provision / public bus
- begs to be driven to alternative provision
- changes their usual routine
- is unwilling to go to alternative provision (alternative provision phobic)
- begins to truant
- 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
- uses excuses to miss alternative provision (headache, stomach ache etc)
- begins to suffer academically
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has dinner or other monies continually "lost"
- has unexplained cuts or bruises or shows signs of being in a fight
- comes home starving (money / lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- changes their eating habits (stops eating or over eats)
- goes to bed earlier than usual • is unable to sleep
- wets the bed
- is frightened to say what's wrong
- gives unlikely excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- is nervous and jumpy when a text message or email is received

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

Raising awareness

Within the curriculum, Next Steps ED CIC will raise the awareness of the nature of bullying through the following:

- Within the general education curriculum for all subject areas
- Within workshop sessions that are run periodically throughout the year
- Individual discussion between pupils, tutors and parents during/after bullying investigations
- Feedback to staff on bullying investigations, if appropriate, at weekly team meetings

Prevention

We will use some or all of the following to help raise awareness of and prevent bullying. As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing and implementing a set of alternative provision ground rules
- Signing a behaviour contract
- PSHE/ Lessons
- Having regular discussions about bullying and why it matters
- Promote acceptance throughout the alternative provision

We expect staff, whether formally on duty or not, to be alert for signs of bullying at all times and report all signs to Mica Smith.

Preventing peer-on-peer abuse

Next Steps ED CIC has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of peer-on-peer abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that occurs online or offline.

Sexual harassment violates a child's dignity and makes them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated, and can create a hostile, sexualised or offensive environment. If left unchallenged, sexual harassment can create an atmosphere that normalises inappropriate behaviour and may lead to sexual violence.

Sexual violence refers to the three following offences:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if they intentionally penetrate the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with their penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if they intentionally penetrate the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of their body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if they intentionally touch another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

Next Steps Ed Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy outlines our stance on addressing peer-on-peer sexual abuse, and the procedures in place will be adhered to if any instances of sexual harassment or sexual violence be uncovered.

To prevent peer-on-peer abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, Next Step Ed will educate pupils about abuse, its forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and respecting others through the curriculum, assemblies and PSHE lessons.

Next Steps Ed will also ensure that pupils are taught about safeguarding, including online safety, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum in PSHE lessons, relationships education and group sessions. Such content will be specific to age and stage of development, and tackle issues such as the following:

- Healthy relationships
- Respectful behaviour
- Gender roles, stereotyping and equality
- Body confidence and self-esteem
- Prejudiced behaviour
- That sexual violence and sexual harassment is always wrong
- Addressing cultures of sexual harassment

All staff will be aware that pupils of any age and sex are capable of abusing their peers, and will never tolerate abuse as “banter” or “part of growing up”. Staff will also be aware that peer-on-peer abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing-/initiation-type violence.

Where a pupil is found to have been involved in harmful sexual behaviour, Next Steps Ed will help the pupil to move forward from the incident by supporting them in adopting more positive behaviour patterns and attitudes.

All staff will be made aware of the heightened vulnerability of pupils with SEND, who are more likely to be abused than their peers. Staff will not assume that possible indicators of abuse relate to the pupil’s SEND and will always explore indicators further.

Staff will be aware that LGBTQ+ pupils are more likely to be targeted by their peers. In some cases, pupils who are perceived to be LGBTQ+, whether they are or not, can be just as vulnerable to abuse as LGBTQ+ pupils.

Next Steps Ed’s response to sexual violence and sexual harassment between pupils of the same sex will be equally as robust as it is for incidents between pupils of the opposite sex. Pupils will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for reporting concerns about friends or peers.

If a pupil has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children’s social care services (CSCS).

Managing disclosures

Victims will always be taken seriously, reassured, supported and kept safe. Victims will never be made to feel like they are causing a problem or made to feel ashamed.

If a friend of a victim makes a report or a member of staff overhears a conversation, staff will act – they will never assume that someone else will deal with it. The basic principles remain the same as when a victim reports an incident; however, staff will consider why the victim has not chosen to make a report themselves and the discussion will be handled sensitively and with the help of CSCS where necessary.

Staff will report all allegations of abuse against pupils to the DSL. If staff are in any doubt over how to handle an incident or report, they will speak to the DSL.

If a report involves a pupil with SEND, the DSL will record the incident in writing and, working with the SENCO, decide what course of action is necessary, with the best interests of the pupil in mind at all times.

Confidentiality

Next Steps Ed will only engage with staff and agencies required to support the victim and/or be involved in any investigation. If a victim asks the school not to tell anyone about the disclosure, Next Steps Ed will not make this promise. Even without the victim's consent, the information may still be lawfully shared if it is in the public interest and protects children from harm. The school's Pupil Confidentiality Policy will be adhered to at all times.

The DSL will consider the following when making confidentiality decisions:

- Parents will be informed unless it will place the victim at greater risk
- If a pupil is at risk of harm, is in immediate danger or has been harmed, a referral will be made to CSCS
- Rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault are crimes – reports containing any such crimes will be passed to the police

More information regarding the Next Steps E's stance on preventing peer-on-peer sexual abuse is available in our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Cyberbullying

Next Steps Ed has Cyberbullying Procedures in place, which outlines our zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The school views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying and will follow the sanctions set out in this policy if they become aware of any incidents. Next Steps Ed will support pupils who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the pupil about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped. As per Section 94 of the Education Act 2011 which grants schools the power to search,

confiscate and delete files from devices if it relates to cyber bullying or poses a risk to the school community. Next Steps Ed has the right to examine and delete files from students personal devices, e.g. mobile phones, where there is good reason to do so. This power applies to all schools and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone. In these cases, this will be done in accordance with the Education Act (2011).

Preventative action by staff

During lesson:

- Look out for pupils who are unwilling to talk to others, or who are withdrawn.
- Look out for attendance patterns that suggest deliberate avoidance of certain situations.
- Investigate damage to, or frequent unexplained loss of, personal property.
- Some problems may arise if a teacher arrives late for a lesson or leaves before the last pupil, so you must always aim to be in your room to supervise both the entry and departure of the pupils.
- Look out for pupils who are unwilling to talk to others in class, or who are withdrawn.
- Look out for torn clothing, cuts and bruises, particularly when they appear repeatedly during the alternative provision day.

Outside lesson times

The following areas may be vulnerable:

- All areas during recreational time, staff to ensure they are on their allocated zones
- Toilets used by pupils.
- Corridors, especially where pupils have to walk through to gain access to other areas of the building. Jostling is sometimes less than innocent.

Next Steps Ed has committed to the following principles to prevent and respond to bullying

OUR ALTERNATIVE PROVISION:

- listens - all pupils and parents and carers are listened to and influence strategies and approaches to prevent, report and respond to incidents of bullying.

includes us all - all pupils, including those with SEN/Disability, are included, valued and participate fully in all aspects of alternative provision life.

respects - all alternative provision staff are role models to others within the alternative provision in how they treat others.

challenges - all forms of discriminatory language – including disablist language – is challenged and taken seriously

celebrates difference – difference is actively and visibly celebrated and welcome across the whole alternative provision.

understands - all alternative provision staff, pupils and parents and carers understand what bullying is and what it isn't.

believes - all pupils, including disabled children and those with SEN, and their parents and carers are acknowledged, believed and taken seriously when reporting incidents of bullying.

reports bullying - all pupils within the alternative provision and their parents and carers understand how to report incidents of bullying.

takes action - we respond quickly to all incidents of bullying. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with SEN, participate fully in decisions made about them and help to formulate appropriate action to respond to incidents of bullying.

has clear policies - our alternative provision's anti-bullying policy reflects these principles and is embedded within other alternative provision policies. They are widely and actively promoted to alternative provision staff, pupils and their parents and carers.

If you are being bullied, or are aware of another person being bullied, you must tell someone. This person might be one of your parents, your tutor, another member of staff, or a friend who you know will help you to find the right adult. The sooner the matter is in the open, the sooner the issues can be addressed, and support offered.

Records of all bullying incidents are kept on file, and any patterns are monitored carefully and followed up.

Dealing with Bullying

The aim of all investigations into bullying cases is to reach a situation in which the bullying ceases and all parties move on with their lives positively and with mutual respect. Where a member of staff encounters an act of bullying, whether physical or verbal, he/she must act to prevent an immediate recurrence (for example, by separating the individuals concerned).

All reported and suspected cases of bullying should be taken seriously and dealt with immediately using the following steps:

The Pupil that is being bullied:

- Talk to the victim of the bullying and let them tell you what has been happening • Listen carefully to the pupil; give them time and attention

- Allow the pupil to give a spontaneous account; do not stop a pupil who is freely recalling significant events
- Make an accurate record of the information on an incident report form; Where possible use the pupil's own words
- Let the pupil know that you have to speak to a manager regarding the situation
- Take any appropriate immediate action to ensure the pupil's safety
- Take the incident report to Mica Smith or Olivia Campbell to discuss the situation
- Contact the pupil's parents letting them know about the situation and what the pupil has told you
- Consult with all parties concerned and consider if necessary and appropriate to contact the police.

The Pupil that is doing the bullying:

- Speak to the pupil that is doing the bullying on the same day you receive the information
- Listen to the bully's point of view, usually without sympathising
- Make an accurate record of the information; Where possible use the pupil's own words
- Point out very strongly that bullying is unacceptable.
- Speak to the DSL's to discuss appropriate sanctions
- Inform the bully's parents of the situation
- Consider appropriate disciplinary steps that can be taken
 - Official warnings to cease offending
 - Detention
 - Fixed Term Exclusion
 - Permanent Exclusion
- Set a review date to see if any bullying incidents have reoccurred

Sanctions

If a member of the SLT is satisfied that bullying did take place, the pupil will be helped to understand the consequences of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The Directors will inform the student of the type of sanction to be used in this instance, e.g. detentions or service-based activities, and future sanctions if the bullying continues. If possible, the director/s will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim (and/or witnesses if appropriate), or face-to face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator. Parents are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken. The Director will informally monitor the pupils involved over the next half term. Where there have been serious or consistent incidents of bullying, Next Steps Ed will act in line with our behavioural Policy which details our exclusion procedures.

Support

For a half term after the initial complaint of bullying, the student's key worker will hold an informal discussion with the victim, on a weekly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped.

The Director holds a formal meeting, on a monthly basis, to check whether the bullying has stopped – these formal meetings will continue to take place once a month until the director and victim are confident the bullying has stopped. The victim will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult in school if bullying is repeated.

If necessary, group dynamics will be broken up by members of staff by assigning places in classes. The victim will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups by joining lunchtime or after-school clubs or activities.

Staff, particularly the DSL, will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

Next Steps Ed will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. Perpetrators will be required to attend a mandatory counselling session, to assist with any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing issues. Next Steps Ed will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

Follow-up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by their form tutors and key workers. One-on-one sessions to discuss how the victim and perpetrator are progressing may be appropriate. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence will be arranged with parents one month after the incident.

Pupils who have been bullied will be supported in the following ways:

- Being listened to
- Having an immediate opportunity to meet with their key worker or a member of staff of their choice
- Being reassured
- Being offered continued support
- Being offered counselling, where appropriate

Pupils who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

- Receiving a consequence for their actions
- Being able to discuss what happened
- Being helped to reflect on why they became involved
- Being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour
- Appropriate assistance from parents

Pupils who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and the DSL will, if necessary, refer the victim of bullying to CAMHS.

In cases where the effects of bullying are so severe that the pupil cannot successfully reintegrate back into the school, the Director and DSL will look to transfer the pupil to another provision, working with the Nottinghamshire schools partnership to organise this transition with the consent and involvement of the pupil's parents.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

Next Steps Ed will review this Policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness. The Policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the alternative provision.

Advice to Parents

As the parent of a child whom you suspect is being bullied: -

- Report bullying incidents to Mica Smith - [Email address to be confirmed](#)
- In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff and the Head of centre notified.
- In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
- If necessary and appropriate, police 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 child using unacceptable behaviour towards others, to change their behaviour.

Do Not:

- Attempt to sort the problem out yourself by speaking to the child whom you think may be behaving inappropriately towards your child or by speaking to their parents.
- Encourage your child to be 'a bully' back.

Both of these will only make the problem much harder to solve.

Bullying Report Form

Location/event:

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Type of behaviour displayed/experienced: (Please Tick)

Isolation/being ignored or left out	Possessions/kit taken or damaged
Physical/being hit or hurt	Forced into actions against will/hazing
Verbal (name-calling, taunting, mocking, threatening)	Written
Cyber (On-line, social media, email, text, posting photos/videos)	Spreading rumours
Other (please specify)	

Names of individuals involved:

		Gender	Age	Role*
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				

*Role: **V** Victim **P** Perpetrator **A** Associate **B** Bystander

Where did bullying behaviour occur?

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Are there indications that the behaviour was related to any of the following:

General appearance/body image	Race/ethnic origin	
Disability/SEN	Sexual orientation	
Gender/Sexism/homophobia/transphobia	Home circumstances	
Religion	Sports ability	

Brief summary of the behaviour:

Action taken

Overall (include details if incident referred on):

Include any sanctions, exclusions, parental involvement, or involvement with external agencies.

Form completed by:	Date:
Date to be Reviewed: -	

Date: -
Review: -