



NATIONAL ONLINE SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

Approved by TCES Operational Board on behalf of

Thomas Keaney, CEO and Schools' Proprietor

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This policy applies to TCES National Online School

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Introduction And Prevention Practices

TCES National Online School recognises that many of our students suffer from anxiety or Emotionally Based School avoidance (EBSA), as well as bullying or isolation or exclusion that may have been triggered at a previous school placement. Understanding how to support pupils who have historically felt unsupported is vital to being able to re-engage our pupils with a love of learning, confidence that their voice will be listened to and trust in their own ability to have agency and control in their pathway.

We ensure that all pupils have a key person to support them who is separate to their academic learning. This may take the form of their Pastoral Form Tutor but may be any member of the TCES National Online School team with whom the student has built a relationship with. Forging positive relationships in all areas of the National Online School pathway is key to the success of the student's positive journey of change.

At TCES National Online school we use a variety of methods for helping pupils to prevent bullying through classes and assemblies, tutor time, group, relationship mentoring, or during PSHE and other online lessons. Pupils are also consulted through school pupil questionnaires and are fully aware of the complaints procedure.

The ethos and working philosophy of our TCES National Online school means that all staff actively encourage pupils to have respect for each other. Good, kind and polite behaviour is regularly acknowledged and rewarded. Pupils are involved in the prevention of bullying as and when appropriate which may include:

- Anti-bullying council initiatives
- Taking part in training and workshops to raise awareness and improve understanding
- writing a set of class rules and signing a behaviour contract
- writing poems or creative Art linked to bullying
- reading stories about bullying or having them read to a class or assembly
- making up role-plays about what to do through scenarios of bullying
- having reflective discussions about bullying and why it matters that bullies are dealt with quickly

In putting together this policy, TCES National Online school has referred to a range of different sources, some of which are included directly within this policy. TCES is committed to emotional and social health school communities, this consistent with the approaches the DfE outline through Preventing and Tackling Bullying (2017) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2022) .

TCES National Online school recognises that although ICT can be used positively and creatively that it also significantly impacts young people. TCES National Online school supports vulnerable children, who have disengaged from school for a variety of reasons, with one of these often being bullying.

This may mean that bullying occurs through ICT in arenas where adults are not present and TCES National Online school expects all staff to be aware and vigilant for signs of bullying.

Definitions of Bullying

The term bullying refers to a range of harmful behaviours, both physical and psychological. All bullying behaviour has the following four features:

1. It is repetitive and persistent – though sometimes a single incident can have precisely the same impact as persistent behaviour over time, for it can be experienced as part of a continuous pattern and can be extremely threatening and intimidating. This is particularly the case with racist bullying.
2. It is intentionally harmful – though occasionally the distress it causes is not consciously intended by all those who are responsible.
3. It involves an imbalance of power, leaving someone feeling helpless to prevent it or put a stop to it.
4. It causes feelings of distress, fear, loneliness and lack of confidence in those who are at the receiving end.

Cyber-bullying

This can be defined as 'the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), particularly mobile phones and the internet, deliberately to upset someone else'. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. However, it differs in several significant ways from other kinds of bullying: the invasion of home and personal space; the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the size of the audience, perceived anonymity, and even the profile of the person doing the bullying and their target. Research indicates that cyber bullying is now a feature of many young people's lives. It can also affect members of school staff and other adults.

There is an acknowledgement that TCES National Online school the sole medium of learning and main medium of communication in the community is online, therefore the risk for cyberbullying is increased. Cyber bullying takes different forms: threats and intimidation, harassment or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages), vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images and manipulation.

Homophobic bullying

This occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay, bisexual or transsexual (LGBT+) people.

Who experiences homophobic bullying?

- Young people who are LGBTQ+ community.
- Young people who are thought to be LGBTQ+.
- Young people who are different in some way — they may not act like the other boys or girls.
- Young people who have gay friends or family, or their parents/carers are gay.

- Teachers, who may or may not be LGBT.

It is important to remember that not everyone who experiences homophobic bullying is LGBT or questioning their sexuality. It can happen to anyone.

Sexist or sexual bullying

Sexist and sexual bullying affects both genders. Boys may be victims as well as girls, and both sexes may be victims of their own sex. Sexual bullying may be characterised by name calling, comments and overt “looks” about appearance, attractiveness and emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used.

Pupils identifying as transgender or experiencing gender dysphoria (feeling that they belong to another gender or do not conform with the gender role prescribed to them) can also be targeted by bullies.

Racist bullying

The school uses the working definitions of *racism* and *racist incident* that were proposed in the report of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, 1999. The report defined racism as:

“Conduct or words or practices which disadvantage or advantage people because of their colour, culture or ethnic origin”.

Historically, the term *racism* has been used principally in situations where colour and physical appearance are considered to be significant markers of difference. There has virtually always, however, been a cultural element as well – ‘the other’ has been recognised not only by their physical appearance but also in relation to their culture, language and religion. This crucial point was reflected in the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry definition quoted above and is reflected also in race relations legislation, since case law has established that Sikhs, Jews and Travellers of Irish heritage are for legal purposes to be treated as distinct racial groups. Other forms of racism where differences of culture and religion are at least as significant as differences in physical appearance include Islamophobia and hostility to refugees and people seeking asylum.

Relational Aggression

Relational aggression is an insidious type of bullying that often goes unnoticed by parents and teachers. Sometimes referred to as emotional bullying, relational aggression is a type of social manipulation where teenagers try to hurt their peers or sabotage their social standing.

Relational bullies often ostracize others from a group, spread rumours, manipulate situations, and break confidences. The goal of a relationally aggressive bully is to increase their own social standing by controlling or bullying another person.

Although relational aggression can be common in secondary school settings, it is not limited to teenagers. In fact, some adults and other workplace bullies also engage in relational aggression.

Other types of bullying:

- Bullying related to special educational needs (SEN/D) and disabilities.

- Bullying related to appearance or health conditions
- Bullying of young carers or looked-after children, or otherwise linked to home circumstances

Why is it Important to Respond to Bullying?

Bullying hurts. No one deserves to be a victim of bullying. Bullying has the potential to damage the mental health of a victim. Everybody has the right to be treated with respect. Pupils who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

To ensure this policy is effective it is essential that:

- The curriculum promotes tolerance of difference and promotes diversity in society in ways in which pupils can feel safe.
- Staff are vigilant and trained to spot possible signs of bullying and feel confident in the actions they need to take when it is brought to their attention.
- A culture of openness and zero tolerance is encouraged in the TCES National Online school that enables and assists pupils to confide in staff if they feel threatened or bullied.
- Safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour management are viewed and worked with as aspects of the same aim i.e. enabling everyone in class to feel welcome, secure, comfortable and free from threat or harm:
- Each school has an effective Anti-bullying council in place who regularly meet with the SLT and discuss strategies

Standards

It is important that we tackle bullying in two ways:

1. We need to be proactive in developing anti-bullying aspects of the curriculum and in the information we send out to pupils, parents/carers and partner organisations.
2. We need to ensure that we react promptly, fairly and effectively so that where bullying exists, those who allege bullying and those who witness bullying will feel confident to activate the anti-bullying systems to end it. It is our aim to challenge attitudes about bullying, to educate and increase understanding for both victims and bullies and to help build an anti-bullying ethos within the group.

The following standards set out clearly the responsibilities of managers and staff for creating an anti-bullying culture in TCES National online school and for responding promptly and effectively to any concerns about bullying that may arise.

The Head of TCES National Online school ensures that the virtual school has a culture that promotes anti-bullying by:

1. Ensuring that all staff know how to listen to pupils alleging bullying and know what to look for (including forms of bullying such as cyber bullying, homophobic bullying and racist/sexist bullying as well as 'teasing' and threats etc).
2. Ensuring that all staff know what to do if or when a bullying incident is reported and that agreed procedures are adhered to in all cases.

3. Ensuring that, as part of a wider discussion around 'safeguarding' and behaviour management, bullying forms a standing item on teacher's meetings; where incidents are monitored and actions are minuted.
4. Ensuring that training about bullying as an aspect of safeguarding and behaviour management is given to all staff annually and that all new staff receive training as part of their induction and within their first term after taking up their post.
5. Ensuring all incidents of bullying and the actions taken are monitored and reviewed on a termly basis and that the review forms part of the Senior Leadership Team Meeting.
6. Ensuring that pupils are informed through the curriculum about bullying and what can be done to prevent it and what they can do if it happens (ideas and material for this are set out in the 'guidance and information informing this policy and standards').
7. Ensuring that parents are kept informed about the school's anti-bullying policies and practices.
8. Creating a school ethos and anti-bullying charter, reviewed and renewed each year, which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying including a formal process for gaining the views of pupils on a termly basis.
9. Ensure that the 5 key principles set out in 'Bullying around racism, religion and culture' (*i.e. acknowledging that racism exists and can lead to bullying, letting pupils know where the school stands, ensuring pupils are listened to, ensuring pupils are involved in solutions, and ensuring the school has a range of strategies for both prevention and intervention*) are in place.

Teachers, Deputy Heads of School, and Therapists ensure:

1. They are aware of the TCES National Online school's policy and standards for safeguarding and bullying and what they must do if an incident is reported to them.
2. They are aware of the signs of possible bullying (as set out in training).
3. That, in all their dealings with pupils, they give a clear message about being available to listen to concerns about bullying and to act appropriately if concerns are voiced.
4. That their teaching includes clear messages about the unacceptable nature of bullying.
5. The DSL has a particular responsibility to ensure that Looked After Children are kept safe from bullying.
6. The wider Multi-disciplinary team with support from the Deputy Head of School has a responsibility to deliver training and raise awareness through workshops and/or assemblies on a termly basis.

All staff ensure:

1. They are aware of the signs of possible bullying (as set out in training).
2. They know what to do if a pupil alleges bullying.
3. That, in all their dealings with pupils, they give a clear message about being available to listen to concerns about bullying and to act appropriately if concerns are voiced.
4. They create through curriculum planning and delivery a safe and caring environment that promotes the British and whole school Therapeutic Principles and Community Values, SMSC, inclusion and thereby enable all pupils to grow in self-awareness, in managing their feelings, motivation, empathy and social skills.

Anti-bullying strategies

The aims of TCES National Online school's anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:

- To prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour.
- To react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way.
- To safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil.
- To unpick and understand why this bullying is occurring and provide intervention for pupils who is bullying
- To apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi- agency support.
- To raise awareness of the effects of bullying and educate all involved in the incident(s).
- To work in partnership with parents

Strategic Preventative Procedures

- Effective school leadership that promotes an open and honest anti-bullying ethos.
- Use of curriculum opportunities (in particular, Form time, assemblies, LIFE, PSHE and other classes can be used to discuss issues around diversity and draw out anti-bullying messages).
- Anti-bullying Ambassadors co-leading on TCES National Online school's anti-bullying initiatives taking into account pupil voice.
- Use of opportunities throughout the school calendar and at certain times of the school day to raise awareness of the negative consequences of bullying (e.g. Anti-Bullying Week in November of each year; and whole-school assemblies).
- Engaging pupils in the process of developing the school anti-bullying policy and promoting open and honest reporting.

Disciplinary penalties have three main purposes, namely to

- impress on the perpetrator that what he/she has done is unacceptable;
- deter him/her from repeating that behaviour; and
- signal to other pupils that the behaviour is unacceptable and deter them from doing it.

Signs and Symptoms

A child 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 child:

- is frightened of school
- doesn't want to go into online group classes.
- Join in virtual activities.
- becomes withdrawn anxious or lacking in confidence.
- starts stammering.
- attempts or threatens suicide.
- runs away.

- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- feels ill in the morning.
- begins to do poorly in schoolwork.
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- comes home hungry (money/lunch has been stolen)
- becomes aggressive, disruptive, or unreasonable.
- is bullying other children or siblings.
- stops eating.
- appears frightened to say what's wrong.
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.
- lack of eye contact.
- becoming short tempered.
- change in attitude to people at home.

It is important to note that bullying does not always have a sign and that children may endeavour to hide any bullying that is occurring to them.

Parental involvement

TCES National Online School is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents and believe that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents/carers are able to work together when bullying occurs. We recognise the important influence which parents/carers have on their children and would wish to enlist their support when their child is involved in bullying – either as victim or a perpetrator.

Parents who believe their children are the victim of bullying should share their concerns with the Online school at the earliest opportunity and be prepared to work with the school to keep their children safe in future. All expressions of concern will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Where parents have concerns with regard to bullying they should contact the Head of the National Online school.

Incident management

The TCES National Online School will take firm and decisive action to deal with any incident of bullying which is witnessed by or reported to any member of staff. When a member of staff receives information, either directly or indirectly, that a pupil may have been the victim of a bullying incident, this report will be taken seriously and investigated. The Online School will offer a proactive, sympathetic and supportive response to children who are the victims of bullying. The exact nature of the response will be determined by the particular child's individual needs and may include:

- immediate action to stop the incident and secure the child's safety
- positive reinforcement that reporting the incident was the correct thing to do.
- reassurance that the victim is not responsible for the behaviour of the bully.
- strategies to prevent further incidents.
- sympathy and empathy

- counselling
- assertiveness training
- extra supervision/monitoring
- creation of a support group
- peer mentoring
- informing/involving parents
- adult mediation between the perpetrator and the victim
- arrangements to review progress.

The TCES National Online School ensures all reported incidents are responded to promptly and effectively by the following procedures:

1. The Head of TCES National Online school must be informed of all reported incidents of bullying within one working day.
2. The Head of TCES National Online school must ensure that the pupil who has reported the bullying is safe.
3. An action plan for responding to the allegation of bullying must be agreed within two working days. Issues to consider include:
 - Is the allegation a matter for the police.
 - Need to inform TCES Senior Managers.
 - Need to inform parents/carers.
 - Need to inform the Local Authority.
 - Clarifying whether the alleged incident is racist, sexist homophobic or involves a disabled pupil or use of ICT.
 - The plan needs to be in writing and agreed with the pupil who has been bullied, parents/carers and TCES Senior Managers.
4. Once agreed, the action plan must be monitored and actions taken to ensure that the likelihood of repetition is minimised.
5. Regular follow up to ensure that bullying has not resumed.

Promoting anti-bullying messages through the curriculum

TCES National Online school's aims to create effective virtual learning environments in which:

- the contribution of all pupils is valued
- all pupils can feel secure and are able to contribute appropriately
- stereotypical views are challenged, and pupils learn to appreciate and view positively differences in others whether arising from race, culture, gender, sexuality, ability or disability
- pupils learn to take responsibility for their actions and behaviours both in school and in the wider community
- all forms of bullying and harassment are challenged
- pupils are supported to develop their social and emotional skills.

The curriculum includes all the planned learning activities, explicit and implicit, which a school promotes. So, when reviewing the curriculum for anti-bullying work, we will aim to review:

- the school curriculum policy and the responsibilities of all curriculum team leaders in taking account of anti-bullying work and tackling prejudice that may give rise to bullying in their curriculum area;

- the contribution to anti-bullying work in specific curriculum areas such as LIFE, PSHE, Form time, and in the British values and SMSC
- how assemblies, peer mentoring sessions, class time, etc can be used as teaching opportunities for anti-bullying principles and practice;
- how transition is planned and delivered:
 - at planned times (eg for year 6 and 7 pupils)
 - for individuals arriving at other times in the school year
 - for individuals needing specific support

Personal, Social, and Health Education (PSHE)

PSHE provides school staff with a clear opportunity to work on bullying. Within the Curriculum for PSHE pupils should be taught:

- Key Stage 2: the consequences of anti-social and aggressive behaviours, such as bullying and racism, on individuals and communities; the nature and consequences of racism, teasing and bullying and aggressive behaviours; how to respond to bullying and ask for help.
- Key Stage 3: the effects of all types of stereotyping, prejudice, bullying, racism and discrimination and how to challenge them assertively.
- Key Stage 4 & 5: to challenge offending behaviour, bullying, racism and discrimination assertively; to take the initiative in giving and receiving support.

Leadership and LIFE

The LIFE Curriculum provides school staff with clear opportunity to address bullying through both the Leadership and the Empowerment curriculum.

Through LIFE pupils should be taught:

- Key Stage 2: Moral development-the ability to recognise what is right and wrong.
What is bullying and what are the signs
- Key Stage 3: Deeper understanding of the impact and affects of bullying on all involved
The positive impact pupil voice and pupil leadership has on bullying
- Key Stage 4&5: The positive impact peer mentoring has on bullying for all involved
How to assertively and appropriately challenge and deal with bullying concerns.

For the bully

The TCES National Online School takes bullying behaviour very seriously and will adopt a supportive, pragmatic, problem-solving approach to enable bullies to behave in a more acceptable way. Steps will be taken to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any help that they may need. We will respond to incidents of bullying behaviour in a proportionate way – the more serious the cause for concern the more serious the response. When sanctions are felt to be necessary they will be applied consistently and fairly. These sanctions may include: a reflective session, refocus or mentoring session.

The school will always seek resolution for the victim and this may involve the bully undertaking restorative work.

Resources and Useful Websites that staff can access for further information are: www.bullying.com / www.childline.co.uk / www.antibullying.net / <https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/>