



Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy takes into account the '[Preventing and Tackling Bullying Guidance](#)' published by the DfE in July 2017.

Coaches are aware that bullying takes three principal forms, verbal, physical and manipulative.

- Verbal – name calling, threats, insults or offensive remarks
- Physical – hitting, kicking, deliberate pushing and jostling, taking of property
- Indirect – spreading rumours, sending malicious messages, ostracising, posting hurtful/ harmful comments on social media platforms

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages or the internet, and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or because a child is adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might be motivated by actual differences between children, or perceived differences.

Stopping violence and ensuring immediate physical safety is obviously our first priority but emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical; Coaches within Learning to Listen have to make their own judgements about each specific case and follow the guidelines of this policy.

Bullying is often recognised as a 'prolonged' attack, but it may also be a single unresolved event, which casts a shadow over a child's life.

Aims

Learning to Listen aims:

- To create an atmosphere where all students can reach their full potential within a safe and caring environment and therefore bullying and other forms of anti-social behaviour are not tolerated.
- To train coaches to recognise the causes and types of bullying and to make all staff aware of the Learning to Listen procedures with regards to any concerns raised about bullying.
- To ensure students are made aware of the code of conduct (Behaviour Policy), which outlines how students are expected to behave towards all other members of the provision community. This code of conduct outlines the fact that harassment is not tolerated by anyone.

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- To address issues relating to bullying and behaviour through Equine Facilitated Learning and general activities.
- To ensure those involved with the wellbeing and care of the student are made fully aware of the provisions anti-bullying policy.

Cyber-Bullying

The rapid development of, and widespread access to, technology has provided a new medium for 'virtual' bullying. Cyber-bullying is a different form of bullying which can happen 24/7, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories as people forward on content at a click.

We recognise the impact of cyber-bullying: including text messaging, social networking websites, mobile phones, photographs, and email. Learning to Listen incorporates responsible use of the internet and modern technology as part of our programme.

Information is also shared with parents and staff concerning the dangers of cyber-bullying. The use of IT systems is covered in Learning to Listen ICT policy.

We recognise that bullying may cause significant psychological damage, or even suicidal tendencies and that some bullying behaviour can be harassing and threatening.

Safeguarding Children

Under the Children Act 1989 bullying incidents should be addressed as a child protection concern when there is 'reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm'. Where this is the case, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will report Learning to Listens concerns to the local authority Safeguarding Children Board.

Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, the provision may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child doing the bullying.

Police

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communication – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

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If Learning to Listen staff feel that an offence may have been committed, they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1998, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication, which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Strategies for Dealing with Bullying

Relationships can break down and so procedures to deal with bullying need to be in place. The purpose of this procedure is to protect and support the victim, to rehabilitate the perpetrator and to re-establish a secure and happy environment.

All coaches will receive training in dealing with bullying via induction and regular review of policy at staff meetings. The Equal Opportunities policy and Behaviour policy should also be consulted.

Depending upon the perceived seriousness of the situation, issues of bullying will be dealt with by Coaches / The Lead Coach or the Director. The Director will inform any other member of staff as necessary and keep an anti-bullying log so that any patterns in bullying behaviour can be identified.

The emphasis for all coaches and case workers should be upon listening, believing and helping all concerned. All students should know that we regard bullying as a serious offence and that all claims of bullying will be thoroughly investigated.

Procedures

Reporting and Recording Arrangements

A student who feels they are being bullied must tell a coach, case worker or any other member of staff with whom they feel comfortable. If they do not feel confident enough to speak up by themselves, students should be encouraged to enlist the moral support of a friend. Above all, students should be encouraged to tell someone straight away.

Coaches should not ignore or disregard a complaint. When a case is referred to them, they should:

- Ask for details and record the information on an anti-bullying incident report sheet.
- Give the completed form to the Lead Coach or Director.

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The Director will then follow these procedures:

1. As soon as possible interview all involved parties. It is essential that records are kept of all interviews.
2. Speak to the victim to establish what exactly has occurred and whether there are any witnesses. These witnesses should then also be interviewed. (It may not be possible to preserve confidentiality in these discussions as the person accused of bullying will need to be told exactly what they have done and the effect it has had.)
3. Interview the person being accused of bullying once the details of the complaint have been established. Again, this should be recorded on the anti-bullying incident record sheet.
4. Inform the parents/ carers of the victim and the child doing the bullying. Parents/ Carers will be made fully aware of the provisions anti-bullying policy. It will be stressed that if the bullying continues sanctions will be used.
5. Make all members of staff involved with the students aware of any incidences of bullying and any strategies to support this not being repeated.
6. Arrange a follow-up meeting with the students a week later to check how things are going.
7. A record should also be kept in the Anti-bullying Log

Involvement of Parents/ Carers

Parents/ carers will be made fully aware of the Learning to Listen anti-bullying policy. In some cases, care givers may be the first to alert coaches to an incident of bullying and they may be in some distress when they contact the provision.

Good practice includes:

- Recognising that the parent/carer may be angry or upset.
- Keeping an open mind – lack of staff awareness does not mean it is not happening.
- Remaining calm and understanding.
- Making clear that Learning to Listen does care and that something will be done, explaining the provision policy, and seeing that procedures are followed.

Preventing Bullying

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At Learning to Listen we:

- Include parents/ carers to ensure that they are clear that the provision does not tolerate bullying and are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied.
- parents/ carers should feel confident that the provision will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the child, and they reinforce the value of good behaviour at home. Parents/ carers should be directed to the Equal Opportunities and Behaviour policies.
- Have created an ethos of inclusive, positive behaviours, where students treat one another and the provision staff with respect, because they understand that this is the right way to behave. Values of respect for staff and other students, an understanding of the value of Equine Facilitated Learning, and a clear understanding of how our actions affect others permeate the whole centres environment and are reinforced by coaches and older pupils who set a good example to the rest.
- Regularly evaluate and update the Anti-Bullying policy.

Further Information

The NSPCC also provides summaries of the key legislation and guidance on:

- bullying <http://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/bullying>
- online abuse <http://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-abuse-and-neglect/online-abuse>
- child protection <http://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-protection-system>

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