



## Anti- Bullying Policy

Date	Reviewed by	Ratified by	Frequency of review	Date for next review
Spring 2024	JO	JR	Annual	Spring 2025

### Introduction

Bullying can be defined as a direct, indirect, physical, psychological or verbal attack against an individual or group of individuals by a person or group of persons, causing physical or psychological harm to the victim. It is usually conscious and wilful and commonly consists of repeated acts of aggression and / or manipulation. It can take a number of forms – both physical and non-physical, either in combination or in isolation. Any bullying, whether physical or nonphysical may result in lasting psychological damage to the individual. For the purpose of this policy we will use this definition of bullying:

Bullying is a deliberately hurtful act by an individual or group, usually repeated over a period of time. It often involves an abuse of power or use of intimidation and can affect an individual or group.

### Our Commitment

At Learning to Listen, we are committed to providing a safe and calm therapeutic environment that is free from disruption and where supporting social emotional wellbeing is the primary focus. The ethos of Learning to Listen is based upon celebrating our differences and connecting positively with one another. By developing this connection and celebrating the diversity within our community, we aim to reduce incidents of all types of bullying including bullying and cyberbullying related to the Protected Characteristics as listed in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 (a. age b. disability c. gender reassignment d. marriage and civil partnership e. pregnancy and maternity f. race (including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin g. religion or belief h. sex i. sexual orientation)

There are different types of bullying, but the main types are:

- Physical – including: kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings including money.
- Verbal – including: name calling, teasing, insulting, writing unkind notes, texting or emailing in an aggressive or unpleasant manner.
- Emotional – including: being unfriendly, excluding or isolating, tormenting, spreading rumours, running abusive initiation procedures
- Passive – including: ignoring others, negative body language / gestures, excluding others, isolating others and the persuasion of others to ignore, exclude or isolate.

In addition, we identify additional key sub-categories of bullying when reporting bullying. These are:

- Cyber bullying
- Discrimination
- Homophobic, Biphobic and/or Transphobic (HBT) bullying
- Physical bullying
- Racist bullying
- Verbal bullying

Bullying can take a number of forms and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups including:

- Racial, religion or belief, cultural – this is when people are persecuted because of their race, cultural practices, faith or beliefs, linguistic background. Social and political issues can also be a factor here.
- Special educational needs or disability focused – this is when people are persecuted because of their particular educational needs, academic ability or because of particular mental, emotional or physical disabilities they might have. Young people with SEND may not have the levels of social confidence and competence, and the robust friendship bonds that can protect against bullying, so particular monitoring is crucial from the staff.
- Academic – in addition to SEND, this is bullying pertaining often to high academic ability or achievement.
- Sporting ability – this is bullying pertaining to sporting ability or that happens on or off the sports pitch. It may include targeted abuse of the rules of the game being played. It also includes persecution because of someone's physical intelligence, coordination skills, fitness level or aptitude for performing or learning new sporting skills.
- Appearance or health focused – This is when those with health or visible medical conditions, such as eczema, become targets for bullying behaviour. Perceived physical limitations, such as size or weight, and other body image issues, can result in bullying, and obvious signs of affluence (or lack of it) can also be exploited ruthlessly.
- Sexual orientation – this is bullying related to sexual orientation (LGBTQ+). Evidence of HBT bullying suggests that children and young people who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (or perceived to be) face a higher risk of victimisation than their peers. HBT bullying is perhaps the form of bullying least likely to be self-reported, since disclosure carries risks not associated with other forms of bullying. The student may not want to report bullying if it means 'coming out' to teachers and parents before they are ready to.
- Sexist or sexual – this may be characterised by name-calling, comments or overt 'looks' about appearance, attractiveness or emerging puberty. In addition, uninvited touching, innuendos and propositions, pornographic imagery or graffiti may be used. Students identifying as transgender or experiencing gender dysphoria may also be targeted. It may also relate to pregnancy or maternity.
- Carers – where students have caring responsibilities, usually for members of their families.
- Adopted / fosters / children in care – where students are not living with their biological parents.

Cyberbullying – is a method of bullying rather than a type of bullying, also sometimes known as 'e-bullying' or 'virtual bullying'. It is the use of ICT to carry out threatening or intentionally hurtful behaviour. It includes sending malicious, threatening or hurtful text, emails or photos

or using malicious, insulting or other hurtful descriptions or comments on social networking sites such as Facebook or during instant messaging conversations such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, BBM or Google Talk. Posting images or videos of others or spreading them by mobile phone / showing in person are types of distribution. Distribution of sexual images is known commonly as 'sexting'. Prolonged campaigns of harassment can occur through cyberbullying.

Learning to Listen is committed to promoting high standards of behaviour in all areas of students' lives, including their use of internet technology, social networking sites, texting and emailing. Learning to Listen does not use laptops and access the internet as part of the intervention, but supports conversations around the use of technology when online.

The provision takes very seriously any sign of bullying or hurtful behaviour through use of the technology, as detailed in the definitions of bullying above.

Through conversation between coaches and their students, the provision seeks to deter cyber bullying by ensuring that all students have clear information and guidance about how to be safe in the digital environment and that they are fully aware of the risk of misuse of social networking sites.

All staff have a duty to be vigilant regarding students' behaviour whilst using technology. Any misconduct or any behaviour or communication which is deemed inappropriate will be treated very seriously and is likely to result in a significant sanction. Sanctions will be in line with the provision's Behaviour Policy. E-safety and prevention of cyber-bullying training forms part of staff inset and half termly analysis allows SLT reflection on provision and next steps as and when required.

Any report of misconduct on technology, will be regarded as bullying and treated in the same way as other forms. Students are made aware of what steps they can take to protect themselves and others online. It is the responsibility of every member of the community to report any instances of cyber bullying, abuse and suspicious or dangerous behaviour by other students, staff or visitors. Reports can be made to any member of staff.

Whilst Learning to Listen recognises that cyberbullying is most likely to take place outside of provision and out of provision hours, the provision accepts its responsibility to follow up any allegations of persistent bullying and parents / carers / relevant professionals will invariably be involved in any discussions of this nature with the relevant students.

## **Legislation**

Learning to Listen has based its anti-bullying policy on the Equality Act 2010 and updates on protected characteristics. A key provision is the new public sector Equality Duty whose three aims form the basis for this policy:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Learning to Listen will not discriminate against, harass or victimise a student or potential student in relation to admissions, the way it provides education for students, provision of student access to any benefit, facility or service, or by excluding a student or subjecting them to any other detriment.

### **Safeguarding children and young people**

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'. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, Learning to Listen will work towards a resolution.

### **Criminal law**

Although bullying itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, Learning to Listen understands that some types of harassment or threatening behaviour – or communications – 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. If Learning to Listen feels that there has been a crime committed, police assistance will be sought.

### **Reporting of bullying behaviour**

Incident forms are used to monitor and record any incidents or concerns that staff have of bullying behaviour. Coaches are responsible for monitoring their individual students and termly reports are used to analyse trends and patterns for behaviour for each child and tracked groups to pre-empt any concern.

### **Bully outside of provision premises**

Learning to Listen has a responsibility to put consequences in place for students conducting poor behaviour outside the provision premises. This can relate to any bullying incidents occurring anywhere off the premises, such as on public transport, outside local shops, or in the village centre. Where bullying outside Learning to Listen is reported to the provision, it will be investigated and acted upon according to the protocols. If appropriate the Police or local authority service will be informed of the actions taken by the provision. If the behaviour could be considered as criminal behaviour or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, we will consult the Police.

### **Preventing Bullying**

At Learning to Listen, we believe that preventing bullying is a key aspect of a positive environment. To do this, we:

- Create an ethos of good behaviour where students treat each other and the provision staff with respect because they know that this is the right way to behave
- Involve parents and carers to ensure that they are clear that Learning to Listen does not tolerate bullying, and that they are aware of the procedures to follow if they believe that their child is being bullied. Parents must feel confident that Learning to Listen will take any complaint about bullying seriously and resolve the issue in a way that protects the student, and reinforces the value of good behaviour at home

- Actively teach all students about bullying so that all students understand the provision's approach and that they are clear about the part they play in preventing bullying, including when they themselves are bystanders
- Regularly evaluate and update the provision's approach to take account of developments in technology.
- Clearly communicate potential consequences of bullying and ensure they reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that students see that bullying is not acceptable.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as religion, ethnicity, disability, gender or sexuality. The provision will also teach students that use of prejudice-based language is unacceptable
- Use specific organisations or resources for help with specific problems such as anti-bullying organisations to deal with certain forms of bullying.
- Provide effective staff training so that all staff understand the principles and purpose of the provision's policy, its legal responsibilities regarding bullying, how to solve problems, and where to seek support
- Work with the wider community such as the Police and Children's Services where bullying is particularly serious or persistent, and where a criminal offence may have been committed. The provision will also work with other agencies and the wider community to tackle bullying that is happening outside the provision
- Make it easy for students to report bullying so that they are assured that they will be listened to and incidents acted on. Students at Learning to Listen will feel that they can report bullying which may have occurred outside the provision including cyber bullying.
- Create an inclusive environment. Learning to Listen works to create a safe environment where students can openly discuss bullying without fear of further bullying or discrimination
- Ensure that within provision placements there are varied opportunities for students to develop healthy attitudes towards differences, practice skills of empathy and experience Restorative Justice.

## Responsibilities

Responsibility for implementation of the Anti-bullying Policy lies with the Director and the Principle coach.

The Director role is:

- Ensure that all staff are trained and feel fully equipped to deal with cases of bullying
- Review and amend the policy annually
- Ensure that guidance is freely available and regularly circulated and publicised to Parents/Carers, students and staff
- Half-termly review of any incident data analysis to pre-empt trends in behaviour

Staff are expected to:

- Promote a fully inclusive ethos in the provision
- Teach students that it is unacceptable to be hurtful or negative to others
- Follow policies for any bullying, sexual harassment and prejudice-related incidents that may occur
- Teach and support students to respect and understand diversity
- Promote strong British values of respect and tolerance in a multi-cultural society
- Be vigilant and responsive to any signs or indications of bullying type behaviours or conduct

- Report any incidents, concerns promptly
- Monitor and track incidents reported to ensure that any concerns and incidents are dealt with promptly

Through our preventative approach to bullying we strive to prepare the students at Learning to Listen for life in modern Britain and create a culture of zero tolerance for any form of bullying.

### **Parent/ Carer involvement**

Learning to Listen is firmly committed to working in partnership with parents/ carers and believes that the best outcomes emerge when professionals and parents/carers work together.

Parents have an important part to play in preventing and responding to bullying. We ask parents to look out for unusual behaviour in their child – for example not wanting to attend the provision, regularly feeling ill, being overly quiet, isolating themselves.

We ask that caregivers always take an active role in their child's placement, enquire how their day has gone and who they have spent time with. If a parent or carer feels their child may be a victim of bullying they must inform the provision as soon as possible. This information will be taken seriously, and appropriate action will follow.

If as a parent or carer you feel another child has bullied your child, we ask that you do not approach that child or their family. Instead, please inform us immediately and we will ensure that the appropriate steps are taken.