Pennine

Anti Bullying Policy

Approved by	**Name** Claire Crowley	**Date** July 2025
Reviewed on		**Date**
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1. Introduction

Pennine are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment. All members of the Pennine community have a right to learn, live, teach and work in a safe, secure and positive environment. Bullying of any kind (including bullying of children or members of staff by parents/carers or other visitors) is wholly unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
We will take immediate action, where we believe an individual may be at risk, or it is alleged that an individual is suspected of being bullied or is bullying others. Our primary concern, at all times, is the welfare and safety of all members of our community including children and young people, residents, staff and visitors.

2. Aims

This policy aims to:

- Seek to create a culture in which bullying of any kind is not accepted by anyone.
- Enable all staff to understand what constitutes bullying.
- Make it clear to Individuals, staff and parents that bullying is completely unacceptable. Provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying, ensuring that bullies are dealt with swiftly and firmly.
- Develop a culture where individuals should be able to tell if they believe they are being bullied and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Enable all staff to be vigilant in recognising if bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Our aim is to promote positive relationships amongst all and to develop a culture in which individuals are listened to and their concerns taken seriously.
- Create a proactive 'prevention culture' through the maintenance of conditions where bullying is less likely to flourish and is more easily detected.
- Promote an understanding of the impact of bullying within our community.

3. Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on the following advice/legislation:

- Education Act 2011.
- The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- The Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Health and Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated Activities) Regulations 2014, particularly Regulation 13: Safeguarding Service Users from Abuse and Improper Treatment.
- DfE guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying' & 'Cyberbullying: Advice for headteachers and school staff'. (July 2017)
- Children Act 1989,
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Equality Act 2010.
- We also follow current DfE guidance 'Keeping children safe in education' (2025) 'Working together to safeguard children' (2018- updated 2024) HM Government

advice 'What to do if you're worried a child is being abused' (2015) and the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership's policies, procedures, guidance and protocols.

4. Scope

The policy applies to all incidents of bullying between young people whether they occur within or outside the settings including cyber bullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory. If there are concerns about young people being bullied by visitors, carers or contractors, these will be addressed through the Whistle-blowing / Safeguarding Policies.

Bullying of employees is out of scope of this policy and instead will be investigated thoroughly and addressed through the Dignity at Work Policy and Code of Conduct.

5. Roles and responsibilities

All staff have a duty to report bullying, to be vigilant to the signs of bullying and to play an active role in the service's efforts to prevent bullying. If staff are aware of bullying, they should reassure the children/young people involved and follow the local procedures.
Parents and carers should look out for potential signs of bullying such as distress, lack of concentration, feigning illness or other unusual behaviour, these can sometimes be masked by SEN. Parents and carers should tell their child not to retaliate and support and encourage them to report the bullying. Parents and carers can report an incident of bullying to the service either in person, or by phoning or emailing.
Children and young people should not take part in any kind of bullying and should, wherever possible, watch out for potential signs of bullying among their peers. They should never be bystanders to incidents of bullying. If children/young people witness bullying they should support the victim, encourage them to report the bullying and, if possible, accompany them to tell a trusted adult.
The Senior Leadership Team on site and the Service Lead have overall responsibility for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is followed by all members of staff and that the service upholds its duty to promote the safety and well-being of all young people. They must ensure bullying is logged, incidents are reviewed and acted upon. Bullying trends should be analysed and be reported via the Board of Directors.

6. Definitions

The government defines bullying as: "Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."
It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email. Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. A feature of bullying in education and residential settings is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority. Bullying can quickly

become a safeguarding matter and it may on occasion be necessary to record it as a safeguarding concern. Pennine recognises the seriousness of both physical and emotional bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide. Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal act in the UK, some types of harassing 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 our staff consider that an offence may have been committed, the service lead or DSL should seek assistance from the police.

Definition of Child on Child Abuse

Bullying can sometimes amount to child on child abuse, which is defined as abuse by one or more pupils against another pupil. The pupils will not necessarily be the same ages/year groups. Child on child abuse is a specific safeguarding concern and as such should be dealt with according to the procedures and protocols outlined in the Safeguarding and Child Protection policies.

All staff should be aware that children can abuse one another and that it can happen both inside and outside of school and online. It is important that all staff recognise the indicators and signs of child on child abuse and know how to identify it and respond to reports.

All staff should understand, that even if there are no reports in their school it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported. If staff have any concerns regarding child on child abuse they should speak to their designated safeguarding lead. Child on child abuse is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

• bullying (including cyberbullying, prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying);
• abuse in intimate personal relationships (aka teenage relationship abuse);
• physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages physical abuse);
• sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault; (this may include an online element which facilitates, threatens and/or encourages sexual violence);
• sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be standalone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
• causing someone to engage in sexual activity without consent, such as forcing someone to strip, touch themselves sexually, or to engage in sexual activity with a third party;
• consensual and non-consensual sharing of nudes and semi nudes images and or videos (also known as sexting or youth produced sexual imagery);
• upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without their permission, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
• initiation/hazing type violence and rituals (this could include activities involving harassment, abuse or humiliation used as a way of initiating a person into a group and may also include an online element).

7. Responding to Bullying

7.1 Reporting bullying

If a child/young person is being bullied they are encouraged to not retaliate but to tell someone they trust about it such as a friend, family member or trusted adult. They are also encouraged to report any bullying incidents in school, college or residential setting. Parents and carers can report an incident of bullying to the service either in person, or by phoning or email. To report bullying of children/young people staff should follow their local procedures.

7.2. Responding to bullying

When bullying has been reported, staff will:

- record the bullying on Management Information System (Arbor)
- offer support to those who are the target of bullying
- pro-actively respond to the bully, who may require support
- identify and assess whether parents and carers need to be involved
- assess whether any other authorities (such as police or the local authority) need to be involved, particularly where actions take place outside of the site

7.3. Derogatory language

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and monitored and follow up actions and sanctions, if appropriate, will be taken for young people and staff found using any such language. Please see the Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy for further details.

8. Training

Staff will receive regular updates and training as part of the on-going professional development program.

9. Implementation

The Senior Leadership Team has responsibility for implementing this policy and the associated procedures.

10. Support, Advice and Communication

Information and training on supporting young people who are being bullied can be obtained from the school DSL. Further information and support can be provided by line managers. In cases where staff are being affected by bullying the line manager or member of SLT can support and advise.

11. Monitoring arrangements

The policy will be reviewed by the SLT every 12 months in line with any local and national updates.

Further information about bullying

Definition of bullying, the government defines bullying as: "Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally."

All episodes of bullying involve an imbalance in physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), intellectual and/or social power (having access to the support of a group or the capacity to socially isolate). The perpetrator(s) of which has (or at least appears to have) more power than the target of the bullying. Bullying, by its nature, is not a conflict between equals; but occurs when the perpetrator(s) of bullying has control over the relationship making it difficult for the person being bullied to defend themselves. Fear of future victimisation is another important factor to be taken into consideration, when determining whether an interaction between individuals or groups meets the threshold necessary, to be considered bullying. Research also suggests that, in some cases, intent to harm may actually be secondary to achieving another goal, such as gaining social power or obtaining material goods. Occasionally an incident may be deemed to be bullying even if the behaviour has not been repeated or persistent – if it fulfils all the other descriptions of bullying. This possibility should be considered particularly in cases of sexual, sexist, racist or homophobic bullying; and when children with disabilities are involved. Bullying can take place between children, between children and staff, or between staff; face-to-face, indirectly or using a range of cyberbullying methods.

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. Pupils who are bullying need support to learn different ways of behaving. There is a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to any issues of bullying. Staff members also need to feel confident in approaching their team leaders or any member of the Senior Leadership team to discuss any concerns.

Forms of bullying

People are bullied for a variety of reasons – and no reason. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on the grounds of race, religion, gender (including transgender and gender reassignment), sexual orientation, or because a child is in residential care, 'looked-after', adopted or has caring responsibilities. It might also be associated with socio-economic background, academic performance, special educational needs (SEN) or disabilities, appearance or health conditions. It might be motivated by actual differences between individuals, or perceived differences. People may experience different forms of bullying at different times and different forms of bullying at the same time. There is

no “hierarchy” of bullying – all forms of bullying should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately.

Bullying can take many forms and may include name-calling; taunting; mocking; making offensive comments about individuals and/or their families; kicking; hitting; pushing; fighting; taking or deliberately destroying belongings or intimidation by looks or gestures (through threats of violence). It may involve inappropriate touching; producing offensive graffiti; invasion of privacy; gossiping; spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours; or always ignoring or leaving someone out of groups (either physically or online). It is also bullying when a child is pressured to do something (e.g. chores), lie for others or otherwise act against their will by others.

Cyberbullying may occur when an individual is tormented, threatened harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another individual or group using the internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It may occur via text messages, social media or gaming and can include the use of images and video. Cyberbullying is a different form of bullying and can happen at all times of the day, with a potentially bigger audience, and more accessories, as people can forward on content at the click of a button.

However, irrespective of the behaviour, it is important to appreciate that bullying depends on how it affects the person, not on what is being done. Different people are sensitive to different things. For example, teasing, arguing, play fighting and name-calling are not always bullying – but they can be if they affect somebody badly.

Bullying can be direct or indirect:

Direct forms include physical violence or threats; verbal assaults and taunts; the destruction of property; extortion and unwanted sexual interest or contact.

Indirect forms of bullying include ignoring and withdrawal of friendships; excluding and isolating young people; malicious gossip; offensive and threatening texting; spreading rumours and abusive or offensive graffiti. Bullying may also include being forced to become involved in criminal or anti-social behaviour.

Emotional (indirect bullying) including isolation of others by a refusal to co-operate with them and exclusion - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding from social groups or an activity by refusal to sit next to/ talk to/ work/ co-operate with others and refusal to follow staff instructions to do the above, or malicious rumours, e-mails or text messages, and also exclusion from play/discussions etc. with those whom they believe to be their friends.

Physical harm or its threat including the abuse of personal property – jostling, serious fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence; deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing personal property, use of weapons/threatening use of weapon (or any object which could be used as a weapon), intimidation through physical gestures and actions.

Cyber – not occurring face to face but rather through electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, internet and intranet sites, email, instant messaging, by mobile phone including through text messages and phone calls, photographs both real and manipulated and so on. It can be particularly insidious because of the potential to follow individuals wherever they are.

Bullying can be based on any of the following things:

- Race - Bullying directed at individuals of a certain race, culture, ethnicity, language, faith, community, national origin or national status. The distinctive feature of racist bullying is that the victim is attacked not as an individual but as the representative of a family, community or group.
- Culture or class – focusing on and/or playing off perceived cultural differences or similar. Gender - sexist behaviour from name calling to physical sexual assault. It is the use of sexual language or negative stereotyping on the basis of gender. Gender identity - transphobic behaviours related to an individual's gender identity
- Sexual orientation- Homophobic/biphobic - This is bullying, which is directed towards people who are openly gay, bisexual, are perceived as gay, or show characteristics. Heterosexual young people subject to homophobic bullying are less reluctant to report it as this may enforce the stereotypical way that they are already viewed by others so sensitivity and positive support is required for victims.
- Religion or belief – Attacking faith, belief, religious practice or custom.
- Special Educational Needs and Disability – remarking upon, drawing attention to, or discriminating against persons with physical disabilities or learning difficulties or other identified special educational needs such as Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD)
- Related to another vulnerability – such as young carers or looked after children

Social Ostracism

Intentionally and repeatedly leaving someone out of a group is called ostracising or social exclusion. It can be a form of bullying. That exclusion can cause an individual to believe something is wrong with who they are, focus on their shortcomings, blame themselves for actions, damage self-esteem. Ostracisation may also impact broader mental health.

Roles within bullying

Bullying is a complex behaviour - situations often involve a tangled web of misunderstandings, anxieties, insecurities and needs. However, different roles have been identified:

- The ringleader, the person who through their (social) power can direct bullying activity.
- Assistants/associates, who actively join in the bullying (sometimes because they are afraid of the ringleader).
- Reinforcers, who give positive feedback to the bully, perhaps by smiling or laughing.
- Outsiders/bystanders who stay back or stay silent and thereby appear to condone or collude with the bullying behaviour.
- Defenders, who try to intervene to stop the bullying or comfort children who experience bullying.

It should be noted that the same individual can adopt different roles at different times, or indeed at the same time (a bullied child might be bullying another child at the same time, or a seeming 'reinforcer' might become a 'defender' when the ringleader is not around).

Signs and symptoms of bullying

A victim may indicate verbally, by signs or behaviour that they are being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child or young person:

- becomes frightened of walking or moving from one place to another
- does not want to use usual transport/ public bus or other mode of transport
- asks to be driven separately/ with certain adults
- changes their usual routines without obvious reason
- is unwilling to go to school, college or home
- begins to hide, truant or avoid school/ going home
- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering or struggles to communicate in usual ways
- attempts or threatens self-harm, suicide or runs away
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares
- feels ill in the morning without specific symptoms
- begins to perform poorly in school or usual tasks
- comes home with clothes torn or property damaged
- has money or possessions which are damaged or "go missing"
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully)
- has unexplained marks, cuts or bruises
- frequently hungry at home or school (unable to eat due to anxiety)
- becomes unusually aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- is bullying other children or siblings
- stops eating
- is frightened to say or communicate what is wrong
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone (possible cyber bullying)
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber-message is received (possible cyber bullying)

SEND Learners

Whilst some of our more vulnerable children and young people exhibit some of these signs when they come to us for support, we should be vigilant about new signs/ behaviours developing, which could indicate bullying. These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated.