The right support, at the right time

Anti-Bullying Policy

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This policy sets out the procedures and responsibilities for Anti-Bullying at the Leading Futures Alternative Provision.

Rationale

At Leading Futures, we are committed to fostering a nurturing and respectful environment where all staff and learners are valued, and positive relationships are built within our community. We believe in the importance of treating every individual with care and respect.

Bullying is unacceptable in any form and will not be tolerated, as it can have a profound and lasting impact on a learner's health, wellbeing, academic progress, and future experiences.

Policy

Bullying harms individuals and can have lasting effects. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all learners have access to a safe and secure learning environment, free from bullying and harassment.

We acknowledge that bullying may occur at any educational setting or work place, but we are dedicated to providing learners with the support and resources they need to report any incidents.

This policy is designed to establish a consistent approach for addressing and resolving bullying when it happens, ensuring a prompt and effective response from the provision.

Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy

- To create an environment where learners feel safe and free from bullying behaviours.
- Develop channels of communication so that learners feel comfortable to report bullying.
- Assert clearly that we do not tolerate bullying or any kind of harassment.

Guidelines

1. Recognising the Signs of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour which is intended to hurt, intimidate or humiliate another person and is usually repeated over time. However, a serious one-off incident may also be treated as bullying where the impact on the victim is significant. There is a culture of vigilance amongst staff and learners, and they look for the signs and symptoms of the following forms of bullying:

- Physical e.g. hitting, kicking, taking belongings
- Verbal e.g. name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks
- Indirect, e.g. spreading rumours or social exclusion
- Misuse of mobile phones and all forms of social media

Leading Futures staff recognise that any learner can be bullied but certain factors that can make bullying more likely are:

- A lack of close friends in the provision
- Shyness
- Race, religion, sexual orientation or social class
- A disability or some other obvious difference, e.g. stammering or acne

Our staff will suspect bullying is occurring if a learner:

- Becomes withdrawn and anxious
- Shows a deterioration in his or her work
- Starts to attend the provision erratically
- Has spurious illnesses
- Persistently arrives late at the provision
- Prefers to stay with adults

2. Specific Targeted Types of Bullying

2.1 Racist Bullying

- Verbal abuse by name calling, racist jokes and offensive language
- Physical threats or attacks
- Wearing provocative badges or insignia
- Bringing racist leaflets, comics or magazines
- Inciting others to behave in a racist way
- Racist graffiti or other written insults

2.2 Sexual Bullying

- Looks and comments about appearance, attractiveness, emerging puberty
- Inappropriate and uninvited touching
- Sexual name-calling, rumours or teasing
- Sexual innuendoes and propositions
- Pornographic material, graffiti with sexual content
- Sharing sexual images or messages without consent
- Online sexual harassment
- Pressuring someone into unwanted behaviour
- Behaviour that may constitute sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour

Incidents involving sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour will be managed in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and relevant statutory guidance.

2.3 Homophobic or Transphobic Bullying

- Spreading rumours
- Social isolation
- Text messaging
- Frightening looks
- In addition to more obvious forms of bullying, such as name calling

2.4 Cyber Bullying

Cyberbullying is the use of technology to harass, threaten, embarrass or target another person. Online threats and mean, aggressive, or rude texts, tweets, posts, or messages all count. So does posting personal information, pictures, or videos designed to hurt or embarrass someone else.

We will not tolerate this type of bullying and we could involve the police if such behaviour is occurring outside of the provision. We may also report to the police concerns raised about suspected content

on a learners phone that could cause harm to themselves or others. This may result in the police confiscating their phone.

Please see guidelines on Searching, Screening and Confiscation for further information.

2.5 Learners with Special Educational Needs

Learners with Special Educational Needs may face challenges in expressing their experiences as clearly as other learners. However, they are often at a higher risk of being bullied, both directly and indirectly, typically due to their specific difficulties or disabilities.

It is important to remember that any learner, regardless of their background, may experience bullying. Any characteristic or difference perceived by peers could potentially lead to bullying. At Leading Futures, we celebrate every person's uniqueness to challenge this status quo.

3. Preventing Bullying

At Leading Futures, we are committed to demonstrating, both through our curriculum and by setting a positive example, that bullying is completely unacceptable. Staff will never ignore incidents of bullying or suspected bullying and will take immediate action to prevent such occurrences wherever possible.

We encourage learners to report any bullying incidents to a teacher or another trusted adult. Learners will be reassured that they may bring a friend for support if they wish.

Leading Futures is dedicated to ensuring that all staff, learners, and parents/ carers are familiar with our anti-bullying and harassment policy. We will also recognise and celebrate acts of kindness and consideration, reinforcing the importance of treating others with respect and empathy.

We also use a range of proactive measures to prevent and tackle bullying including:

- We ensure all learners understand and uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Our Engagement For Learning Policy sets clear expectations about acceptable behaviour and how members of our community should treat one another.
- Our Personal Development curriculum includes opportunities for learners to learn about different types of bullying and what they can do to prevent and respond to bullying.
- Tutor Time provides regular opportunities to discuss issues that may arise in class and for tutors to target specific interventions.
- Guest speakers or assemblies help raise learners' awareness of bullying and derogatory language.
- Difference and diversity are celebrated across the provision through diverse displays, books and images. The whole provision participates in events including Anti-bullying week, Black History Month and LGBTQ+ History Month.
- The provision values equality, inclusion and respect and these are embedded across the curriculum to ensure that it is as inclusive as possible.
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and learners across the provision.
- The restorative justice process provides support to victims of bullying and those who show bullying behaviour.
- Learners are continually involved in contributing to provisions anti-bullying initiatives through the learner council and opportunities such as the Learner Voice survey.
- Working with parents and carers, and in partnership with community organisations, to tackle bullying where appropriate.

4. Reporting Bullying

All members of our community have a responsibility to identify and report bullying concerns.

- A victim can speak to their Tutor/ Class Teacher, another member of staff or email the provision.
- Parents/ carers can inform their son/ daughter's Tutor or Class Teacher.
- Learners concerned about others can inform our pastoral staff, Form Tutor or teaching staff, as well as making contact via email.
- Staff must inform the relevant Pastoral Staff/ Senior Staff of any concerns.
- Any physical attacks should be reported immediately to a Director and an Incident Report should be produced and recorded. See Leading Futures Engagement for Learning Policy.
- The perpetrators will be immediately separated from the victim.
- The victim will be reassured they were courageous for reporting the incident and will be protected.
- The parents/ carers of the perpetrator and victim will both be informed of the incident so that they can support their child at home.

4.1 Concerns Involving Adults

While this policy primarily addresses bullying between learners, Leading Futures recognises that learners may also raise concerns about the conduct of adults.

Any allegation that a member of staff has humiliated, bullied, intimidated or otherwise acted inappropriately towards a learner will be investigated under the appropriate safeguarding, complaints, whistleblowing and/or disciplinary procedures.

5. Addressing Bullying Incidents

At Leading Futures, any incident of bullying will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. Staff will provide support for the victim and ensure that the individual responsible for the bullying understands that such behaviour is unacceptable and goes against our core values.

When handling bullying incidents, our staff will:

- Never ignore bullying.
- Avoid making hasty assumptions.
- Listen carefully to all accounts of the situation.
- Use a problem-solving approach that encourages learners to find constructive solutions, rather than simply defending their actions.
- Conduct regular follow-up checks to ensure that the bullying has not resumed.

5.1 If a Learner is Bullied

Staff who receive a report of a bullying incident from a learner will refer the incident to a member of the pastoral team/ senior team who will:

- Listen to the learner's account of the incident.
- Reassure the learner that reporting the bullying incident was the right thing to do.
- Make it clear to the learner that he or she is not to blame for what has happened.
- Make a note of what the learner says.
- Interview those learners involved in the alleged bullying and any potential witnesses.

- Check CCTV, etc. for evidence if appropriate.
- When following up an incident listen carefully to all accounts – learners saying the same does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth.
- Issue the appropriate sanction where required.
- Explain that the learner should report any further incidents to the pastoral team or any other member of staff immediately.

Staff will ask the learner:

- What has happened to you?
- How often has it happened to you?
- Who was involved?
- Where did it happen?
- Who saw what happened?
- What have you done about it already?

If there are concerns that a learner is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm as a result of bullying, it should be treated with urgency. In some circumstances it may be appropriate to treat the matter as a child protection concern and it will be reported to the local authority's social care team.

5.2 Advice to Learners

Leading Futures will advise learners who are caught up in bullying incidents to:

- Stay calm.
- Remain with friends for support.
- Be firm and clear, tell the bully to stop.
- Remove themselves from the situation as quickly as possible.
- Immediately tell an adult what has happened.

The provision will advise learners involved in cyberbullying incidents to:

- Avoid retaliating or returning messages.
- Check what information is in the public domain.
- Keep any relevant evidence by taking screen shots if necessary.
- Prevent the incident from recurring, for example by changing contact details and blocking contacts.
- Contact the host where appropriate.
- Report the incident on the social media platform or to CEOP.

Where there is evidence that a phone has been used in a cyberbullying incident, senior members of staff can use disciplinary powers to confiscate the phone which may be passed to the police, parents/ carers.

Further pastoral support is available for learners who have been bullied.

6. Dealing with Serious Bullying

If the preventative measures and learner support strategies do not succeed, serious bullying will be

dealt with under the Leading Futures Engagement for Learning Policy when one or more of the following consequences may be issued:

- Be removed from the class.
- Lose any break or lunchtime privileges.
- Have any item that might have been used for cyberbullying confiscated.
- Be separated from other learners for their learning sessions.
- Be banned from an educational trip or sports event where these are not an essential part of the curriculum.
- Be suspended for a fixed period.

In the most serious cases, permanent exclusion may be considered as a consequence, if the bullying:

- Involves serious actual or threatened violence against another learner.
- Amounts to persistent and defiant misbehaviour.

7. Recording Incidents

All incidents of bullying and discussions with the learners involved will be recorded, along with the provisions response. Bullying is recorded on our electronic system and maintained by the Directors of Leading Futures.

Where bullying is motivated by a protected characteristic or perceived protected characteristic, the incident will be recorded as a prejudice-based incident. This includes incidents relating to:

- Disability
- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or belief
- Sexual orientation
- Gender reassignment

8. Preventing Recurrence

Senior Leaders will put in place appropriate strategies which may include:

- Mediation/Restorative Justice between the victim and the perpetrator.
- Informing parents/ carers of both victim and perpetrator about the investigation and actions taken.
- Setting up a Pastoral Support Plan for the perpetrator.
- Offering the victim additional pastoral support to ensure they feel heard and safe.
- Referring the perpetrator to other external agencies for additional support and intervention.
- Monitoring the relationship closely

9. Working with Parents/ Carers

The provision will work with parents/ carers in dealing with bullying. Preventing bullying in our provision is everyone's responsibility.

All staff, learners and parents/ carers should be aware that bullying can exist and share a commitment to combat it and to make the provision a happy place for everyone.

Parents/ carers and families are often the first to detect signs of bullying. Common physical symptoms include headaches, stomach aches, anxiety and irritability. The provision encourages parents/ carers who suspect that their son or daughter is bullying or being bullied to immediately contact the provision and make an appointment to see the learners Form Tutor as soon as possible.

Parents and carers will be informed of incidents and involved in discussions. The provision will discuss with parents/ carers how they can work together to stop the bullying.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The policy will be evaluated and reviewed every two years by the Directors.

Other Leading Futures Policies that link to this Policy include:

- Online Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Engagement for Learning Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy