

Anti Bullying Policy

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1. Introduction

Step into Learning (SIL) is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and inclusive environment for all students and staff. We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to bullying in any form.

Bullying is contrary to our core values and can have devastating, long-term effects on an individual's mental health and educational attainment. This policy aims to:

- Ensure that bullying is not tolerated on any SIL site, during off-site trips, in work placements, or within SIL accommodation.
- Provide clear procedures for staff and Trustees to report and respond to incidents.
- Assure learners and parents/guardians that all reports will be taken seriously and supported effectively.

This policy is informed by the DfE guidance '*Preventing and Tackling Bullying*' and the *Equality Act 2010*.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Step into Learning staff, learners and trustees.



3. Policy

Bullying is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It often involves an imbalance of power, making it difficult for the victim to defend themselves.

3.1 Harassment & Protected Characteristics

Under the Equality Act 2010, harassment is unwelcome conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating environment. SIL proactively challenges bullying motivated by prejudice against protected characteristics, including:

- Race, religion, or culture
- Gender, sexual orientation (Homophobic/Biphobic), or Gender Identity (Transphobic)
- Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND)
- Status as a looked-after child or young carer

3.2 Bullying vs. "Banter"

SIL distinguishes between playful "banter" and bullying. Banter becomes bullying when it is persistent, offensive, or intended to humiliate. We do not dismiss harmful behaviour as "just a laugh" or "boys being boys," as this risks normalising abuse.

3.3 Forms of Bullying

- **Physical:** Kicking, hitting, or any use of violence.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, or teasing.
- **Emotional/Social:** Isolation, exclusion, or tormenting (e.g., hiding personal belongings).
- **Cyberbullying:** Misuse of social media, email, or mobile devices to send threats or share harmful images/video .
- **Sexual Violence & Harassment:** Includes unwanted physical contact, sexually abusive comments, or "upskirting". These are treated as serious safeguarding concerns and may be criminal in nature.

3.4 Signs and Indicators

Staff must remain alert to changes in a learner's behaviour, such as:

- Sudden anxiety, withdrawal, or lack of confidence.
- Deterioration in work quality or unexplained attendance issues.
- Physical injuries or damaged personal property.
- Nervousness regarding mobile phone use or internet access.
- Extreme reactions, such as self-harm or suicidal ideation.

3.5 Procedures and Reporting

Anyone who witnesses or suspects bullying is expected to report it immediately to a member of staff or the Safeguarding Team.

1. **Immediate Action:** Stop the incident and ensure the victim is safe.
2. **Recording:** All incidents must be recorded on the **CPOMS** system.
3. **Investigation:** The Safeguarding Team will investigate promptly, involving parents/guardians where appropriate.
4. **Support:** Victims will receive emotional support; perpetrators will be challenged to change their behaviour through education and, where necessary, disciplinary action.
5. **Staff Bullying:** If a learner feels bullied by a member of staff, they should be directed to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)** immediately.

3.6 Monitoring and Review

The Safeguarding Team monitors bullying data via CPOMS to identify trends. This policy is reviewed annually by Senior Leadership and the Board of Trustees to ensure it remains effective and compliant with the latest DfE guidance.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

4.1 Staff Responsibilities

Staff members are the primary point of contact for learners and are responsible for the immediate environment.



- **Vigilance:** Staff must remain alert to physical or behavioural changes in learners, such as sudden anxiety, withdrawal, or unexplained attendance issues.
- **Immediate Action:** If an incident is witnessed, staff are expected to stop it immediately and ensure the victim is safe.
- **Reporting:** All witnesses or those who suspect bullying must report it immediately to the Safeguarding Team.
- **Documentation:** Every incident must be formally recorded on the CPOMS system to ensure a paper trail exists for every report.

4.2 The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) & Safeguarding Team

The DSL and their deputies (DDSL) manage the technical and investigative side of the policy.

- **Prevention:** Preventing the risk of bullying behaviours by way of staff training, learner education via PSHE and by embedding an internal culture that does not tolerate bullying behaviour.
- **Investigation:** The Safeguarding Team is responsible for conducting prompt investigations into reported incidents.
- **Parental Liaison:** They involve parents or guardians in the process where appropriate.
- **Resolution and Support:** The team ensures victims receive emotional support while challenging perpetrators to change their behaviour through education or disciplinary action.
- **Staff Concerns:** If a learner feels bullied by a member of staff, the DSL is the primary point of contact for that report.

4.3 Leadership and Trustees

Leadership provides the strategic oversight and ensures the organization meets its legal and ethical duties.

- **Monitoring Trends:** The Safeguarding Team and leadership monitor bullying data via CPOMS to identify patterns or high-risk areas.
- **Policy Maintenance:** Senior Management and the Board of Trustees review the policy annually to ensure it stays compliant with the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance.



- **Statutory Compliance:** Leadership ensures the organization meets its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Education Act 2002, which requires institutions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5 Primary Policy References

- **Department for Education (2017):** *Preventing and Tackling Bullying: Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies.*
- **Department for Education (latest version):** *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE).* (Statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment).
- **Equality Act (2010):** (UK Legislation providing a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity).

5.1 Supporting Resources & Guidance

- **Anti-Bullying Alliance:** *Bullying and the Law.*
- **Department for Education (2022):** *What we are doing to help combat bullying in education.*
- **Education Act (2002):** Section 175, which outlines the duty of further education institutions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

5.1 Supporting Step Into Learning Policies

- Safeguarding & Welfare Policy
- Online Digital Safety Policy
- Complaint Handling Policy