Bullying & Harassment Policy

Valid From	Review Date	Approved By
01.11.2026	01.11.2027	Matthew Ford & Shahed Koyes

Active Support Education Centre is a registered independent school supporting learners aged between 11 and 16 years old in Luton and Bedfordshire. We are committed to making it our mission to promote resilience and positive wellbeing for all our pupils and staff. We understand Wellbeing as state of being comfortable, healthy and happy. We will drive the message forward, to ensure that mental health is 'everyone's business' across the whole school community.

We will strive to create an environment that has a whole school approach, in providing excellent mental health support, understanding and intervention. We will put Wellbeing at the heart of our school to ensure successful learning and commit to our policies reflecting this.

1. Aims

1.1 The main purpose of this policy is to ensure that all staff are aware of the nature of bullying and the procedures for dealing with it, is set out in the Safeguarding policy.

1.2 We will strive to create an environment that has a whole school approach, in providing excellent mental health support, understanding and intervention. We will put Wellbeing at the heart of our school to ensure successful learning and commit to our policies reflecting this. Active Support will not tolerate bullying and believe in a pro-active policy towards managing bullying as set out in the Safeguarding and Wellbeing and Mental Health policies. Active Support believe that an individual's wellbeing is paramount to fulfilling one's potential and strive to challenge all forms of bullying.

1.3 Consistent application of the policy will lead to a school where bullying is perceived by all to be an anti-social and unacceptable activity that will always be challenged and dealt with.

2. Objectives

2.1 At Active Support we believe that any actions or words that are used for the express purpose of causing discomfort or harm to another person is bullying.

2.2 We recognise that bullying can cause extreme emotional distress to its victims and that no member of the provision's community should bully any other.

2.3 We regard all forms of bullying as serious, but recognise that bullying in the contexts outlined below requires a particularly firm response:

2.3.1 Bullying that takes place on a systematic basis towards one individual

2.3.2 Bullying that is perpetrated on a systematic basis by one individual or one group.

2.3.3 Bullying that is directed towards individuals who are particularly vulnerable.

2.4 Physical violence is not the only way in which bullying takes place and the seriousness of mental, verbal and emotional bullying must not be

underestimated. Banter is not acceptable in any form if it causes upset to a third party, regardless of the intention.

2.5 At Active Support we consider use of foul, racist, sexist, homophobic, bi-phobic or transphobic language to constitute bullying. The Equality Act 2010 states that it is a discrimination to treat any person unfavorably because of their race, sex, marital status, disability, age, sexual orientation, political or religious beliefs, or any other protected characteristics.

2.6 It is our intention to challenge all forms of bullying, to investigate all known incidents of bullying and to support the victims of bullying.

2.7 We believe that all members of Active Support have a part to play in preventing and dealing with bullying.

2.8 The impact of bullying and harassment can lead to illness, increased absenteeism, poor performance and an apparent lack of commitment or resignation. It can lead to tension and conflict between individuals impacting the education of learners.

3. Definitions

3.1 **Harassment** is any unwanted physical, verbal or nonverbal conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. A single incident can amount to harassment.

3.2 It is the deed itself and the impact on the recipient which determine what constitutes harassment rather than the intention of the perpetrator.

3.3 It is however important for employees to recognise that, in the work context, it is the legitimate role and duty of a manager to direct and instruct employees to monitor, provide feedback and to appraise the performance of duties required of them in their job.

3.4 Unlawful harassment may involve unwanted conduct of a sexual nature (sexual harassment) or it may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation. Harassment can include behaviour that individuals find offensive even if it's not directed at them, and even if they do not have the relevant protected characteristics themselves.

3.5 A wide range of behaviour can be identified as harassment and can involve any visual, physical or verbal conduct that is:

- unsolicited and unwanted;
- creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for one or more employees.
- an unwelcome term or condition for decisions that would affect continued employment, promotion, salary or any other job condition

Examples of different types of harassment (this list is not exhaustive) are as follows:

a) Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual advances or suggestive behaviour (which the harasser may perceive as harmless), sending or displaying material that is pornographic or that some people may find offensive (including emails, texts, video clips, internet postings). Provocative remarks, jokes or comments on physical appearance.

b) Racial Harassment

Derogatory name calling, racist jokes, reference to the colour of a person's skin, ridiculing cultural differences, making stereotypical remarks about particular ethnic groups, verbal abuse or assault.

c) Disability Harassment

Mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability. Ignoring or criticising a person because of their disability, name calling, derogatory or stereotypical remarks or jokes based on a person's disability.

d) Ageist Harassment

Ageist jokes or comments. Excluding a person from activities based on age. Demeaning or ridiculing competencies.

e) Sexual Orientation Harassment

Outing or threatening to 'out' someone as gay or lesbian. Homophobic jokes or remarks.

f) Religion or Belief Harassment

Disparaging or Stereotypical remarks about religious groups, offensive remarks or jokes, ridiculing religious dress. Lack of support for religious requirements.

g) Gender Reassignment Harassment

Mocking dress or personal appearance, offensive jokes, remarks or comments.

h) Associative Harassment

Denigrating or ridiculing a person based on their association with a protected group. Wrongful perception of a person because of their association with a protected group.

3.6 **Bullying** is defined by ACAS as behaviour that:

- Is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting
- Is an abuse or misuse of power and
- Uses means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient Bullying may include harassment and harassment may include bullying.

3.7 Bullying occurs when a person uses their superior strength or power persistently to coerce, persecute or oppress others by fear. It may take the form of humiliating or undermining an individual's skills and abilities to such an extent that they may become fearful, their confidence crumbles and they lose belief in themselves. This does not always arise from a superior/subordinate relationship and can result from unacceptable peer pressure.

Examples of bullying behaviour include:

- Physical or psychological threats constant criticism of competent staff or removing their responsibilities and trivial fault finding;
- Overbearing and intimidating levels of supervision exclusion, isolation, being singled out and treated differently;
- Being scapegoated, marginalised and belittled;
- Being shouted at, threatened, intimidated, persecuted, humiliated publicly;
- Being set unrealistic goals and deadlines, taking credit for work undertaken by others;
- Leave or training being unreasonably refused;
- Actively discouraging employees from seeking professional advice, including from professional associations and unions

This list is not exhaustive.

3.8 **Victimisation** occurs when someone is treated poorly because they have made or are supporting a complaint or raised a grievance under, or relating to the provisions of, the Equality Act or because they are suspected of doing so. Employees who make complaints or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result.

Any employee found to have victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action.

4. Key Principles to protect learners

4.1 Learners should feel safe and secure from bullying in all aspects of their time at Active Support.
4.2 Improved examination of other outcomes as a result of a safe and secure environment that supports learning.
4.3 Learners should be confident to report bullying whether they, or others, are the victims.
4.4 Learners should be confident that bullying will be dealt with seriously by the provision.
4.5 Staff are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of bullying.
A provision community that, as a whole, challenges bullying in all its forms.

5. Planning and Implementation:

5.1 The issues surrounding bullying will be addressed consistently in curriculum areas, by the Wellbeing team and staff meetings but especially through Equality and Diversity courses and training.

5.2 Response to incidents:

5.2.1 If a member of staff sees an incident of bullying, he/she must intervene immediately to stop it, and as soon as appropriate discuss with their line manager. The line manager will inform the Directors who will decide on what action to take.
5.2.2 If it is decided that it is a serious incident then a serious incident form will need to be completed which will be kept on the Director's server for record purposes. The incident must also be recorded on the online CPOMS giving brief details for referring agency/school information. (e.g., "bullying issue reported to Matt Ford).
5.2.3 Learners who are victims of bullying should report the fact to a member of staff or the wellbeing team.
5.2.4 Learners who witness incidents of bullying should report the facts to a member of staff or wellbeing team.
5.2.5 Parents who are concerned about bullying should contact Active Support staff or the Governors. Full details can be accessed from the Active Support Website.
5.2.6 All reported incidents of bullying must be recorded on the online CPOMS. The report must also include a summary of action taken.
5.2.7 Co-Headteachers will report all serious incidents at agreed intervals to the Governors.

6. Responsibilities and Rights of Employees

6.1 Every employee has a right to freedom from bullying or harassment. Any individual who believes himself or herself to have been subjected to harassment or bullying has the right to ask for it to stop and this includes the right to make a formal complaint.

6.2 Every employee has a responsibility to ensure that he/she does not incite, perpetrate or condone any form of bullying or harassment within his/her place of work. Any such action which cannot be resolved on an informal basis, or is more serious, or continues following a request to stop, will be subject to a formal investigation.

6.3 Employees should be aware that such behaviour in certain circumstances may also be unlawful and perpetrators may be held personally liable in the event of any legal proceedings.

6.4 Employees who are subjected to bullying or harassment should seriously consider seeking the support of a colleague(s), and their trade union/professional association in taking the procedure forward. Further information is available from HR and the Staff Handbook.

7. Responsibilities of Governing Bodies and Head teachers

While all employees have a responsibility for the prevention of unfair treatment, management including headteachers and governing bodies have a duty to ensure that harassment, bullying or victimisation does not occur in the workplace.
This can be achieved by:

- Ensuring awareness and availability of the policy to all employees
- Responding to and actively supporting any complainant by providing full and clear advice on the procedure to be followed
- Maintaining confidentiality ensuring that no repetition or victimisation occurs after the complaint has been resolved

8. Support and Action

8.1 In respect of victims and perpetrators of bullying, each case will be dealt with individually.

8.2 The Headteachers and Managers will discuss appropriate action with the linked member of staff.

8.3 Appropriate action for victims may include counselling and the temporary provision of “safe havens” whiles the matter is dealt with. It may include a change in timetable as part of that.

8.4 Appropriate action for perpetrators may include: informing parents, internal or external exclusion from the provision, counseling to tackle the causes of the behavior, being escorted to and from the provision, review of timetable in school.

8.5 In all cases, perpetrators will receive counselling from the Headteachers or other appropriate members of staff about the provision’s bullying policy and the reasons for it.

9. Monitoring, Review and Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Governors. The Headteachers will be responsible for the successful implementation of this policy and the accurate record of such incidents. This will be done through consultations with the keyworker staff, learner surveys and analysis of the incidents.