

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction

This policy has been developed in line with the legal requirements and statutory guidance. These obligations are highlighted in a range of government initiatives including:

- Children Act (2004) Education and Inspectors Act (2006)
- Equality Act (2010)
- Ensuring Good Behaviour in Schools (June 2011)
- Behaviour and Discipline in Schools (July 2011)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (June 2011)
- National Strategies on Behaviour and Attendance Wirral Anti-Bullying Guidance

This policy was originally developed by senior staff. This policy was developed March 2022 by Brendan Bell, Centre Manager.

The set review of this policy will take place in August 2022 by Brendan Bell, to come in line with other annual policy reviews.

This policy is available:

- Online via our website
- From the centre office, on request

Statement of Intent

We are committed to providing a caring, compassionate, trusting and safe community for all our learners so they can learn in a relaxed, safe and secure environment.

Bullying of ANY KIND is unacceptable at our training facility. If bullying does occur all learners should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. We are a TELLING PROVISION. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. NO ONE deserves to be a victim of bullying. EVERYBODY has the right to be treated with respect. Learners who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving.

Aims of this Policy:

The aims of the Cornerstone Vocational Training (CVT) Anti-Bullying Policy are therefore:

- To ensure that all those connected with CVT understand what is meant by the term 'bullying' and are aware that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated under any circumstances
- To prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying
- To promote an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable by everyone
- To ensure a safe, compassionate and trusting environment is created in which everyone is able to work and learn in harmony
- To provide a transparent, easily understood system for responding to reported incidents of bullying
- To fulfil its legal obligations and role within the local community, supporting parents and working with other outside agencies where appropriate
- To promote good character, ensuring learners act with integrity, respecting one another and the adults in school

Roles and Responsibilities

Creating a safe community is crucial for effective learning and ensures that all learners' rights for a positive training experience are met.

Expectations of appropriate learner behaviour are made explicit in our Behaviour Policy. This requires a whole provision approach which aims to develop a shared awareness, tolerance and understanding so that a consistent, just approach to bullying will be taken, all members of CVT sharing responsibility for preventing and combating bullying.

Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Dissemination of policy to whole of CVT
- Effective implementation
- Staff training and awareness raising
- Ensuring all adults who work with learners are aware of this policy and work within its framework
- Monitoring review and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy
- Liaising with LA to ensure best practice
- Managing the reporting and recording of bullying incidents
- Ensuring staff act as trustworthy role models for learners at all times

Staff

All CVT staff need to consider the influence of their own behaviour towards learners. All staff have a duty to ensure that their dealings with learners do not promote bullying by using:

- Deliberate humiliation
- Promoting the message that some people are “fair game”
- Official approval of status and power as a means of control
- A pronounced hierarchy where the message is ‘do as I say not as I do’
- Methods which make it difficult for learners to seek help if they are being victimised
- Any actions which betray learners’ trust
- Methods which leave no time to listen to vulnerable learners
- Treating learners differently from one another.

Instead, the staff should

- Treat learners with compassion and respect, ensuring justice is served
- NOT set up victims
- Presenting a positive, trusting role model – use power and authority with integrity
- Explicitly state that bullying is not acceptable and will always be challenged
- Actively seek to change learners’ attitudes towards bullying where appropriate.

Parents

- Should take their child’s concerns seriously
- Should let CVT know of their concerns as appropriate
- Support key messages being given to learners and where appropriate attend meetings and contribute in a positive way to actions aimed at solving any problems
- Support CVT in Restorative Justice processes
- Support CVT when sanctions are issued following incident of bullying in line with CVT’s Behaviour Policy

Learners

- Should treat the other members within CVT with respect and compassion, accepting differences and individuality
- Be a role model to other learners
- Not to intimidate, humiliate, bully or upset any other learner in CVT deliberately through word or deed
- Try to initiate a hierarchical system of status and power - all learners are equal
- Using CVT’s Code of Conduct as a guide to ensure that they are acting as good citizens inside and outside of CVT
- Trust other members within CVT to act with good character
- Demonstrate forgiveness when they have been wronged and have a ‘clean slate’

What is Bullying?

Bullying is the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim. The DfE states that bullying is “repeated behaviour that is intended to hurt someone physically or emotionally.” While there is no single definition of bullying, the DfE identifies three characteristics that are included in most definitions:

- The behaviour is intended to cause distress
- The behaviour is repeated
- There is an imbalance of power between the perpetrator(s)

Bullying can be:

- **Emotional** - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures)
- **Physical** - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- **Racist** - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- **Sexual** - unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments
- **Homophobic** - bullying comments regarding sexual orientation
- **Sexist** – discrimination on the basis of gender because of, or focussing on, the issue of sexuality
- **Transphobic** – any transgender bullying
- **Verbal** – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
- **Cyber** – all areas of internet, such as e-mail and internet chat room and social media misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technology, i.e. camera and video facilities
- **Religious Beliefs** – because of, or focussing on the issue of religion and belief

Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. Adults should be aware of these possible signs and that they should investigate if a child:

- Is frightened of walking to or from CVT
- Doesn't want to go to CVT / use public bus
- Begs to be driven to CVT
- Changes their usual route
- Is unwilling to go to CVT
- Begins to truant
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Starts stammering
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away
- Cries themselves to sleep or has nightmares
- Feels ill in the morning
- Begins to do poorly in CVT activities

- Comes home with clothes torn or books 'damaged'
- Has possessions which are damaged or 'go missing'
- Asks for money or starts stealing money
- Has dinner or other monies continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (money/lunch has been stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other children or siblings
- Stops eating
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above
- Is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone
- Is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received

These signs and symptoms could and may well indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Reporting and Responding to Bullying

All staff should respond immediately to any reported or witnessed incident of bullying. The incident should, in the first instance, be reported to the Centre Manager.

The Centre Manager will report the matter to the parents/carers of the victim and the bully.

If the matter is not be resolved at this level, it will then be referred to the Director, Peter Roberts.

All allegations about bullying should be dealt with as a matter of urgency and with integrity. Sensitivity and careful judgement should be applied when deciding on the most appropriate course of action, both when listening to reported incidents and when considering a just response.

Learners are encouraged to report any bullying either of themselves or others to any adult in CVT. Learners, if they prefer, can report bullying incidents and receive help through independent listeners such as:

- Tutor/Assessor
- Learning Mentors
- Peer Mentors
- Any Trusted Adult in CVT

A careful investigation of any reported incident is carried out. Records will include:

- Who was involved?
- Where and when it happened?
- What happened?
- What action was taken?
- How it was followed up?

The Centre Manager will ensure that a variety of measures are taken to help any victim of bullying during the course of an investigation.

These may include:

- Providing the learner with a safe haven at break or lunchtime
- Attachment to a friend for support
- Leaving the premises early at the end of the day
- Early boarding of a bus temporarily
- Contact with parents - this will be done regularly, often daily. Even if there is no progress in the investigation, due to staff absence etc, it is good practice to stay in regular contact with parents/carers to foster trust
- Inspection of CCTV

Punitive action, including the possible use of breaks in placement entitlement, is taken against learners who deliberately intimidate or assault other learners. Sanctions that are consistent with the offence and in keeping with the Behaviour Policy should be applied to any person found guilty of bullying another person. When bullying is more complex, usually when the violation is more psychological or thoughtless, the Senior Leadership Team apply discretion in the handling of the problem.

Bullies may be dealt with through

- Sanctions – e.g. having a break of the placement entitlement
- Contacting the home provider
- Contact with parents
- Restorative justice meeting

Victims of bullying will be provided with appropriate support and help from staff utilising some of the above strategies. Once the bullying has been dealt with, the victim will be followed up on to check that there has been no recurrence of the bullying.

A learner suspected of bullying will be given the opportunity to explain their behaviour during investigation. Only when the incident has been fully investigated may a learner be sanctioned to allow justice to be served.

Just sanctions will be applied fairly, proportionately, consistently and reasonably taking account of any additional needs or disabilities that learners may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable children. Bullying by these learners is no more acceptable than bullying by any other learners and it will be made clear to them that these actions are wrong and appropriate sanctions imposed.

However, for a sanction to be reasonable and lawful, we must take into account the nature of the child's additional needs and the extent to which the child understands and is in control of what he/she is doing.

Disciplinary penalties have three main purposes.:

- To impress on the perpetrator that what they have done is unacceptable
- To deter them from repeating this behaviour
- To signal to other learners that the behaviour is unacceptable and to deter them from doing it.

Parents who contact CVT to report their child has been bullied will have their concerns taken seriously. The landline is the first contact for parents telephoning CVT. Therefore, all staff should be familiar with the policy. Parents contacting CVT should be referred to the Centre Manager.

Good practice includes:

- Recognising that the parent may be angry or upset
- Remaining calm and understanding
- Keeping an open mind
- Making clear that CVT does care and that something will be done, explain CVT policy and make sure procedures are followed correctly
- Fostering a trusting, compassionate relationship with parents/carers
- Contacting parents regularly with updates during the investigation.

Involving Parents

- Parents of both the perpetrator and the victim should be informed by the Centre Manager as soon as bullying has been confirmed through investigation (an interim telephone call whilst an ongoing lengthy investigation is taking place is good practice).
- Thereafter parents should be communicated with regularly until the matter is resolved and a phone call advising them as to the final decision of CVT with regard to the incident.
- Parents of the bully should be invited in to discuss their child's behaviour where appropriate constructively at an early stage rather than as a last resort.
- If a parent contacts CVT to report that their child has been bullied their concerns should be taken seriously and they are referred to the appropriate Centre Manager. If they are unavailable then to the Director.

These staff should:

- Ask for details and record the information
- Make a further appointment to explain actions and to find out if they bullying has stopped
- Follow up with staff to ensure the appropriate action has been taken.
- Ensure the CVT policy has been implemented

As a training provider, it is important for us to work with parents to help them then understand the stance of CVT on bullying. We should offer a range of approaches to parents as appropriate to help them deal with their child's behaviour either in-house or by signposting the parents to appropriate channels of support including referral to appropriate Children's Services e.g. CAMHS, Educational Psychologist or use the EHAT process to involve other appropriate agencies.

If parents are unhappy with the outcome of an investigation despite every effort from CVT to resolve the situation, they should be informed of their right to complain, via the CVT's Complaints Procedure, to the Centre Manager/Director. Copies of this are available from the CVT.

Strategies for Preventing Bullying

The continuing response to bullying by CVT is to develop an ethos where bullying is seen as unacceptable. This will be driven forward by work carried out in various forms and using varied strategies.

Curricular Approaches

At CVT we believe that the most effective way of preventing bullying through the curriculum is to create effective learning environments in which:

- The contribution of all learners is valued and trusted
- All learners feel secure and able to contribute appropriately
- Stereotypical views are challenged and learners learn to appreciate and view positive difference in others, developing compassion and understanding
- Learners learn to take responsibility for their actions both in CVT and in the wider community, acting with honesty and integrity
- All forms of bullying and harassment are challenged
- Learners are supported to develop their social and emotional skills, i.e. through construction
- Learners are encouraged to have good character through the promotion of our British Values.

General Strategies to Prevent Bullying

- Supervision: students are supervised by trained staff at lunchtime and breaks. Staff are alert to potential problems and are in a position to deal with any incidents that occur in the centre and outside throughout these times.

- Short lunchtimes also help reduce the opportunity for bullying situations to arise. Staff need to be prompt to break duties and visible in the centre and outside at these times.
- Behaviour Policy – our positive behaviour policy helps all staff to ensure just and consistent sanctions are applied and avoids the use of sarcasm or threats.
- No blame approach
- Support for parents/carers- information/meetings with centre manager
- Support for all CVT staff-Through staff training and development for all staff including non-teaching staff involved in lunchtime supervision
- Safe place for learners to go to talk if bullying is taking place

Implementation

To ensure that the CVT community continues to adopt the policy of bullying we will keep awareness raised through the following:

- Displays
- New and continual staff induction and training

Monitoring

The monitoring of the policy will be an on-going process. All incidents of bullying will be logged by the centre manager. This will enable us to closely monitor any cases of bullying and it will inform us of:

- Number of incidents
- Type of incident
- Age of bully/victim
- Location of incident

The centre manager will collate and analyse the data and liaise with parents and the learners home school provider as appropriate.

Evaluation

In order to ensure the effectiveness of the policy a process of evaluation will be carried out.

This evaluation will involve consultation with the whole CVT community via:

- Staff meeting agenda item
- Collaboration with parents
- Learner voice surveys

If successful we hope to see

- A reduction in bullying incidents
- Learners more prepared to report bullying
- Learners less accepting of bullying
- Heightened awareness of bullying

The evaluation will be the responsibility of the centre manager.

Useful Organisations

Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) – www.anti-bullying.org

Brings together more than 65 organisations with the aim of reducing bullying and creating safer environments in which children and young people can live, grow, play and learn.

Mencap – www.mencap.org

Mencap is a learning disability charity that provides information and support to children and adults with a learning disability, and to their families and carers.

Stonewall – www.stonewall.org.uk

The lesbian, gay and bisexual charity.

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) – www.eachaction.org.uk

Educational Action Challenging Homophobia (EACH) is a charity and training agency helping people and organisations affected by homophobia. The website gives guidance, contact details and a freephone helpline.

School's Out – www.schools-out.org.uk

Provides both a formal and informal support network for all people who want to raise the issue of homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism in education.

Beatbullying – www.beatbullying.org.uk

Beatbullying is the leading bullying prevention charity in the UK and provides anti-bullying resources, information, advice and support for young people, parents and professionals affected by bullying.

Childnet International – www.childnet-int.org

Childnet International – the UK's safer internet centre.

Samaritans – www.samaritans.org

Have a free helpline on 116 123 or jo@samaritans.org.

CALM – www.thecalmzone.net

Support resource for males. Free telephone: 0800 585858

SANE – www.sane.org.uk

Mental health charity improving quality of life for anyone affected by mental illness – including family, friends and carers. Telephone: 0300 304 7000

Switchboard LGBT+ – www.switchboard.lgbt

LGBT telephone helpline. Telephone: 0300 330 0630

Childline – www.childline.org.uk

Counselling service for children and young people up to their 19th birthday. Free telephone: 0800 1111

Ask WESS – askwess@woodchurch-high.wirral.sch.uk