

POLICY

Education – Anti Bullying

Policy Author	Laura Dickie, Head of Policy Tonia Lewis, Education and Quality Improvement Lead
Approval Date	Feb 2026
Policy Approver	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
Next Review Date	Feb 2029
Version No.	001
Policy Level	Education
Staff groups affected	All Education

Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the service's established governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring that the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Proprietor Representative and Regional Lead.

A formal review of this policy will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance, or operational requirements necessitate it.

The Head of Policy will support this process by identifying relevant changes in legislation, regulation, national standards and emerging best practice. The Head of Policy will also incorporate learning from inspections, audits and practice developments into future revisions whilst overseeing all proposed amendments to the universal content to ensure accuracy, consistency and compliance.



David Horton

Head of Education



Tracey Wilson

Principal

Terminology

Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

Term	Definition
'Establishment' or 'Site'	A generic term referring to the school/college owned by CareTech.
Learner	Any child or young person under the age of 18, or young adult over 18 who receives education.
Service Head	The senior person with overall responsibility for the school/college.
Tutor/Teacher	Members of staff who have teaching responsibility for learners at the school/college.
Parent/Carer	Parent or person with parental responsibility.
Regulatory Authority	The independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services (e.g., Ofsted, Estyn, Education Scotland).
Social Worker	The worker allocated to the individual learner; if none is allocated, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	The local authority/agency responsible for placing the learner or commissioning the service.
Local Authority	The local authority for the establishment's location.
Staff	All staff working at the location, including employed staff, students on placement, contractors, agency staff, volunteers and proprietors.



1. Local Site Profile

The Forum School is an independent specialist day school providing education for pupils aged 7-19 years with Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), associated communication and interaction needs, and social, emotional and mental health needs. The school provides a highly structured, therapeutic learning environment that promotes emotional wellbeing, independence, resilience and positive relationships. Many pupils have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and benefit from personalised learning programmes, therapeutic support and reasonable adjustments to enable them to succeed academically, socially and emotionally. The school works closely with families, local authorities, therapists and other professionals to ensure pupils receive coordinated support. The Forum School promotes a culture of kindness, respect and acceptance where differences are celebrated and every pupil is supported to feel safe, valued and included.

2. Purpose

Every Learner has the right to learn and work in a safe, respectful environment. This policy sets out our universal approach to preventing, identifying and responding to bullying, including online harm. It applies across all sites, to all Learners (under and over 18), all members of the staff team/education team, Teachers/tutors, volunteers, contractors and visitors.

This policy provides a consistent framework that each site implements through the localised sections.

3. Scope

- Applies to all learning, social and residential contexts linked to the site (on-site, off-site visits, transport arranged by the site, work placements, online spaces and messaging connected to learning).
- Covers bullying between Learners, and between Learners and adults connected to the site.
- Interfaces with safeguarding, behaviour, online safety, equality/inclusion, complaints and data protection arrangements.

4. Local Adaptation Requirement (Adapt Locally)

Some sections in this policy are adapted locally. These sections are completed by each site to reflect local operational procedures or national equivalents (e.g., safeguarding framework, inspection remit, curriculum/quality framework, data protection contacts).^{**}

All local additions are:

- Accurate
- Up to date
- Consistent with national legislation and regulator guidance



- Fully aligned with the universal standards in this policy
- Where no local adaptation or local equivalent is required, the universal content remains fully applicable.

5. Legal and Regulatory Context

The Forum School is governed by the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements of the nation in which it operates. The universal standards in this policy are implemented in line with the correct national frameworks set out in **Appendices A–C**, which summarise the legal, regulatory and inspection requirements for England, Wales and Scotland.

6. Principles (Our Commitments)

- **Relational & trauma-responsive:** We prioritise safety, dignity and connection. Responses aim to stabilise, understand and repair harm, not to escalate distress.
- **Inclusive & equitable:** We recognise that some Learners are more at risk of bullying and require proactive support and reasonable adjustments.
- **Learner voice:** We make it easy, safe and routine to report concerns—privately or with a trusted adult.
- **Preventive culture:** We teach and model respect, digital citizenship, and bystander confidence in every phase/programme.
- **Clear, timely response:** Concerns are taken seriously and addressed promptly, fairly and proportionately.
- **Evidence-informed:** We record, analyse and act on data to reduce recurrence and improve practice.

7. What We Mean by Bullying

Bullying is repeated, intentional or pattern-forming behaviour that aims to cause physical, emotional or social harm, or to exercise power over another person or group. It may be:

- **Verbal/face-to-face:** name-calling, threats, humiliation, coercion, excluding or isolating.
- **Physical:** assault, unwanted contact, damage to property or belongings.
- **Social/relational:** rumours, intimidation, “silent treatment,” pressuring others to act harmfully.
- **Online/cyber:** posts, images, doxxing, impersonation, harassment, non-consensual sharing of content, group-chat pile-ons.
- **Prejudice-based:** involving hostility or derogatory language/actions linked to protected or personal characteristics (e.g., race/ethnicity, religion/belief, disability/ASN/ALN/SEN sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, care-experienced status, socioeconomic background, appearance). Bullying is different from ordinary conflict: it involves a power imbalance (perceived or actual).

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Principal

- Sets culture, ensures resourcing, approves local procedures, and assures impact through governance reporting.

Teachers/tutors & staff team (including residential/support teams)

- Teach and model respectful relationships and digital conduct.
- Notice early indicators; respond proportionately; record and escalate concerns.
- Implement agreed supports and reasonable adjustments.

Education leaders/curriculum/programme leads

- Embed anti-bullying education across the curriculum and FE programmes; coordinate workload-aware responses and restoration.

Designated safeguarding lead(s) / Local safeguarding team

- Advise on threshold, coordinate with the multi-agency team, maintain oversight of risk and safety plans.

Learners

- Treat others with respect; report concerns for self or others; participate in restorative processes where safe and appropriate.

Parents/carers and partners

- Work with the site to resolve concerns and sustain positive relationships.

9. Prevention (Culture, Curriculum and Skills)

We build a culture where bullying is unlikely to thrive through:

- **Teaching:** proactive curriculum on respect, consent, digital literacy, bystander action, and prejudice-based bullying (age/phase appropriate, including FE contexts).
- **Staff competence:** regular training on trauma-responsive practice, online trends, and prejudice-based harm.

Anti-bullying education is delivered through:

- Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education.
- Relationships and Health Education.
- Computing and Online Safety lessons.
- Tutor and class discussions.
- Assemblies and themed awareness events.
- Individual therapeutic and social skills programmes.
- Social communication interventions and emotional regulation work.

Pupils are taught:



- How to recognise bullying and discrimination.
- How to seek help safely.
- Online safety and responsible digital behaviour.
- Healthy relationships and respectful communication.
- Strategies for self-advocacy and bystander support.

Reporting and Help-Seeking

Pupils can raise concerns through:

- Any trusted member of staff.
- Their tutor or class teacher.
- The safeguarding team.
- Worry boxes or pupil voice opportunities.
- Parent/carers communication where appropriate.

Any concern raised will be taken seriously and responded to promptly.

10. Responding to Concerns (Trauma-Responsive Process)

Step 1 — Stabilise & listen: Ensure immediate safety; listen without judgment; avoid compelling disclosure; signpost next steps; consider communication needs and reasonable adjustments.

Step 2 — Record & triage (same day): Log accurately; check for indicators of prejudice-based harm, online harm, exploitation, or group dynamics; review history for patterns.

Step 3 — Plan: Agree proportionate actions—support for the targeted Learner(s), fair process for those alleged to have caused harm, contact parents/carers where appropriate (age/consent-aware), and decide if safeguarding threshold is met.

Step 4 — Act & support: Implement supports (Section 10); consider restorative approaches where safe/appropriate; apply sanctions only where proportionate and educative; address online footprint (takedown/reporting).

Step 5 — Review: Re-check with Learners; adjust support; record outcomes; analyse for learning.

Response Timeframes

- Initial concern acknowledged on the same school day wherever possible.
- Safeguarding concerns referred immediately in line with safeguarding procedures.
- Parents/carers informed within 1-2 working days where appropriate.
- Review of agreed actions normally within 10 school days.

Appeal or Complaint

Parents/carers who remain dissatisfied may access the school's Complaints Policy.

Recording

Bullying incidents are recorded using the school's safeguarding and behaviour recording systems and monitored by senior leaders to identify patterns and trends.

11. Support for Learners (Under and Over 18)

- **Targeted by bullying:** named adult; safe spaces; timetable/placement adjustments; catch-up and assessment flexibility; therapeutic input; digital hygiene coaching; travel/residential safety plan.
- **Those who caused harm:** structured reflection; reparative tasks; coaching on empathy/digital conduct; proportionate consequences; monitored re-integration.
- **Groups/classes:** restorative circles or facilitated discussions, if safe and consented.
- **Online harm:** guidance on evidence capture; platform reporting; privacy/security resets.

Support may include:

- Key adult mentoring.
- Therapeutic interventions.
- Emotional regulation support.
- Social communication work.
- Pastoral support.
- Safe spaces and structured check-ins.
- Individual risk assessments and safety plans where required.

Multi-Agency Pathways

Where concerns indicate additional need, referrals may be made to:

- Children's Social Care.
- Local Authority SEND teams.
- Educational Psychology Services.
- CAMHS.
- Health professionals.
- Early Help services.

12. Online/Cyber Bullying

Expectations apply in all learning-related digital spaces. The site uses approved platforms; staff do not use personal accounts with Learners. Learners are taught how to report, block, preserve evidence and seek help quickly.

Platform List and Controls

The school uses approved educational platforms and internet filtering and monitoring systems in line with statutory guidance.

Reporting Online Abuse

Pupils, parents/carers and staff should report online bullying immediately to:

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- A member of the senior leadership team.

- The relevant online platform where appropriate.

Evidence such as screenshots should be retained where safe to do so.

13. Prejudice-Based and Targeted Bullying

We take a zero-ambivalence stance on prejudice-based bullying (e.g., disability/ASN/ALN/ASL/race/ethnicity, religion/belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, care-experienced status, socioeconomic background, appearance). Responses consider identity-based impact, power dynamics and wider group effects. Leaders monitor patterns and reduce disparities.

The Forum School is committed to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion. Bullying incidents linked to disability, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or any protected characteristic are monitored and reviewed by senior leaders as part of the school's safeguarding and quality assurance processes.

Reporting Hate Incidents

Any hate-related incident will be treated seriously, investigated promptly and recorded in line with safeguarding and behaviour procedures.

14. Reasonable Adjustments and Accessibility

We adapt processes, communications and learning tasks to remove barriers for Learners (including disabilities, neurodivergence, SEMH needs, EAL). Flexible reporting options, accessible formats and adjusted timelines are available.

Access Planning

Relevant adjustments are recorded within:

- EHCP documentation.
- Individual pupil support plans.
- Behaviour support plans.
- Risk assessments where appropriate.

Assistive Technology and Communication Support

Pupils may access:

- Visual supports.
- Alternative communication systems.
- Assistive technology.
- Modified reporting processes.
- Adult-supported advocacy.

15. Recording, Data and Privacy

- Record concerns/actions/outcomes on the site system; flag repeat patterns.
- Collect the minimum necessary personal data; store securely; follow retention rules.
- Use aggregated data to drive prevention and improvement.

Case System

Bullying concerns are recorded on the school's safeguarding and behaviour management systems. Access is restricted to authorised staff with safeguarding or leadership responsibilities.

Analytics Cadence

Incident data is reviewed:

- Twice weekly by safeguarding leads
- Termly by senior leaders
- Annually as part of policy review and governance reporting.

16. Safeguarding

Bullying can be a symptom or driver of wider risk (on-site, online, at home, in the community, in residences/work placements). We treat bullying concerns as safeguarding-relevant by default and apply a trauma-responsive approach:

16.1 Early identification & threshold thinking

- Consider indicators of **significant harm** or **risk of harm** (e.g., coercion, sexual harassment/violence, criminal or sexual exploitation, self-harm, hate incidents, persistent online abuse, group pressure, threats to safety).
- For **over-18 Learners**, consider adult-safeguarding concerns, capacity, and consent; balance autonomy with duty to protect.
- Where threshold is met, **escalate immediately** via the site safeguarding procedure.

16.2 Immediate safety & stabilisation

- Safety planning for targeted Learners (environmental tweaks, supervision, timetable changes, contact restrictions, travel/residential adjustments).
- Limit contact between parties while enquiries proceed; avoid actions that escalate distress; prioritise dignity and choice.

16.3 Information sharing & consent

- Share information **lawfully, proportionately and on a need-to-know basis** with the multi-agency team when risk is identified; record rationale.
- For adults, assess capacity and obtain consent where appropriate; override only where justified by risk/serious harm tests.
- Keep Learners informed about what will be shared and why; offer advocacy or a trusted adult.

16.4 Online/contextual safeguarding

- Consider **contexts** (class, residence, transport, local community, online platforms).
- Take steps to reduce ongoing harm (report to platforms; secure evidence; educate peer group; amend access/visibility settings).

16.5 Multi-agency coordination

- Consult/escalate to local safeguarding partners as needed; follow agreed local thresholds and referral pathways.
- Align anti-bullying actions with any child/adult protection plan or early-help plan; avoid duplicated or conflicting actions.

16.6 Documentation & review

- Record decisions, actions, and outcomes; set review points; monitor for recurrence or escalation; capture Learner voice in reviews.

5. Key contacts and safeguarding management team

David Horton	Head of Education	DSL	07879 538432
Tracey Wilson	Principal	DDSL	07732 600688
Sarah Howe	Assistant Head Teacher	DDSL	07823 402346
Chloe Beevers	Behavioural Support Assistant	DDSL	251
Melissa McCarthy	Regional Lead	DDSL	07917 048872
If you are unable to contact the above, please contact:			
Kerry Byron	Head of Care	DDSL	07525 629525
Mark Rogers	Registered Manager	DDSL	07525 632629
Hannah Everard	Registered Manager	DDSL	07525 629524
PLEASE NOTE: if there is not any of the senior management team above present eg OUT OF HOURS , then please contact the SENIOR ON CALL			
If you are not satisfied or cannot contact any of the above, please contact a more senior manager or director of the company as outlined below:			
Graham Norris	Operations Director of Education		07580 864354
Jeremy Wiles	Group Executive Director – Children’s Services		0208 735 6150
LADO Martha Sharp, Laura Taulk and Lynne Bowman. LADO@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Dorset LADO Tel 01305 221122			
Local Child Safeguarding Board Tel Office hours 01305 221196 Out of Hours 01202 65727			
Local Adult Safeguarding Board Tel Office hours 01305 221196 Out of Hours 01202 657279			

In the event that none of the above can be contacted a more senior manager, a Director of the Company can be contacted or Ofsted/CQC/CIW, local safeguarding board/partners, the police or the Whistleblowing Hotline – on **0800 086 9128** can be used.

YOU MUST DO SOMETHING STRAIGHTAWAY AND BE TOTALLY SATISFIED THAT YOU HAVE BEEN TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

17. Training and Competence

All staff receive induction and regular refreshers on: recognising bullying (incl. online and prejudice-based), trauma-responsive conversations, safe documentation, restorative practice, and the safeguarding interface.

18. Quality Assurance and Governance

Leaders monitor: reporting volumes, response times, repeat incidents, prejudice-based patterns, Learner/parent feedback, staff training completion, and impact of prevention/education. Findings feed improvement planning and governance reporting.

19. Communication and Publishing Duties

- This policy is published on the school website in an accessible format; the school office will provide alternative formats/languages on request.
- The school office provides a plain-language summary to Learners and parents/carers at induction and re-shares annually.
- Reporting routes and safeguarding information is shared around the site and on Learner platforms.

20. Linked Policies and Procedures

- **Safeguarding / Child & Adult Protection**
- **Online Safety / Acceptable Use / Filtering & Monitoring**
- **Positive Behaviour Support**
- **Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**
- **Inclusion**
- **SEND / ASN / ALN**
- **Data Protection**
- **Records Management**
- **Complaints & Whistleblowing**
- **Curriculum/Tutorial Frameworks**
- **Work-based Learning / Placement Agreements** (where relevant)
- **Residential home Anti-Bullying and Safeguarding / Child Protection Policy**

Legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks underpinning anti-bullying in England

Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE) Guidance updated 2017

- **Means:** National guidance for leaders and staff on preventing and responding to bullying (including online); applies to schools and is useful for FE settings.
- **Requires:** A whole-site approach, clear reporting routes, proportionate responses, and targeted support for vulnerable Learners.
- **Our stance:** We embed prevention, early help and equitable access to help-seeking across all programmes and ages.
- **Implementation example:** Site behaviour/relationships policy references this guidance; incident logs show actions, outcomes and learner voice.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/preventing-and-tackling-bullying>
- **Behaviour in Schools (DfE) updated 2024**
- **Means:** Non-statutory guidance that sets behaviour policy expectations, including responses to peer-on-peer abuse and incidents online.
- **Requires:** A published behaviour policy, consistent practice, and proportionate sanctions alongside support to prevent recurrence.
- **Our stance:** Anti-bullying practice is part of the behaviour curriculum and daily routines, not a standalone activity.
- **Implementation example:** Walkthroughs and work scrutiny show how routines, language, and restorative approaches reduce recurrence.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/behaviour-in-schools--2>

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026

- **Means:** Statutory guidance for schools and colleges how cater for under 18s on safeguarding; covers child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment/violence and online harm.
- **Requires:** Clear reporting/escalation, DSL oversight, staff training, safe recording, and coordinated support when bullying indicates wider risk.
- **Our stance:** All bullying concerns are triaged through safeguarding; thresholds and multi-agency team engagement are applied consistently.
- **Implementation example:** Case files show same-day logging, threshold decisions, parent/carer updates and review points.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Equality Act 2010

- **Means:** UK-wide law prohibiting discrimination, harassment and victimisation; relevant to prejudice-based bullying and reasonable adjustments.
- **Requires:** Eliminate unlawful conduct, advance equality of opportunity, foster good relations; evidence of accessible anti-bullying processes.
- **Our stance:** We design reporting, responses and curriculum messages to prevent prejudice-based bullying across all characteristics.



- **Implementation example:** Termly review of prejudice-based incident data with actions and communication to Learners and staff.
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents>

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (ISS)

- **Means:** Standards independent schools must meet (e.g., welfare, health and safety; leadership; complaints); anti-bullying sits within welfare & leadership.
- **Requires:** Safe culture, effective behaviour and anti-bullying arrangements, compliant information/complaints and leadership oversight.
- **Our stance:** Proprietor and Headteacher/Principal review anti-bullying data and compliance at least termly.
- **Implementation example:** Governance minutes and compliance checks link incidents, actions and ISS Parts 3/8 assurance.
- **Links:** <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/3283>

Ofsted: Education Inspection Framework (schools)

- **Means:** National inspection framework; inspectors consider behaviour, attitudes, personal development and safeguarding culture (bullying included).
- **Requires:** Evidence that Learners feel safe, bullying is rare/handled well, and staff act quickly and proportionately.
- **Our stance:** We maintain an inspection file with live evidence of prevention, response times, outcomes and learner voice.
- **Implementation example:** EIF evidence map: policies, logs, staff training records, learner surveys, and trend analysis.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-handbooks-and-frameworks>

Ofsted: Further Education & Skills inspection

- **Means:** Toolkit and operating guides for inspecting FE & skills providers under the EIF; includes whole-provider safeguarding and inclusion.
- **Requires:** Providers show safe culture, effective reporting, and proportionate responses to bullying across adult and 16–19 cohorts.
- **Our stance:** Anti-bullying is embedded in induction, tutorials and programme leadership across FE provision.
- **Implementation example:** FE inspection pack: tutorial plans, incident analysis by programme, reasonable-adjustment records, and learner feedback.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-toolkit-operating-guide-and-information>

Appendix B — Wales

Legislation, guidance and regulatory frameworks underpinning anti-bullying in Wales

Rights, Respect, Equality 2019



- **Means:** Statutory guidance for schools on preventing, recording and responding to bullying, including prejudice-based and online.
- **Requires:** A whole-site strategy, accessible reporting, consistent responses, recording/monitoring and engagement with Learners and parents/carers.
- **Our stance:** We use the guidance to shape the behaviour/relationships policy and incident workflow.
- **Implementation example:** Annual policy review evidences use of RRE definitions, data trends and improvement actions.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.wales/rights-respect-equality-guidance-schools>

Keeping Learners Safe 2022

- **Means:** National safeguarding guidance for schools and colleges; bullying escalates where risk indicates harm.
- **Requires:** Clear reporting/escalation, DSP arrangements, information-sharing, and multi-agency coordination for concerns arising from bullying.
- **Our stance:** All bullying concerns are screened against safeguarding thresholds for under-18s and coordinated through the site safeguarding team.
- **Implementation example:** Case records show same-day logging, threshold decisions, referrals where needed, and review of safety plans.
- **Links:** <https://www.gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe>

Estyn: Inspection (schools and post-16)

- **Means:** Estyn's published approach and resources explain what/how inspection considers wellbeing, care, support, guidance and safeguarding (bullying in scope).
- **Requires:** Evidence of safe culture, effective reporting, consistent practice and improvement planning; applies across schools and post-16.
- **Our stance:** We keep an inspection pack aligned to Estyn's "what/how we inspect" resources (independent schools and independent specialist colleges).
- **Implementation example:** Inspection folder with policy links, incident analytics, learner voice, and QA cycles available via the VIR on request.
- **Links:** <https://estyn.gov.wales/inspection-guidance-resources/>

Equality Impact Statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individual's rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice across all services. The potential impact of the policy on children, young people, young adults, families, and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010.

No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing, and participation for every individual. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through ongoing review and quality assurance.