

Policy for Counter Bullying

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Staff Groups Affected	All Staff

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1. Monitoring and Review

The Policy Author will undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later one year from the date of approval shown above, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:



Samantha Price

Principal

September 2025

2. Background

The school and care leadership teams expect that every allegation of bullying will be taken seriously. Children with ASC can have difficulties with perspective and taking and misreading social cues, which means that they could misinterpret the intentions and actions of others. Any allegation from a child who perceives they are being bullied should be taken seriously even if this appears to be a misperception. We take time to ensure that all staff, children and parents/Carers are aware of the effects of bullying on individuals and the school community as a whole. We all have a role in creating a safe and positive learning environment

3. Scope

This policy applies to all children and all forms of bullying

4. Aims of the Policy

Cambian Spring Hill aims to create an environment where children can grow and flourish without fear. Each child has the right to be safe in and out of school and to be protected when they are feeling vulnerable. We aim:

- To improve the quality of life of children.
- Ensure that children learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied.
- To reinforce that the school and Children's Home takes bullying seriously and that it will not be tolerated.
- To take measures to prevent all forms of bullying in the school, at home and during off-site activities.

- To support everyone in actions to identify and protect those who might be bullied.
- To clarify for all children and staff that bullying is wholly and always unacceptable.
- To demonstrate to all that the safety and happiness of children is essential.
- To promote an environment where children feel they can trust and tell adults if they are being bullied or know about any bullying.
- To promote positive attitudes in children that foster resolution skills.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of their duty of care over those in their charge and highlight the need to be alert to the signs of bullying.
- To ensure that all staff are aware of procedures through regular updating of practice.

Staff and carers also recognise that it must take note of any bullying perpetrated outside school as this can have an impact on an individual child inside the school, and the signs/symptoms will be the same. Staff/carers will do what is reasonably practicable to support how such incidents of bullying are addressed.

5. What is Bullying?

The UK's Anti-Bullying Alliance and its members have a shared definition of bullying based on research from across the world over the last 30 years.

ABA defines bullying as:

“The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power. It can happen face to face or online”

There are four key elements to this definition:

- Hurtful.
- Repetition.
- Power imbalance.

Intentional.

Bullying behaviour can be:

- Physical – pushing, poking, kicking, hitting, biting, pinching etc.
- Verbal - name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, threats, teasing, belittling.
- Emotional – isolating others, tormenting, hiding books, threatening gestures, ridicule, humiliation, intimidating, excluding, manipulation and coercion.
- Sexual – unwanted physical contact, inappropriate touching, abusive comments, homophobic abuse, exposure to inappropriate films etc.
- Online /cyber – posting on social media, sharing photos, sending nasty text messages, social exclusion.

- Indirect - Can include the exploitation of individuals.

Behaviours that do not constitute bullying include:

- Mutual arguments and disagreements (where there is no power imbalance).
- Not liking someone or a single act of social rejection.
- One-off acts of meanness or spite.
- Isolated incidents of aggression, intimidation or violence.

Policies relating to this one;

- Positive Behaviour
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Curriculum
- PHSE
- Online Safety

6. Signs and Symptoms

A child may indicate, by signs or behaviour, that they are being bullied. All staff should be aware of these possible signs and they should investigate if a child. The following list is not exhaustive:

- is unwilling to go to school
- becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- starts stammering
- attempts or threatens self-harm
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares or unexpected bedwetting
- regularly feels ill in the morning
- begins to underperform/disengage with their learning
- arrives with clothes torn or books damaged
- has possessions damaged or go missing
- has unexplained cuts and bruises
- stops eating
- is frightened to say what is wrong
- changes their usual routine

All staff should be aware of these possibilities and act promptly on any suspicions of bullying using the procedures outlined below:

7. Procedures

1. Listen carefully and calmly, and document what the child tells you

Ensure a private place to talk. Do not dismiss their concerns or make them feel they are at fault. Listen to their account fully first and then ask them (and maybe others) questions to get more detail. Avoid the terms 'bully' or 'victim' and instead talk about the behaviour of everyone involved, including bystanders.

Clarify if there are immediate safety risks and let the child know how you will address these. If there are, normal safeguarding procedures should be followed.

2. Collect additional information

Ask for any evidence from the child. Speak with all others involved, including bystanders and other staff. Be alert to your legal responsibilities regarding evidence if the incident may constitute a crime. Keep records on behaviour watch. Ensure you have information that answers who, what, where, when, how, why. Children's views on why bullying is happening can suggest ways the setting can respond.

3. Discuss with the multi-disciplinary team and share a plan of action with the child(ren)

Where appropriate, discuss the concern with the relevant adults to ensure an holistic response in developing a plan of action. This could include parents/carers, the Head of Education, Registered Manager, Clinical team, Student Support and Wellbeing officer and/or the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Once you are confident you have a comprehensive picture of the situation, discuss a plan of action with the child(ren). Refer to the relevant policies in terms of expectations and implications. Where appropriate, the plan may include a restorative practice session. Where this forms part of the action plan, the meeting should be recorded using appendix 1.

Invite suggestions from children as appropriate.

Inform all children involved, of your intention to inform their parents/carers or social worker.

4. Inform the child(ren) what you intend to do

Provide as much information as you can without violating the privacy of other children or parents/carers. Also, inform them about when you are planning to follow up with them after implementing the plan. Explain that you will look at immediate and short-term responses as well as other long-term preventative measures or efforts to promote a positive school and home environment. Seek support from the clinical team to support children with significant communication difficulties.

5. Provide suggestions about what to do if the bullying occurs again

Have information on hand to share with children or set up a meeting for them to talk about strategies with an appropriate staff member or offer an independent person such as the NYAS or Reg44 visitor. Ensure they are aware of who they can talk to, signpost to the Student Support and Wellbeing Officer for additional support when needed.

6. Set a date for follow up review/s

Bullying can require a sustained effort to prevent, particularly if situations are long-standing. Reviews are critical to check in with children and to ensure the setting's efforts have not caused other problems or created a problem elsewhere.

7. Record the incident in the child's data management system, Behaviour Watch

8. Notify appropriate personnel

Refer the matter to the responsible person: DSL, DDSL, Registered Manager, Vice Principal or Principal.

9. Contact the parent/guardian/Social Worker about the incident and your course of action

If parents/guardians/Social Care have not yet been involved in the process of planning the course of action (Step 3), advise them of the incident and the resulting course of action. Including reference to this policy and guidelines. Refer parents/carers to the responsible officer for further consultation if required.

10. Follow up with the child(ren) over the next several weeks and months

It is essential to be alert to ongoing bullying, particularly the possibility that the bullying can 'reappear' in another form sometime later.

8. Restorative Practice

If left unchecked, without intervention, bullying issues in schools or residential settings can result in interpersonal conflict, which leaves two or more people feeling angry, hurt, resentful, anxious or even afraid.

When in conflict, people need:

- A chance to tell their side of the story – their experience.
- Express their thoughts and feelings.
- Understand better how the situation happened.
- Understand how it can be avoided another time.
- To feel understood by the others involved.
- An acknowledgement of the harm caused, if not an apology.
- To find a way to move on and feel better about themselves.

Cambian Spring Hill School will seek to use restorative approaches in liaison with the in-house clinical team to establish the most appropriate methods to employ with the children involved in the process.

The potential advantages of restorative approaches in the school setting include:

- A safer, more caring environment A more effective teaching and learning environment.
- A greater commitment by everyone for taking the time to listen to one another.
- A reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts.
- Greater awareness of the importance of connectedness to young people. The need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults.
- Greater emphasis on responses to inappropriate behaviour that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect young people.
- Reductions in fixed-term and permanent exclusions.
- Greater confidence in the staff team to deal with challenging situations.
- An increased belief in the ability of young people to take responsibility for their choices, and more people giving them opportunities to do so.

9. Further Reading and Resources

https://www.restorativeschoolstoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Restorative%20chat%20-%205%20themes%20explanation_0.pdf

https://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Restorative_Practice%20-%20FINAL_0.pdf

<http://www.restorativethinking.co.uk/schools/resources/>

<https://www.socialthinking.com/>

Restorative Practice Meeting Template