

Compass Learning & Education

Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2026

Policy Owner: Director – Rosie Aylward

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL): Rosie Aylward

Review Cycle: Annual

Next Review Date: 1st September 2027



1. Policy Statement

Compass Learning & Education is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment in which all learners feel secure, valued and able to engage positively in their education. Bullying in any form undermines safety, dignity and wellbeing and will not be tolerated.

The provision recognises that bullying can cause significant emotional harm, long-term psychological impact, reduced attendance, disengagement from learning and increased vulnerability to exploitation or harm. Within an Alternative Provision context, learners may already present with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs or have experienced trauma. It is therefore essential that bullying is addressed promptly, proportionately and within a safeguarding framework.

Bullying is never dismissed as “banter”, “part of growing up”, or a normal aspect of peer relationships. Where behaviour meets safeguarding thresholds, it will be managed in line with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy and relevant statutory guidance.

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Inclusion Policy
- Use of Reasonable Force Policy

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone’s responsibility.

2. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as behaviour that is repeated, intentional and involves a real or perceived power imbalance, which causes physical, emotional or psychological harm.

Bullying can manifest in a number of forms and may occur face-to-face or online. It can involve an individual or a group targeting another individual or group.

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

Physical bullying, such as hitting, pushing, tripping, damaging belongings, intimidating physical gestures, or threatening violence.

Verbal bullying, including persistent name-calling, insults, derogatory remarks, mocking, threats, or humiliation.

Emotional or relational bullying, such as deliberate exclusion, spreading rumours, manipulating friendships, coercion, or public embarrassment.

Cyberbullying, which involves the use of digital technologies to intimidate, threaten, shame or humiliate. This may include social media harassment, abusive messaging, sharing images without consent, or coordinated online targeting.

Prejudice-based bullying, which targets a person because of a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, sex, gender reassignment, or because they are looked after, previously looked after, have SEND, or are perceived to be “different”.

A single serious incident may also be treated as bullying where the impact is significant.

The provision recognises that bullying may overlap with child-on-child abuse and harmful sexual behaviour and will be escalated accordingly.

3. Context of Alternative Provision

Compass Learning & Education operates within an Alternative Provision context, working with learners who may have experienced disrupted schooling, exclusion, adverse childhood experiences, unmet SEND needs, or SEMH vulnerabilities.

The provision recognises that:

- Learners may have experienced bullying themselves.
- Behaviour can be a form of communication.
- Power imbalances may exist linked to age, maturity, social standing, confidence or vulnerability.
- Trauma may impact emotional regulation and social interaction.

However, vulnerability does not remove accountability. Every learner has the right to feel safe, and every learner has a responsibility to behave in a way that does not harm others.

The provision adopts a contextual safeguarding approach, recognising that bullying behaviour may be influenced by wider peer dynamics, online environments or community factors.

4. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by and compliant with:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE)
- Equality Act 2010
- Education and Inspections Act 2006

- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- SEND Code of Practice (2015)
- Human Rights Act 1998

Under the Equality Act 2010, the provision has a duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between groups.

Where bullying constitutes harassment, hate-related abuse, sexual harassment, assault or exploitation, safeguarding procedures will be followed in line with the Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy.

5. Preventing Bullying

5.1 Whole Provision Culture

Preventing bullying is central to the culture of Compass Learning & Education. The provision actively promotes:

- Respect
- Responsibility
- Resilience

Expectations are explicitly taught and reinforced through:

- Clear behaviour systems
- Visible adult presence and supervision
- Consistent routines
- High expectations for language and conduct
- Immediate challenge of discriminatory or harmful language

Staff model respectful interactions at all times and intervene early where relational conflict is observed.

5.2 Curriculum and Education

Through the Personal Development curriculum, learners are taught about:

- Healthy and respectful relationships
- Consent and boundaries
- Equality and protected characteristics
- Online safety and digital responsibility
- Bystander responsibility
- The impact of bullying on mental health
- Harmful sexual behaviour

Education is preventative and developmentally appropriate.

6. Reporting Bullying

Learners are actively encouraged to report concerns about themselves or others.

Reports may be made to:

- Any trusted member of staff
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead
- A mentor or key worker
- Via a parent/carer

The provision recognises that children may not disclose concerns directly. Staff must maintain professional curiosity and respond to changes in behaviour, attendance or emotional presentation.

All staff must:

- Listen carefully
- Avoid leading questions
- Reassure the learner
- Explain next steps
- Record concerns promptly and factually
- Inform the DSL without delay

No learner should ever feel they are causing trouble by reporting bullying.

We also have an anonymous anti-bullying reporting post-box, where students can share all concerns they may have, without fear of reprisal.

7. Responding to Bullying

7.1 Immediate Safety

The first priority is safety. Where there is immediate risk:

- Learners will be separated.
- Supervision levels will be adjusted.
- Risk assessment will be undertaken.

7.2 Investigation

The DSL or senior leader will conduct a prompt and proportionate investigation, considering:

- The nature of the behaviour
- Frequency and pattern
- Power imbalance
- Contextual factors
- SEND vulnerabilities
- Safeguarding thresholds

All parties will be treated fairly. The views and wishes of the child will be considered wherever possible.

7.3 Outcomes

Outcomes will be proportionate and may include:

- Restorative processes
- Formal correction
- Behaviour support plan
- Parental involvement
- Suspension
- Referral to external agencies
- Placement termination (as a last resort)

Where appropriate, restorative approaches will be used to repair harm, provided this is safe and agreed by the victim.

8. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is treated as seriously as in-person bullying. The provision recognises that online behaviour can:

- Amplify humiliation
- Spread rapidly
- Persist beyond school hours
- Increase emotional harm

Where online behaviour impacts the safety or wellbeing of learners, the provision may act even if the behaviour occurred outside of provision hours.

Incidents involving illegal content, including sexual imagery, will be managed in line with safeguarding procedure.

9. Supporting the Victim

The welfare of the victim is paramount.

Support may include:

- Immediate reassurance
- Safe space arrangements
- Regular check-ins
- Emotional support or mentoring
- Referral to CAMHS or external agencies
- Adjustments to timetable or supervision
- Ongoing monitoring

Victims will never be blamed for reporting concerns.

10. Supporting the Perpetrator

Where bullying behaviour occurs, support may also be required for the learner responsible. This may include:

- Behaviour reflection and restorative work
- Emotional regulation support
- SEND review
- Risk assessment
- Multi-agency referral
- Targeted intervention work

Addressing underlying need does not remove consequences.

11. Child-on-Child Abuse Threshold

Where bullying includes:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Coercion
- Exploitation
- Serious assault
- Hate-related incidents

It will be managed as child-on-child abuse in line with safeguarding procedures.

The DSL will determine whether referrals to Children's Social Care or the Police are required.

12. Recording and Monitoring

All incidents are recorded securely.

Leadership reviews incidents:

- Weekly (operational oversight)
- Termly (pattern analysis)
- Annually (policy evaluation)

Patterns relating to protected characteristics, SEND, gender or vulnerability are monitored to ensure compliance with equality duties.

Data informs preventative planning and staff training.

13. Roles and Responsibilities

Director

The Director ensures:

- Policy compliance
- Oversight of safeguarding trends
- Appropriate training
- Culture of openness and challenge

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL:

- Leads investigation of serious cases
- Undertakes risk assessments
- Refers to external agencies
- Ensures information sharing with commissioners
- Monitors patterns

Staff

All staff must:

- Model respectful conduct
- Challenge harmful language
- Report concerns immediately
- Maintain professional curiosity

Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Treat others with dignity
- Report concerns
- Engage in restorative processes
- Take responsibility for behaviour

14. Malicious Allegations

Where an allegation is proven to be deliberately false or malicious, this will be treated as serious misbehaviour and addressed in line with the Behaviour Policy.

However, the provision will always ensure that this does not discourage genuine reporting.

15. Review and Continuous Improvement

This policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if required by:

- Changes in statutory guidance
- Serious incident review
- Pattern analysis
- Commissioning requirements
- Ofsted feedback
- The provision remains committed to continuous improvement in safeguarding culture and practice.