SP01 – Anti Bullying Policy

RISE Learning Zone.
Balloon Woods,
Coventry Lane,
Bramcote,
Nottingham.
NG9 3GJ

2025

Reason	Amendment Details	Author	Date
1st Issue	Updated policy	Kirsty Sanders	09.24
2nd	Updated policy	Kirsty Sanders	09.26

Last update: 09.2026

Next review: 09.2028

Reference: SP-01

Full Policy Sign Off

Signed 

Printed Kirsty Sander

Position Director

Dated 09.2026

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Statement and Commitment

Rise Learning Zone CIC is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment in which every learner is able to learn without fear of bullying, intimidation, harassment, discrimination or abuse.

Bullying in any form is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Rise recognises that bullying can have a significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance, engagement, educational progress and sense of safety. In some circumstances, bullying may also constitute a safeguarding concern or child-on-child abuse.

All members of the Rise community have a responsibility to prevent bullying, challenge inappropriate behaviour and report concerns. This includes learners, parents and carers, directors, staff, tutors, pastoral staff, volunteers, agency and sessional staff, visitors and professionals working with Rise.

We will:

- take all reports and concerns about bullying seriously
- listen to learners and ensure their voice is central to our response
- act promptly to establish what has happened
- protect and support learners who have experienced bullying
- address the behaviour of learners displaying bullying behaviour
- consider whether there are underlying safeguarding, SEND, communication, social, emotional or mental health needs contributing to behaviour
- work with parents/carers, commissioning schools and external agencies where appropriate
- record and monitor incidents and patterns
- take proportionate action under our Behaviour Policy
- refer safeguarding concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).

Sanctions and interventions will be proportionate to the seriousness, frequency, context and impact of the behaviour.

Rise will not automatically permanently exclude or terminate a placement because bullying has occurred. Decisions will be made on an individual basis, taking account of safeguarding duties, the needs of all learners involved, the commissioning arrangements and the Behaviour Policy.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- prevent bullying wherever reasonably possible
- create a culture in which learners feel safe to report concerns
- establish a consistent definition and understanding of bullying
- ensure bullying is identified and stopped as quickly as possible
- ensure learners affected by bullying receive appropriate support
- ensure learners displaying bullying behaviour receive appropriate intervention
- establish clear procedures for reporting, recording, investigating and monitoring incidents
- identify patterns of behaviour and emerging safeguarding concerns
- ensure appropriate action is taken in relation to online and off-site bullying
- challenge prejudice, discrimination and harmful attitudes
- provide clear information for learners, parents/carers, staff and other professionals.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all learners attending Rise Learning Zone CIC and to all adults working for or on behalf of the organisation.

Rise may respond to bullying:

- on Rise premises
- during lessons, interventions, enrichment or vocational activities
- during break and lunch periods
- during educational visits and off-site activities
- while learners are travelling to or from Rise
- on school or public transport
- online or through social media, messaging services, gaming platforms or other technology
- in the local community
- outside normal provision hours where the behaviour affects the safety, welfare or education of a Rise learner or has a detrimental effect on the orderly operation of the provision.

4. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy has regard, where applicable, to relevant legislation and statutory or national guidance, including:

- Children Act 1989
- Children Act 2004
- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003
- Public Order Act 1986
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Department for Education guidance on preventing and tackling bullying
- Department for Education guidance relating to behaviour in schools
- Department for Education guidance relating to online safety
- local safeguarding arrangements and procedures.

Where bullying behaviour may constitute a criminal offence or places a child at risk of significant harm, Rise will consider referral to the police, Children's Social Care or other appropriate agencies.

5. What Is Bullying?

Rise adopts the widely used Anti-Bullying Alliance definition:

Bullying is 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.

The four key elements are therefore:

hurtful

intentional

repetitive

involving an **imbalance of power**.

An imbalance of power does not have to relate to physical strength. It may arise from popularity, social status, age, numbers within a group, access to information or images, perceived intelligence, communication ability, disability, vulnerability or another personal characteristic.

Bullying can be perpetrated by an individual or group and can be directed towards an individual or group.

6. Bullying and Other Harmful Behaviour

Not every disagreement, argument or isolated incident constitutes bullying. Learners may experience conflict, friendship difficulties or one-off incidents of inappropriate behaviour which do not meet the definition of bullying. However, a serious one-off incident does not need to meet the definition of bullying for Rise to take action. A single incident of violence, sexual harassment, discriminatory abuse, threatening behaviour or another form of harmful behaviour may constitute a serious behaviour incident and/or safeguarding concern. Staff must therefore never dismiss a concern simply because the behaviour has occurred only once.

7. Forms of Bullying

Bullying may include, but is not limited to:

Physical bullying	hitting kicking pushing punching biting pinching spitting damaging possessions taking possessions deliberately invading another person's physical space.
Verbal bullying	name-calling insults threats mocking teasing belittling intimidating comments spreading rumours making offensive or humiliating comments.
Emotional or relational bullying	deliberately excluding someone social isolation humiliation manipulation coercion threatening gestures intimidation spreading rumours encouraging others to exclude someone deliberately damaging friendships or relationships.
Online or cyber bullying	abusive or threatening messages social media posts group chats sharing photographs, videos or screenshots without consent creating fake accounts or profiles impersonation online exclusion spreading rumours online harassment through gaming platforms sharing humiliating or manipulated content encouraging others to target another person online.
Sexual or Sexist bullying	sexual comments or jokes sexualised name-calling unwanted sexual comments unwanted physical contact sexual harassment comments about a person's body sexual rumours displaying or sharing sexual material

	pressure to send sexual images unwanted sharing of intimate images behaviour based upon sexist attitudes or stereotypes. Sexual harassment or sexual violence must be treated as a potential safeguarding concern and managed in accordance with Rise's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.
Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying	Behaviour connected with, or perceived to be connected with: race or ethnicity nationality religion or belief disability special educational needs sex sexual orientation gender reassignment pregnancy or maternity appearance family circumstances socioeconomic circumstances another perceived difference. Discriminatory incidents must be challenged and appropriately recorded even where they do not meet the repeated-behaviour definition of bullying.

8. Banter

Learners may describe harmful comments or behaviour as "banter". Banter is not an acceptable defence for behaviour which causes harm, humiliation, distress or intimidation.

Staff will consider:

- the impact of the behaviour rather than simply the stated intention
- whether everyone involved genuinely considered the interaction acceptable
- whether there was an imbalance of power
- whether someone felt unable to object
- whether the behaviour targeted a protected or personal characteristic
- whether there is evidence of repetition or escalation.

Where a learner is distressed, intimidated or humiliated, staff will respond appropriately regardless of whether the person responsible describes their behaviour as a joke or banter.

9. Baiting and Provocation

Baiting involves deliberately provoking another person in order to obtain a reaction. This can occur face-to-face or online and may include deliberately attempting to make another learner angry or distressed so that they react and subsequently get into trouble. Staff must investigate the circumstances leading up to an incident rather than considering only the final reaction. A learner's reaction to sustained bullying, provocation or baiting does not remove the responsibility to investigate the behaviour that preceded it.

10. Learners Who May Be Particularly Vulnerable

Any learner can experience bullying. Rise recognises, however, that some children may be particularly vulnerable because of actual or perceived differences. These may include children:

- with SEND
- with communication difficulties
- with disabilities or medical conditions
- in care or previously in care

- receiving social care support
- who are young carers
- experiencing poverty or disadvantage
- who have experienced bereavement or trauma
- from minority ethnic or religious backgrounds
- who are questioning or exploring aspects of their identity
- who do not conform to perceived gender stereotypes
- who are socially isolated
- with allergies or health needs
- who are new to the provision
- who have previously experienced bullying or abuse.

Staff must be particularly alert to learners whose SEND or communication needs may make it more difficult for them to recognise, explain or report bullying.

A learner's vulnerability must never be treated as the cause of bullying.

11. Bullying as a Safeguarding Concern

Bullying can be a form of child-on-child abuse and may constitute a safeguarding concern. All staff must maintain an attitude that **"it could happen here"**. Staff must not dismiss harmful behaviour between children as:

- "banter"
- "just having a laugh"
- "part of growing up"
- "boys being boys"
- "girls falling out"
- similar explanations.

Such attitudes risk normalising harmful behaviour. Where bullying involves, or may involve:

- significant physical harm
- sexual violence or sexual harassment
- coercion or exploitation
- threats of serious violence
- harmful sexual behaviour
- discriminatory or hate-related abuse
- persistent harassment
- sharing of intimate images
- serious online abuse
- criminal behaviour
- self-harm or suicidal thoughts
- significant emotional harm.

Or any concern that a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, staff must report the matter immediately to the DSL or Deputy DSL in accordance with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The DSL will determine whether further safeguarding action or referral is required.

12. Preventing Bullying

Rise aims to create an environment in which bullying is less likely to occur. We will do this by:

- establishing clear expectations for respectful behaviour
- promoting an inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture
- teaching learners about healthy and respectful relationships
- teaching online safety and responsible use of technology
- challenging prejudice and discriminatory language
- providing opportunities through PSHE and the wider curriculum to discuss bullying, relationships, consent, equality and online behaviour

- ensuring learners understand how to report concerns
- encouraging learners to speak to a trusted adult
- appropriately supervising learners during less structured periods
- identifying areas or times where bullying may be more likely to occur
- providing appropriate staff training
- working with parents/carers and commissioning schools
- monitoring behaviour records for patterns and trends
- listening to learner voice.

Staff will model respectful, inclusive and courteous behaviour at all times.

13. Reporting Bullying

Learners can report bullying to any member of staff. They may do so:

- verbally
- in writing
- through an agreed reporting mechanism
- through a parent/carer
- through their commissioning school
- through another learner
- through another trusted professional.

Learners will be regularly reminded that reporting bullying is not "snitching". Learners who witness bullying are encouraged to report what they have seen or heard. No learner should be disadvantaged, punished or deliberately treated unfavourably because they have reported bullying or supported another person in making a report.

14. Staff Response to a Report of Bullying

When a member of staff receives a report or identifies possible bullying, they must:

Listen and reassure	Listen carefully and take the concern seriously. Reassure the learner that they have done the right thing by speaking to an adult. Do not promise confidentiality. Establish whether the learner is currently safe.
Record	Make an accurate record of: what has happened who was involved when and where incidents occurred how frequently the behaviour has occurred witnesses relevant online evidence the impact upon the learner any immediate action taken. Records must distinguish clearly between fact, allegation, observation and professional opinion.

Consider safeguarding	Consider whether the behaviour constitutes or may constitute a safeguarding concern. Where there is any doubt, consult the DSL or Deputy DSL.
Listen to the learner's views	Ask the learner: what they would like to happen what would help them feel safe whether there are particular times, locations or situations in which they feel unsafe what support they need. The learner's wishes and feelings should inform the response, although staff cannot promise to take only the action requested by the learner where safeguarding duties require further action.
Investigate promptly	Appropriate staff will speak separately with those involved and any witnesses. Staff should avoid bringing learners together during the initial fact-finding stage where this could cause additional distress, intimidation or contamination of accounts.
Take action	Appropriate action will be taken to: stop the behaviour protect the learner affected address the behaviour of the learner responsible communicate expectations clearly implement appropriate consequences provide support reduce the likelihood of recurrence.
Inform relevant adults	Parents/carers will normally be informed where appropriate. The commissioning school and/or relevant professionals may also be informed in accordance with placement arrangements, safeguarding requirements and information-sharing principles.
Review	The situation will be monitored and reviewed to establish whether the bullying has stopped and whether further intervention is required.

15. Supporting a Learner Who Has Experienced Bullying

Support will be individualised and may include:

- an identified trusted adult
- regular pastoral check-ins
- safety planning
- adjustments to supervision
- changes to seating or grouping arrangements
- support at arrival, departure or break times
- emotional literacy or wellbeing interventions
- SEND support
- support with online safety
- communication with parents/carers
- liaison with the commissioning school
- referral to external services where appropriate
- ongoing monitoring.

Learners should not ordinarily be expected to make significant changes to their education simply to avoid the person displaying bullying behaviour.

16. Responding to Learners Displaying Bullying Behaviour

Rise recognises that any learner may display bullying behaviour and that such behaviour may itself indicate unmet needs, previous experiences of harm or other safeguarding concerns. We therefore avoid labelling children as "bullies". Staff will address the **behaviour** rather than defining the child by that behaviour.

Our response may include:

- clear boundaries and consequences
- restorative work where appropriate
- individual behaviour plans
- pastoral intervention
- work on empathy and relationships
- social and emotional learning
- SEND assessment or support
- increased supervision
- parent/carer meetings
- liaison with the commissioning school
- risk assessment
- safeguarding intervention
- referral to specialist services.

Support for the learner displaying bullying behaviour does not reduce Rise's responsibility to protect the learner who has experienced harm.

17. Restorative Practice

Rise may use restorative approaches where appropriate. Restorative practice focuses on understanding harm, taking responsibility and repairing relationships. However, restorative meetings will not automatically be used in every case.

Before using restorative practice, staff will consider:

- the wishes of the learner who has experienced harm
- any imbalance of power
- safeguarding concerns
- the risk of intimidation or further harm
- whether the learner responsible accepts some responsibility
- whether participation is genuinely voluntary.

A learner who has experienced bullying will not be required to participate in a face-to-face restorative meeting. Restorative practice must never replace safeguarding action where safeguarding intervention is required.

18. Consequences and Sanctions

Bullying behaviour will be addressed in accordance with Rise's Behaviour Policy.

Consequences will take account of:

- seriousness
- frequency
- intent
- impact
- age and developmental understanding
- SEND
- vulnerability
- previous incidents
- safeguarding considerations
- the learner's response following the incident.

Serious or persistent bullying may result in increased sanctions, risk-management measures, meetings with parents/carers and commissioners, and review of the placement. Where suspension, termination or change of placement is being considered, decisions will be made in accordance with Rise's relevant policies, contractual/commissioning arrangements and safeguarding responsibilities.

19. Online Bullying

Online bullying will be treated as seriously as face-to-face bullying.

Online behaviour can occur at any time and can rapidly reach a large audience. Material can also remain accessible after the original incident.

Where appropriate, Rise may ask learners or parents/carers to preserve relevant evidence;

- advise learners not to retaliate online
- support reporting or blocking of accounts
- provide online safety advice
- contact parents/carers
- liaise with the commissioning school
- report safeguarding concerns
- seek specialist advice
- involve the police where appropriate.

Learners must not be instructed to forward sexual or intimate images to staff as evidence. Any concerns involving nude or semi-nude images must be managed under safeguarding procedures.

20. Bullying Outside Rise

Bullying may occur outside the provision, including:

- on public or school transport
- near Rise
- in local shops or public areas
- within learners' home communities
- online
- during evenings, weekends or holidays.

Where off-site behaviour is reported and has an impact upon the welfare, safety or education of a Rise learner, Rise will consider what action it is reasonable and appropriate to take.

This may include liaison with:

- parents/carers
- commissioning schools
- transport providers
- Children's Social Care
- police
- safeguarding partners
- other relevant agencies.

21. Criminal Behaviour and Police Involvement

Some behaviour associated with bullying may constitute a criminal offence. Examples may include:

- assault
- theft
- criminal damage
- harassment
- threats
- hate crime
- sexual offences

- malicious communications
- offences relating to intimate images.

Where a criminal offence may have occurred, the DSL and/or senior leadership will consider whether police involvement is appropriate. Where anyone is at immediate risk of serious harm, emergency services should be contacted.

22. Prejudice-Based and Discriminatory Incidents

Rise will challenge discriminatory behaviour and language whenever it occurs. This includes racism, antisemitism, anti-Muslim hostility, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, disablism and other forms of prejudice or discrimination. An incident does not have to be repeated to warrant action. Relevant incidents will be recorded so that leaders can identify patterns involving:

- individual learners
- groups
- protected characteristics
- particular locations
- times of day
- emerging attitudes within the learner population.

Appropriate education and intervention will be provided alongside any disciplinary response.

23. Recording and Monitoring

All confirmed or suspected bullying incidents must be appropriately recorded using Rise's recording systems.

Records should include:

- learners involved
- nature/category of behaviour
- dates and locations
- whether the behaviour occurred online
- whether discriminatory or prejudice-related factors were involved
- safeguarding considerations
- actions taken
- parent/carer contact
- commissioning-school contact where applicable
- consequences or interventions
- support provided;
- review/outcome.

Senior leaders and the DSL will periodically review records to identify patterns, repeated incidents and emerging safeguarding concerns. Information from monitoring will be used to inform:

- staff deployment
- supervision arrangements
- curriculum planning
- PSHE
- individual interventions
- risk assessments
- staff training
- wider provision improvement.

24. Staff Responsibilities

All staff must:

- remain alert to signs of bullying
- challenge inappropriate and discriminatory behaviour

- listen to learners
- take reports seriously
- record concerns accurately
- report safeguarding concerns to the DSL
- maintain appropriate confidentiality
- implement agreed interventions
- model respectful behaviour
- contribute to a culture in which learners feel safe to report concerns.

Staff must not assume that another adult will deal with a concern.

25. Role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The DSL will:

- provide advice where bullying overlaps with safeguarding
- ensure child-on-child abuse concerns are managed under safeguarding procedures
- consider referrals to external agencies where appropriate
- ensure safeguarding records are maintained
- identify patterns or links between incidents
- support appropriate information sharing
- work with commissioning schools and safeguarding partners where necessary.

26. Role of Senior Leaders

Senior leaders will ensure:

- the policy is implemented consistently
- staff understand their responsibilities
- learners understand how to report bullying
- appropriate training is provided
- behaviour and bullying records are monitored
- safeguarding concerns are escalated appropriately
- supervision arrangements are reviewed where patterns emerge
- the effectiveness of anti-bullying arrangements is regularly evaluated.

27. Working With Parents and Carers

Rise aims to work constructively with parents and carers. Parents/carers are encouraged to:

- report concerns promptly
- preserve relevant evidence where appropriate
- avoid confronting other learners directly
- avoid posting information about incidents or other children on social media
- support agreed interventions
- communicate with Rise where concerns continue.

Parents/carers who believe that bullying has not been appropriately addressed may use Rise's Complaints Procedure.

28. Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

Rise recognises that effective anti-bullying practice is inseparable from equality, diversity and inclusion. We will promote an environment in which difference is respected and valued. We will actively seek opportunities to:

- challenge stereotypes
- challenge racism and discrimination
- promote equality
- celebrate diversity

- develop empathy
- promote respectful relationships
- ensure learners feel they belong ensure learners understand that discriminatory behaviour and language are unacceptable.

29. Learner Voice

Learners will be given opportunities to contribute to the development of a safe environment. This may include:

- discussions during induction
- PSHE activities
- individual pastoral conversations
- learner questionnaires
- learner voice activities
- reviews following incidents.

Learner feedback will be used to identify areas where learners feel safe or unsafe and to improve Rise's anti-bullying arrangements.

30. Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Information about bullying will be shared only with those who need it for the purposes of safeguarding, supporting learners, investigating concerns or fulfilling professional responsibilities. Staff must never promise a learner absolute confidentiality. Where information needs to be shared to protect a child, the child's safety and welfare will take priority.

31. Links With Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside Rise Learning Zone CIC's:

- Safeguarding Policy and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Acceptable Use/Technology Policy
- Complaints Policy
- relevant risk assessment and safeguarding procedures.

Where an incident reaches the threshold of a safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy takes precedence.

32. Monitoring and Review

Rise Learning Zone CIC will monitor the effectiveness of this policy through:

- analysis of behaviour and bullying records
- safeguarding records
- learner voice
- parent/carer feedback
- staff feedback
- commissioning-school feedback where appropriate
- review of repeated incidents and patterns.

The policy will be formally reviewed at least annually and sooner where:

- legislation or statutory guidance changes
- safeguarding guidance changes

- an incident identifies a weakness in existing procedures
- monitoring indicates that changes are required.