Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out South Cumbria Skills Exchange (SCSE), operated by Whamos Training and Development CIC's commitment to preventing and responding to bullying. We believe every learner has the right to feel safe, respected and able to engage with the provision without fear of being bullied.

This policy reflects Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2024), the DfE's Preventing and Tackling Bullying guidance (2017), and the Equality Act 2010.

2. Scope

This policy applies to bullying:

- Between learners, in any direction
- Online (cyberbullying), whether on SCSE devices or otherwise where it affects a learner's safety or engagement at SCSE
- Of a learner by a member of staff, volunteer or contractor (this is also addressed via the Safeguarding Policy and allegations procedures)
- Of a member of staff by a learner or third party (this is also addressed via the Safe Recruitment and Whistleblowing Policies)

It covers all settings — on SCSE premises, on educational trips and off-site activity, and any online environment connected to the provision.

3. Definition

Bullying is unwanted, repeated behaviour by an individual or group that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally. Bullying can take many forms and is often motivated by prejudice. Key features are:

- **Repetition** — bullying happens more than once, or has the threat of being repeated
- **Imbalance of power** — the person bullying has more power (real or perceived) than the person being bullied
- **Intent to harm** — the behaviour is meant to cause distress or harm

A single significant incident may not technically meet the definition but is still treated seriously and addressed promptly.

4. Forms of bullying

We recognise that bullying takes many forms, including:

- **Physical** — hitting, kicking, pushing, taking belongings

- **Verbal** — name-calling, threats, insults
- **Indirect / relational** — spreading rumours, exclusion from groups, deliberate isolation
- **Cyberbullying** — bullying carried out through digital means including social media, messaging apps, gaming platforms, online forums; including sharing of images, doxing, group exclusion, impersonation
- **Prejudice-based** — bullying motivated by:
- Race, ethnicity or nationality (racist bullying)
- Religion or belief
- Sex or gender
- Sexual orientation (homophobic, biphobic bullying)
- Gender identity (transphobic bullying)
- Disability or learning difference (disablist bullying, including ableism)
- Socio-economic background
- **Peer-on-peer abuse** — bullying that crosses into the territory of abuse and so is also a safeguarding matter (see Safeguarding Policy)

5. Why SCSE takes a particularly active stance

Learners placed with SCSE often arrive having experienced bullying at previous provision, sometimes over years. Many are neurodivergent and disproportionately likely to be targets. Our cohort needs a setting where:

- The default is psychological safety
- Adults model respect and address every incident promptly
- Restorative approaches are used wherever possible
- Where a child has been the target of bullying, our role is to support recovery, not to ask them to "be more resilient"
- Learners who exhibit bullying behaviour are also treated as children needing support to change, not simply as offenders

6. Prevention

SCSE prevents bullying through:

- A clear and visible expectation, communicated at induction, that bullying in any form is not tolerated
- A relational, trauma-informed approach where every learner has a trusted adult
- Active listening: weekly check-ins where learners can raise concerns
- A curriculum that includes age-appropriate conversations about prejudice, online safety, and consent
- Adult modelling of respectful interaction, including how to disagree without harm
- Quick, visible response to any concern raised, so learners see that reporting works

7. How a learner can report bullying

A learner who is being bullied, or who is concerned about someone being bullied, can:

- Speak to any member of SCSE staff
- Speak specifically to their named mentor or session lead
- Speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (Elizabeth Amos-Milburn) or Deputy DSL (Alexandra Gager-Liebhart)
- Ask a parent, carer or commissioning school contact to raise it on their behalf
- Use the anonymous reporting box at reception
- Email the directors directly

Where the learner is too distressed to articulate the concern verbally, alternative routes (writing, drawing, indicating photos of the people involved) are offered.

A learner is told what will happen next and is kept informed of progress.

8. How parents and carers can raise a concern

A parent or carer who suspects their child is being bullied at SCSE should contact:

- Their child's session lead or mentor in the first instance
- The Directors (elizabeth@cumbriaskills.org.uk or lexie@cumbriaskills.org.uk)
- The commissioning school's DSL, who will also liaise with SCSE

Parents will be invited to a meeting within five working days to discuss the concern and the action being taken.

9. Responding to a bullying incident

When a bullying concern is reported, SCSE will:

- **Listen** — take the concern seriously, without dismissal, without asking the target to justify it.
- **Record** — document who is involved, what happened, when, where, and any witnesses, in the SCSE behaviour and safeguarding log.
- **Assess** — determine whether this is bullying as defined, a single significant incident, a misunderstanding, or a safeguarding matter requiring referral.
- **Inform** — notify the commissioning school's DSL of any bullying incident involving a placed learner, regardless of severity. Where the bullying crosses into peer-on-peer abuse, also follow the Safeguarding Policy referral procedures.
- **Support the target** — agree what they need to feel safe, including practical adjustments, additional check-ins, and (where they consent) communication with parents and the commissioning school.
- **Address the behaviour of the person bullying** — through a restorative conversation where appropriate, clear expectations about future conduct, consequences proportionate to the behaviour, and support to understand why the behaviour is harmful.
- **Restorative response** — where both parties consent and it is safe, facilitate a restorative conversation. This is never imposed and never the only response.
- **Follow up** — re-check with the target after one week and one month to ensure the bullying has stopped and that they feel safe.

10. Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying that affects a learner's experience at SCSE is taken seriously even when it occurs off-site or on personal devices. SCSE will:

- Take reports seriously and not dismiss them as "off-site"
- Where the cyberbullying involves SCSE devices or platforms (including the CS Learner platform), investigate the matter and apply consequences
- Where the cyberbullying involves third-party platforms (Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, Discord, gaming networks), advise the learner and parents on reporting routes and, where appropriate, contact the platform
- Where the cyberbullying involves images of a sexual nature (sharing nudes, "sexting"), follow UKCIS guidance: do not view or copy the image, refer to the DSL, and consider referral to police and Children's Social Care
- Where the cyberbullying involves threats of violence or extortion (sextortion), refer to police as a matter of urgency

11. Bullying motivated by a protected characteristic

Bullying that is racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, religiously-motivated, disablist or otherwise prejudice-based is recorded separately so that patterns can be tracked. SCSE's response includes:

- Treating the prejudice element as an aggravating feature
- Educating the person bullying on the harm caused, in age-appropriate terms

- Notifying the commissioning school and where appropriate the Local Authority
- Where conduct is sufficiently serious, treating the incident as a hate incident and notifying police

12. When bullying becomes peer-on-peer abuse

Some bullying meets the threshold for peer-on-peer abuse — including but not limited to physical violence causing harm, sexual harassment or assault, coercive or controlling behaviour, and serious threats. In these cases the procedure in the Safeguarding Policy is followed. Both the target and the person responsible are treated as children needing safeguarding response, and external agencies are involved as required.

13. Records and monitoring

All bullying incidents are recorded in a confidential log. The log is reviewed by the Directors at least termly to:

- Identify patterns by individual, by group, or by protected characteristic
- Evaluate the effectiveness of preventative work
- Identify training needs for staff

Anonymised summary data is shared with commissioning schools and with our risk-assessment review.

14. Staff training

All SCSE staff receive training on:

- Recognising bullying in its various forms, including subtle relational bullying and online behaviours
- Responding to disclosures
- Restorative approaches
- The intersection of bullying with safeguarding, SEND, and protected characteristics

Refresher training is provided annually.

15. Related policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- **Bullying and Harassment Policy** — for the parallel staff and adult workplace conduct policy, including grievance and disciplinary routes
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Gender Diverse Policy
- Neurodiversity Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- Online Safety / E-Safety Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Complaints Policy

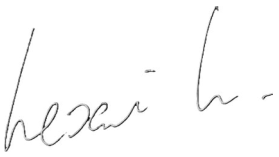
16. Policy review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Directors and DSL, or sooner following any significant incident or change in statutory guidance.

Approval & Review

This policy has been approved on behalf of the Directors:

Elizabeth Amos-Milburn *Co-Director*	**Alexandra Gager-Liebhart** *Co-Director*

Date of approval: 18th May 2026
Next review: 18th May 2027

Schedule 1 — Record of Changes

Version	Date	Nature of Change
001	18th May 2026	Initial published version included in the Combined Policies and Procedures 2026 edition.