

Anti-Bullying Policy 2026-27

Policy Owner	Director of Education
Approved by	Education Standards Committee
Last reviewed on	September 2026
Next review date	September 2027



Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)
- Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE)
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment Between Children in Schools and Colleges
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Equality Act 2010
- Children Act 1989 and 2004
- UK GDPR and data protection legislation
- Behaviour in Schools guidance
- DfE Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Guidance (2026)
- CET Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Policy
- CET Positive Relationships and Behaviour for Learning Policy
- CET Online Safety Policy
- CET Safeguarding Policy
- CET Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEND Code of Practice
- CET SEND Policy.

Statement of Intent

1. Creative Education Trust (CET) is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment in which all students can learn and thrive. Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
2. We take a **whole-trust safeguarding approach**, recognising bullying as:
 - A **peer-on-peer safeguarding issue** where it causes harm
 - Potentially linked to **child-on-child abuse**, including sexual harassment, sexual violence and online abuse
 - A behaviour that may be **prejudiced or discriminatory**, requiring robust response under the Equality Act 2010

All students, staff, and visitors are expected to report concerns. CET promotes a strong “**speak out / telling culture**” where safeguarding is everyone’s responsibility.

Definitions:

- Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, **repeated over time and involving a power imbalance**, that intentionally causes harm (physical, emotional or psychological)
Bullying includes (but is not limited to):
- Physical, verbal, emotional and social bullying

- **Prejudiced-based and discriminatory bullying** (race, religion, SEND, sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment)
- **Sexual harassment and sexual violence (child-on-child abuse)**
- **Online/cyberbullying**, including social media misuse
- **Technology-assisted abuse**, including:
 - AI-generated harm (e.g. deepfakes)
 - image-based abuse / sharing of sexual images
- **Coercion, control or intimidation behaviours**



The Trust recognises that **a single significant incident** may be treated as bullying where it causes serious harm.

Examples of the above kinds of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- a) emotional - being intentionally hostile, unfriendly, excluding, tormenting; emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical bullying
- b) physical - pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
- c) racist - racial taunts, graffiti, gestures
- d) sexual - unwanted physical contact, sexual assault, or sexually abusive comments; frequently linked with cyber-bullying, for example sexting, or the sharing of youth produced sexual imagery on a non-consensual basis
- e) homophobic, bi-phobic, transphobic or gender-based bullying focused on sexual orientation, gender identification or inappropriate use of language such as describing actions or objects as 'gay'
- f) racist, religious, special educational needs or disability – bullying focused on an individual's characteristics
- g) verbal – name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing; discriminatory language of any kind is unacceptable and will be challenged
- h) cyber – all areas of the internet, such as email and internet chat room misuse, mobile threats by text messaging and calls, misuse of associated technologies including camera and video facilities
- i) artificial intelligence (AI) tools are now widespread and easy to access. Staff, students and parents/carers may be familiar with generative chatbots such as ChatGPT and Google Bard. Creative Education Trust recognises that AI has many uses to help students learn but may also have the potential to be used to bully others. For example, in the form of 'deepfakes', where AI is used to create images, audio or video hoaxes that look real. Creative Education Trust will treat any use of AI to bully students in line with the provisions of this policy.
- j) CET recognises that bullying may occur online and off-site. Leaders will act where behaviour impacts students' safety or wellbeing and/or where it affects

the orderly running of the school. This includes, but is not limited to, social media incidents, image sharing and the misuse of technology.



3. Distinguishing between normal social problems and bullying can be challenging but it is essential if we are to address students' well-being effectively. Research indicates some key factors that can help staff differentiate between normal social problems and bullying:
- **Repetitive and intentional behaviour:** bullying typically involves repetitive and intentional actions designed to hurt, harm or intimidate another student. It goes beyond occasional conflicts or disagreements that are part of normal social interactions
 - **Power imbalance:** bullying often includes a power imbalance, where one student has more power or control over the other. The power imbalance can be physical, social, or psychological. In normal social problems, conflicts tend to occur between peers of relatively equal power
 - **Harmful intent:** bullying involves harmful intent. The perpetrator intends to cause distress, harm or fear in the victim. In contrast, normal social problems may result from misunderstandings or disagreements without the intention to hurt
 - **Consistency:** bullying is consistent over time, whereas normal social problems are more likely to be isolated incidents. If a student repeatedly targets another student with harmful actions or words, it may indicate bullying
 - **Severity:** the severity of the behaviour matters. While normal social problems may involve minor disagreements or conflicts, bullying can include more severe actions, such as physical violence, spreading rumours, or cyberbullying
 - **Emotional impact:** research suggests that bullying often has a more profound emotional impact on the victim. Students who are bullied may experience anxiety, depression or fear. In contrast, typical social problems may lead to temporary discomfort but not long-lasting emotional distress.

Objectives:

1. To develop the skills necessary for students and staff to deal effectively with incidents as they arise.
2. To instil in all students the desire to eliminate any behaviour which can be construed as menacing, threatening or physically damaging.
3. To develop in all students a confident and sociable manner which enables them to look after their own interests, and those of their fellow students.
4. To create in parents a feeling of confidence that their children are safe in the academy and an assurance in the academy's ability to deal with any such problems.
5. To include student voice in making decisions about the academy's position on bullying.
6. To notify parents of those students involved in incidents of bullying, as perpetrators or victims, and the action taken by the academy.



7. To record incidents and action taken where appropriate.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Trust Board / Executive

- Ensure the Trust complies with statutory safeguarding duties
- Monitor bullying data, trends and actions at Trust level

Academy Improvement Board

- Monitor bullying data, trends and actions at school level

Headteachers / Principals

- Implement this policy consistently
- Ensure staff training (including **online harms and child-on-child abuse**)
- Ensure robust **recording and analysis of bullying incidents**

Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Treat bullying that causes harm as a safeguarding concern
- Ensure appropriate referrals (e.g. children's social care, police where required)
- Maintain oversight of **peer-on-peer abuse incidents**

Staff

- Act immediately on concerns
- Record incidents accurately
- Apply consistent responses

Students

- Report concerns
- Support peers
- Uphold respectful behaviour

Prevention of bullying:

1. CET promotes a proactive and preventative approach. Accordingly, the Principal/Headteacher will ensure that students develop a clear understanding about what bullying is, the impact it can have and how to prevent and report it. This will typically be through the PSHE/SRE curriculum and assembly programme that addresses respectful relationships, consent, online safety and diversity and inclusion, and that includes the explicit teaching of protected characteristics and equality.
2. Online safety education will include guidance for students on social media behaviour, cyberbullying reporting and AI misuse awareness.
3. The Principal/Headteacher will use student voice to shape practice and will ensure staff training includes a focus on identifying bullying vs. peer conflict and recognising vulnerable groups. Targeted support will be provided for students with SEND, LGBTQ+ students, and students with safeguarding vulnerabilities
4. All staff must be familiar with the academy's current policies to protect students from bullying and other forms of harm, specifically the anti-bullying policy, behaviour for learning policy and the child protection policy.



5. All staff must also be aware of the statutory guidance contained or alluded to within, Part 5 of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, so that they can adequately safeguard students when responding to allegations of sexual harassment or sexual violence, or when students report bullying via the non-consensual sharing of youth produced sexual imagery. Bullying will be considered a safeguarding issue where there is serious harm; there is a pattern of abuse or when it involves sexual, discriminatory or online exploitation elements. All staff must follow safeguarding procedures in such cases.
6. The Principal/Headteacher will ensure that all staff have a thorough understanding about how to prevent and tackle bullying through the academy's induction and professional development programme.
7. CET takes the protection of students from radicalisation very seriously. All staff are suitably trained and kept up to date in order that they are equipped to identify children at risk of being drawn into terrorism and to challenge extremist ideas. The designated safeguarding lead provides guidance to staff to ensure that any concerns that a child might be vulnerable to radicalisation are referred to Channel when appropriate. The school will work closely with parents, unless it has specific reason to think that this would put the child at risk, to identify early signs of radicalisation, keeping them informed about any concerns in school and pointing them towards the right support mechanisms.

Anti-Bullying Procedures:

1. If parents or students have any concerns that bullying may be occurring, they should speak immediately with the child's class teacher, form tutor or pastoral leader. If a parent or child does not feel comfortable to do this, they should speak with any other member of staff, including, but not limited to, members of the pastoral or safeguarding teams. Parents and students can also use anonymous reporting systems (where available).

Response Principles:

All incidents will be:

- Taken seriously and investigated promptly
- Recorded using the academy's safeguarding/behaviour system
- Assessed for safeguarding risk

Where appropriate, the response will include:

a) Safeguarding response

Where harm is significant:

- DSL involvement
- Consideration of external referral

b) Support for victims

- Immediate safeguarding and reassurance

- Ongoing pastoral support
- Safety planning



c) Intervention with perpetrators

- Clear consequences in line with behaviour policy as appropriate
- Educative and restorative work
- Consideration of underlying needs

d) Parental involvement

- Prompt communication
- Support and signposting

Staff must:

- ensure that any allegations or concerns reported to them are properly investigated. If the staff member is unable to do this themselves, they must pass the case on to a member of the pastoral team or a senior leader. Students must be confident that incidents will be investigated fully and fairly
- be vigilant in watching for activity both inside and outside lessons which might be evidence of bullying. They should look particularly for early signs of distress in students and follow this up to find out the cause. Any serious matters should be referred on to the Principal/Headteacher or a delegated senior member of staff
- be receptive and sympathetic when a student confides in them
- establish the facts of the matter when investigating, usually by asking any students concerned to write accounts of what has happened. In some cases, false and exaggerated allegations will be made, whilst in others, witnesses will give conflicting evidence. A judicious balance between the accounts of the alleged bully, the student being bullied and reliable witnesses will need to be kept, taking account of knowledge of the children concerned
- ensure that a member of the pastoral staff or a senior leader is sighted on particularly serious allegations of bullying, who will ensure that the Principal/Headteacher is made aware of the situation. The Principal/Headteacher will ensure that those members of staff investigating an allegation or concern are fully supported with expertise both within school and from external agencies as required
- make clear to the perpetrator and his or her parents, after an investigation, the unacceptable nature of any behaviour. Any student whose behaviour is found to be unacceptable will receive a sanction in line with the CET Positive Relationships and Behaviour for Learning Policy and the academy's behaviour management procedures. The consequences of any repetition must be emphasised. Sanctions will be proportionate and consistent and will take

account of any safeguarding needs. Serious or persistent bullying may result in suspension or permanent exclusion (in line with DfE guidance)



- contact the parents of perpetrators and victims to offer them guidance, including signposting them to external agencies where appropriate, to help them to support their children
- provide both perpetrator and victim with advice about their future behaviour. In most cases pastoral staff are best placed to offer this, and they will ensure that parents are aware of this process and are supportive of it
- 'check in' with the victim and perpetrator periodically to be sure that the chance of any recurrence is minimised, and is dealt with swiftly if it does occur - and that both victim and perpetrator are supported to enable them to partake fully in normal academy life
- advise parents when it might be appropriate for them to contact the police or another agency, for example when bullying or harassment has taken place outside of the academy
- advise students and parents about how to respond to issues that, upon investigation, do not constitute bullying but that are still upsetting, such as changes in friendship groups.

Recording and analysing:

All CET academies will:

- Record all incidents (including type and protected characteristics)
- Monitor patterns and trends (e.g. location, groups, repeat incidents)
- Report regularly to on the above to the Academy Improvement Board

Analysis will include:

- Prejudiced-based incidents
- Sexual harassment/violence
- Online harm incidents

This information will inform:

- Curriculum planning
- Staffing and supervision
- Policy development

Leaders should be mindful that sometimes students do not report incidents of bullying that they either witness or experience directly. At least annually, leaders at the academy will make use of an anonymised questionnaire, student discussions or some combination thereof to sample the views of students on roll about bullying. Leaders will ask questions to determine students' perceptions of the extent to which bullying happens; where bullying takes place; whether they would report bullying; and how effectively they think that reported cases are dealt with. Leaders will analyse

perception data against incident data, and will involve students in designing anti-bullying strategies, as appropriate.



Complaints:

Complaints regarding bullying should be raised initially with the Principal or Headteacher. If the issue cannot be resolved in a satisfactory manner, then the CET Complaints Policy should be followed.