



# Phoenix College

## Anti-Bullying Policy

February 2025

**This policy refers to ‘the organisation’ throughout and in doing so is referring to Phoenix Autism Trust.**

February 2025 – Review February 2025

## Introduction

All young people have the right to go about their daily lives without the fear of being bullied, threatened, assaulted or harassed. No one should underestimate the impact that bullying can have on a person's life. It can cause high levels of distress, affecting young people's well-being, behaviour, academic and social development right through into adulthood.

At Phoenix College, we are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all of our students so they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere free from oppression and abuse.

All cases of bullying are serious and any behaviour that adversely affects the well-being of another will not be tolerated. All students should feel able to tell and when bullying behaviour is brought to our attention, prompt and effective action will be taken.

This means that **anyone** who is aware of any type of bullying that is taking place is expected to tell a member of staff immediately.

## Links with other policies and practices

This policy should be read alongside the following organisational policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Equalities Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedures
- Adult at Risk Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Procedures
- E-Safety

## Links to legislation

There are several pieces of legislation which set out measures and actions for school/colleges in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law. These may include (but are not limited to):

- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986

## **Responsibilities**

It is the responsibility of:

- The Principal to communicate this policy to the college community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably. She/he has overall responsibility
- The Governors/Trustees will take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including: trustees, governors, provision leaders, teaching and non-teaching staff, will support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly
- Parents/carers will support their young persons and work in partnership with the college.
- Students will abide by the policy.

## **What Is Bullying?**

Bullying can be defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual either physically or emotionally”. (DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017)

Bullying can include:

- name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.
- This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming, websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.
- Bullying is recognised by the college as being a form of peer on peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can cause severe and adverse effects on children’s and young people’s emotional development.

## **Forms and types of bullying covered by this policy**

Bullying can happen to anyone. This policy covers all types and forms of bullying including:

- Bullying related to physical appearance
- Bullying of young carers, children in care or otherwise related to home circumstances
- Bullying related to physical/mental health conditions
- Physical bullying
- Emotional bullying
- Sexual bullying
- Bullying via technology, known as online or cyberbullying
- Prejudicial bullying (against people/pupils/students with protected characteristics):
- Bullying related to race, religion, faith and belief and for those without faith
- Bullying related to ethnicity, nationality or culture

- Bullying related to Special Educational Needs or Disability (SEND)
- Bullying related to sexual orientation (homophobic/biphobic bullying)
- Gender based bullying, including transphobic bullying
- Bullying against teenage parents (pregnancy and maternity under the Equality Act)

### **Objectives of this Policy**

- All teaching and non-teaching staff, students, parents and carers should understand what bullying is
- All teaching and non-teaching staff should know what the college policy is on bullying, and follow it when bullying is reported
- All students and parents/carers should know what the college policy is on bullying, and what they should do if bullying arises

### **Why is it important to respond to bullying?**

- Bullying hurts
- No one deserves to be bullied
- Students who are bullying need to learn different ways of behaving. Our College ethos is built on respect: Everybody has the right to be treated with respect.
- Colleges have a responsibility to respond promptly and effectively to issues of bullying

### **Signs and symptoms**

Pupils/students who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as

- becoming shy and nervous,
- appetite irregularities,
- feigning illness,
- refusing to attend college or clinging to adults.
- changes in personal habits
- lacking concentration or high levels of distractible behaviour.
- a pupil may become super-vigilant.

Individual behaviour patterns are well known to staff and when there are changes in these patterns the possibility of bullying must always be considered.

- Pupils/students must be encouraged to report bullying.
- Advocates for the pupils/students must report possible bullying on behalf of their charges and where possible communication strategies must be put in place to allow pupils/students to express their feelings.
- Pupils/students/ communications must be listened to.
- Phoenix College staff must be alert to the signs of bullying (in all its many forms) and act promptly and firmly against it in accordance with college policy.

**The aims of the College's anti-bullying strategies and intervention systems are:**

- to prevent, de-escalate and/or stop any continuation of harmful behaviour
- to react to bullying incidents in a reasonable, proportionate and consistent way
- to safeguard the pupil who has experienced bullying and to trigger sources of support for the pupil
- to apply disciplinary sanctions to the pupil causing the bullying and ensure they learn from the experience, possibly through multi-agency support.

**Implementation**

Some students may experience considerable difficulties with communication, social interaction and empathy which can affect their ability to reflect on the impact their behaviour has on others or to self-manage their behaviour. These difficulties can mean that some students are less likely to intentionally 'bully' others, although behaviour that could be bullying behaviour does occur on occasions. While these actions may not have the same degree of intention as is usual when describing bullying, the effect on the targeted individual or individuals is the same and therefore must be addressed. The way staff members deal with such incidents of behaviour that challenges should take account of all round needs.

**Preventative Strategies include:**

- Using our extensive knowledge of pupils/students, and strong relationships with home, to recognise any changes that might result in 'bullying' behaviours
- Changes to individual behaviour plans
- A functional assessment to understand the motivation underpinning the behaviour change
- Talking to pupils/students about issues of difference through dedicated events or projects
- Talking with pupils/students about how to manage their own feelings and emotions.
- Ensuring that all pupils/students are appropriately supervised
- Ensuring that all members of staff are familiar with the policy
- Watching for early signs of distress and where pupils/students are able to communicate, listen to what they are saying
- Ensuring that appreciation and respect for all cultures are promoted
- Ensuring that all pupils/students have the means to communicate, where verbal communication is challenging
- Using group activities to promote appropriate behaviour

**The following steps should be taken when dealing with incidents:**

- If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached
- A clear account of the incident will be recorded and given to the provision leader who will act with delegated responsibilities on behalf of the principal
- The provision leader will interview all concerned and will record the incident
- Information is gathered about the incident before any conclusion is made about whether the incidents were bullying behaviour – both the pupil suspected of 'bullying' and the 'victim' will be listened to carefully

- Relevant staff and parents/carers will be kept informed.
- If the issue persists, then further support meetings (with parents and staff) will be held.
- In cases where a crime has been committed or a student is believed to be in imminent danger or risk, the appropriate authorities (police, LA) will be informed immediately prior to any internal investigation.

If it is suspected that the bullying is in the form of staff on student then the disciplinary procedure will be acted upon and a safeguarding concern raised.

**Pupils/students:**

Bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be dealt with immediately. Pupils/students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- immediate support and reassurance
- restoring self-esteem and confidence
- participating in a restorative justice conversation, where appropriate.

Pupils/students who have bullied will be helped by:

- the 'bully' to be informed in a suitable way that their behaviour is inappropriate and must stop
- discovering more about the situation to help restore positive behaviours
- informing parents/carers to help change the behaviour of the pupil
- participating in a restorative justice conversation, where appropriate.

We aim to use positive methods to create and restore appropriate behaviours. Action that is solely disciplinary is not considered the right choice within our environment and Positive Behaviour Support ethos.

Positive behaviours, social skills and emotional well-being are promoted within the curriculum

**Monitoring, evaluation and review:**

The college will review this policy every year and assess its implementation and effectiveness. This will be done through positive action based on Incident Reports and through ongoing feedback from staff and pupils/students.

The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the college and training will be given to staff as part of their induction package to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities and how to implement them.

**Equal opportunities:**

Diversity of cultures is represented in the books, display materials and equipment used within the college. Activities are organised to give students the opportunity to share in, respect and appreciate a wide range of cultures and activities. Each student's culture is recognised and treated with respect across the curriculum and where possible students are given the opportunity to share experiences and knowledge in order to raise self-esteem. If a young person's culture or race might be a factor in an occurrence of bullying, staff should refer to Procedures for Dealing with and Reporting Racial Incidents.