



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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Policy Statement

ELKOLET is committed to providing a safe, respectful and inclusive learning environment in which all students are treated with dignity and are able to learn without fear of bullying, harassment, intimidation or abuse.

Bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. ELKOLET recognises that bullying can have a significant impact on a student's emotional wellbeing, attendance, engagement, behaviour, educational progress and safeguarding.

ELKOLET will respond promptly and proportionately to allegations or concerns of bullying and will take account of the individual circumstances of all students involved, including their age, SEND, disability, vulnerability and any relevant safeguarding concerns.

Where behaviour constitutes, or may constitute, a safeguarding concern, including child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, sexual violence or discriminatory abuse, ELKOLET's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will apply alongside this policy.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- prevent bullying wherever reasonably possible;
- ensure students understand what bullying is and how to report it;
- create an environment where students feel safe to speak about concerns;
- respond promptly and consistently to allegations of bullying;
- support students who experience bullying;
- address the behaviour and underlying causes of students who bully others;
- ensure bullying is not dismissed as "banter", "jokes" or "part of growing up";
- recognise the relationship between bullying and safeguarding;
- address bullying occurring online or outside ELKOLET where it affects the safety, wellbeing or education of ELKOLET students;
- ensure appropriate consideration is given to SEND, disability and other vulnerabilities;
- work appropriately with parents/carers and commissioning schools; and
- monitor incidents to identify patterns, hotspots or emerging safeguarding concerns.

Links with other school policies and practices

This policy links with several school policies, practices and action plans including:

- Behaviour policy
- Complaints policy
- Safeguarding and Child protection policy
- Online, Email and Social Media Safety Policy
- Bring Your Own Device Policy

All of these policies can be found at [POLICY CENTER | ELKOLET](#)

Links to legislation

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

- Keeping Children Safe In Education 2026
- The Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Children Act 1989
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- The Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Public Order Act 1986

Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of:

- The Director of Education and Family Support to communicate this policy to the charity's community, to ensure that disciplinary measures are applied fairly, consistently and reasonably.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to manage and monitor practices to ensure alignment with the anti-bullying policy and procedures and maintain a clear overview of the incidence of bullying and the anti-bullying prevention and response strategies
- Trustees to take a lead role in monitoring and reviewing this policy.
- All staff, including: trustees, directors, volunteers, teaching and non-teaching staff, to support, uphold and implement this policy accordingly.
- Parents/carers to support their children and work in partnership with the ELKOLET.
- Students to abide by the policy.

Definition of 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 be physical, verbal, emotional, relational, discriminatory or online.

A single serious incident may not meet the definition of bullying but may constitute unacceptable behaviour, abuse or a safeguarding concern. In these cases, such incidents will be handled under the appropriate policy and procedure.

Bullying is recognised by ELKOLET as being a form of peer-on-peer abuse and can overlap with serious safeguarding concerns not only behavioural incidents involving:

- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Unwanted sexual comments
- Sharing sexual images

- Coercive behaviour
- Harmful sexual behaviour

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 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)

Forms of Bullying

Physical Bullying

This includes hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping, grabbing, damaging property or any other behaviour intended to cause physical harm or intimidation.

Verbal Bullying

This includes repeated insults, threats, name-calling, mocking, humiliating comments, abusive language or deliberately hurtful remarks.

Emotional and Relational Bullying

This includes deliberately excluding a student, manipulating friendships, spreading rumours, encouraging others not to associate with someone, intimidation or persistent humiliation.

Cyberbullying and Online Abuse

Bullying can occur through:

- social media;
- messaging services and group chats;

- email;
- online gaming;
- video-sharing platforms;
- live-streaming platforms;
- forums and online communities;
- anonymous accounts; and
- other digital or AI-enabled platforms.

Online bullying may include threats, harassment, humiliation, impersonation, exclusion, spreading false information, sharing personal information, sharing photographs or videos without permission, or encouraging others to participate in abuse.

ELKOLET will consider online behaviour which takes place outside the normal learning environment where it affects the safety, wellbeing, relationships or education of ELKOLET students.

ELKOLET recognises that emerging technologies, including generative artificial intelligence, may be used to create or distribute harmful content. This includes manipulated or AI-generated images, videos or other material intended to humiliate, threaten, intimidate or sexually exploit another student.

Such incidents will be considered in accordance with safeguarding procedures where appropriate.

Discriminatory and Prejudice-Based Bullying

ELKOLET does not tolerate bullying or harassment based on a person's actual or perceived:

- race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation;
- disability or SEND;
- gender reassignment;
- pregnancy or maternity;
- age; or
- any other protected characteristic or personal characteristic.

Discriminatory language or behaviour will not be dismissed as "banter" or a joke.

Where discriminatory behaviour may amount to a safeguarding concern, harassment or unlawful discrimination, the matter will be escalated and managed under the relevant ELKOLET procedures.

Sexual Harassment and Sexualised Bullying

Sexual harassment is not treated as ordinary bullying or "banter".

Examples may include:

- sexual comments or jokes;
- unwanted sexual remarks;
- sexualised name-calling;

- commenting on someone's body or appearance in a sexual manner;
- spreading sexual rumours;
- unwanted sexualised messages;
- sharing or requesting sexual images;
- pressuring another student to send images;
- sharing intimate images without consent;
- AI-generated sexual images or deepfakes;
- unwanted touching or sexual behaviour; and
- encouraging others to participate in sexual harassment.

Any concern involving sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with ELKOLET's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Child-on-Child Abuse

ELKOLET recognises that bullying can form part of, or overlap with, child-on-child abuse.

Child-on-child abuse may include:

- bullying and cyberbullying;
- physical abuse;
- sexual violence;
- sexual harassment;
- harmful sexual behaviour;
- abuse within intimate personal relationships;
- coercive or controlling behaviour;
- sharing intimate images without consent;
- AI-generated sexual images or deepfakes;
- discriminatory abuse;
- initiation or hazing rituals; and
- other behaviour which causes harm to another child or young person.

Staff must not assume that behaviour is simply "bullying" where there are indicators of abuse.

Concerns must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

SEND, Disability and Vulnerability

ELKOLET recognises that students with SEND or disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and may experience or communicate bullying differently.

Staff should consider whether:

- changes in behaviour may indicate bullying;
- a student has difficulty communicating what has happened;
- a student may not recognise that behaviour constitutes bullying;

- communication or social interaction difficulties may affect the situation;
- behaviour may be connected to an underlying additional need; or
- reasonable adjustments are required.

SEND or disability will never be used to excuse bullying.

Equally, disciplinary responses must take account of relevant SEND, disability and individual circumstances and should be proportionate and consistent with ELKOLET's Behaviour Policy and legal duties.

Bullying Outside ELKOLET

ELKOLET may become involved where bullying takes place outside the normal learning environment if it:

- involves ELKOLET students;
- affects the safety or wellbeing of an ELKOLET student;
- affects relationships or behaviour within ELKOLET;
- occurs during an ELKOLET activity or educational visit;
- occurs during an external activity arranged as part of an ELKOLET placement; or
- creates a safeguarding concern.

This includes bullying on the journey to or from the provision and online bullying which takes place outside ELKOLET premises.

Where another school or organisation has primary responsibility for the incident, ELKOLET will work with the relevant organisation and commissioning school as appropriate.

ELKOLET's Ethos

ELKOLET's community recognises that all forms of bullying, especially if left unaddressed, can have a devastating effect on individuals; it can create a barrier to learning and have serious consequences for mental wellbeing.

By effectively preventing and tackling bullying ELKOLET can help to create a safe environment, where students are able to learn and fulfil their potential.

Our Community

- Monitors and reviews our anti-bullying policy and practice on a regular basis.
- Supports staff to promote positive relationships to help prevent bullying.
- Recognises that some members of our community may be more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others; this may include children with SEND. Being aware of this will help us to develop effective strategies to prevent bullying from happening and provide appropriate support, if required.
- Will intervene by identifying and tackling bullying behaviour appropriately and promptly.
- Ensures our students are aware that bullying concerns will be dealt with sensitively and effectively; that everyone should feel safe to learn and abide by the anti-bullying policy.

- Requires all members of the community to work with ELKOLET to uphold the anti-bullying policy.
- Recognises the potential impact of bullying on the wider family of those affected so will work in partnership with parents/carers regarding all reported bullying concerns and will seek to keep them informed at all stages.
- Will deal promptly with grievances regarding ELKOLET's response to bullying in line with our complaints policy
- Seeks to learn from good anti-bullying practice elsewhere.
- Utilises support from relevant organisations when appropriate.

Reporting Bullying

Students are encouraged to report bullying as soon as possible.

A student may report a concern to:

- a trusted member of staff;
- the Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- another member of the safeguarding team; or
- another adult they feel comfortable speaking to.

Students may report bullying:

- verbally;
- in writing;
- electronically where an appropriate reporting mechanism is available; or
- through another person.

Students may also report bullying affecting another student.

Staff must take reports seriously and must not make promises of absolute confidentiality.

Responding to Bullying

The following steps may be taken when dealing with all incidents of bullying reported to the school.

If bullying is suspected or reported, the incident will be dealt with immediately by the member of staff who has been approached or witnessed the concern.

ELKOLET will provide appropriate support for the person being bullied – making sure they are not at risk of immediate harm and will involve them in any decision-making, as appropriate.

The DSL will interview all parties involved.

The DSL will be informed of all bullying issues where there are safeguarding concerns.

The DSL will speak with and inform other staff members, where appropriate.

ELKOLET will ensure parents/carers are kept informed about the concern and action taken, as appropriate and in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Sanctions, as identified within the Behaviour Policy, and support will be implemented in consultation with all parties concerned.

If necessary, other agencies may be consulted or involved, such as the police, if a criminal offence has been committed, or other local services including early help or children's social care, if a child is felt to be at risk of significant harm.

Where the bullying of or by pupils takes place off-site or outside of normal school hours (including cyberbullying), ELKOLET will ensure that the concern is fully investigated. If required, the DSL will collaborate with the Commissioning School and other schools. Appropriate action will be taken, including providing support and implementing sanctions at ELKOLET in accordance with this policy and the Behaviour Policy.

A clear and precise account of bullying incidents will be recorded by ELKOLET in accordance with existing procedures. This will include recording appropriate details regarding decisions and action taken.

Cyberbullying

When responding to cyberbullying concerns, ELKOLET will:

- Act as soon as an incident has been reported or identified.
- Provide appropriate support for the person who has been cyberbullied and work with the person who has carried out the bullying to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Encourage the person being bullied to keep any evidence (screenshots) of the bullying activity to assist any investigation.
- Take all available steps where possible to identify the person responsible. This may include:
 - looking at use of the ELKOLET systems;
 - identifying and interviewing possible witnesses;
 - contacting the service provider and the police, if necessary.

ELKOLET will also work with the individuals and online service providers to prevent the incident from spreading and assist in removing offensive or upsetting material from circulation. This may include:

- Supporting reports to a service provider to remove content if those involved are unable to be identified or if those involved refuse to or are unable to delete content.
- Confiscating and searching students' electronic devices, such as mobile phones, in accordance with the law and ELKOLET's searching and confiscation policy.
- Requesting the deletion of locally held content and content posted online if they contravene ELKOLET's behavioural policies.
- Ensure that sanctions are applied to the person responsible for the cyberbullying; the school will take steps to change the attitude and behaviour of the bully, as well as ensuring access to any additional help that they may need.

If a criminal offence has been committed, ELKOLET, alongside the Commissioning School, will inform the police.

Information regarding steps that staff and students can take to protect themselves online will be provided. This may include:

- advising those targeted not to retaliate or reply;

- providing advice on blocking or removing people from contact lists and social media platforms;
- helping those involved to think carefully about what private information they may have in the public domain.

Supporting students

All students involved a bullying incident will be supported by Student Support, Vicky Johnson.

Students who have been bullied will be supported by:

- Reassuring the student and providing continuous pastoral support
- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the experience with a staff member, relevant volunteer or the designated safeguarding lead
- Being advised to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience as appropriate.
- Working towards restoring self-esteem and confidence.
- Providing ongoing support; this may include working and speaking with staff, offering formal counselling, engaging with parents/carers.

Pupils who have perpetrated bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened, establishing the concern and the need to change.
- Informing parents/carers to help change the attitude and behaviour of the young person.
- Providing appropriate education and support regarding their behaviour or actions.
- If online, requesting that content be removed and reporting accounts/content to service provider.
- Sanctioning, in line with the behaviour policy; this may include official warnings, placement review meetings, removal of privileges (including online access when encountering cyberbullying concerns), and fixed-term or permanent exclusions.
- Where necessary, working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance; this may include involvement from the Police or referrals to Early Help, Children Social Work Service, or the Children and Adolescent People's Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

Supporting adults

ELKOLET takes measures to prevent and tackle bullying among students; however, it is equally important to recognise that bullying of adults, including staff and parents, whether by students, parents or other staff members, is unacceptable.

Adults who have been bullied or affected will be supported by:

- Offering an immediate opportunity to discuss the concern with the designated safeguarding lead, a senior member of staff and/or the director.
- Advising them to keep a record of the bullying as evidence and discuss how to respond to concerns and build resilience, as appropriate.

- Where the bullying takes place off-site or outside of normal hours (including online), we will still investigate the concern and ensure that appropriate action is taken in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Reporting offensive or upsetting content and/or accounts to the service provider, where the bullying has occurred online.
- Reassuring and offering appropriate support. This could be through BrightExchange, a confidential mental health support service provided to ELKOLET through Peninsula.
- Working with the wider community and local/national organisations to provide further or specialist advice and guidance.

Adults who have perpetrated the bullying will be helped by:

- Discussing what happened with a senior member of staff and/or the director to establish the concern.
- Establishing whether a legitimate grievance or concern has been raised and signposting to ELKOLET's official complaints procedures.
- If online, requesting that content be removed.
- Instigating disciplinary, civil or legal action as appropriate or required.

Preventing bullying

Environment

The whole ELKOLET community will:

- Create and support an inclusive environment which promotes a culture of mutual respect, consideration and care for others, which will be upheld by all.
- Recognise that bullying can be perpetrated or experienced by any member of the community, including adults and children (peer on peer abuse).
- Recognises the potential for children with SEN and disabilities to be disproportionately impacted by bullying and will implement additional pastoral support as required.
- Openly discuss differences between people that could motivate bullying, such as: children with different family situations, such as looked after children or those with caring responsibilities, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality or appearance related difference.
- Challenge practice and language (including 'banter') which does not uphold ELKOLET's values of tolerance, non-discrimination and respect towards others.
- Be encouraged to use technology, especially mobile phones and social media, positively and responsibly.
- Work with staff, the wider community and outside agencies to prevent and tackle concerns including all forms of prejudice-driven bullying.
- Actively create "safe spaces" for vulnerable children and young people e.g. student support area.
- Celebrate success and achievements to promote and build a positive charity ethos.

Policy and Support

The whole ELKOLET community will:

- Provide a range of approaches for students, staff and parents/carers to access support and report concerns.
- Regularly update and evaluate our practice to consider the developments of technology and provide up-to-date advice and education to all members of the community regarding positive online behaviour.
- Take appropriate, proportionate, and reasonable action, in line with existing policies, for any bullying brought to our attention, which involves or affects students, even when they are not on-site; for example, when using school transport or online, etc.
- Implement appropriate disciplinary sanctions; the consequences of bullying will reflect the seriousness of the incident, so that others see that bullying is unacceptable.
- Use a variety of techniques to resolve the issues between those who bully, and those who have been bullied.

Education and Training

The whole ELKOLET community will:

- Train all staff, including teaching staff, support staff, and pastoral staff, and volunteers to identify all forms of bullying and take appropriate action, following relevant policy and procedures, including recording and reporting incidents.
- Consider a range of opportunities and approaches for addressing bullying throughout the curriculum and other activities.
- Collaborate consistently with the commissioning school
- Ensure anti-bullying has a high profile throughout the year
- Provide systematic opportunities to develop students' social and emotional skills, including building their resilience and self-esteem.

Involvement of pupils

We will:

- Regularly canvas young people's views on the extent and nature of bullying.
- Ensure that all students know how to express worries and anxieties about bullying.
- Ensure that all students are aware of the range of sanctions which may be applied against those engaging in bullying.
- Utilise student voice in providing student led education and support
- Publicise the details of internal support, as well as external helplines and websites.
- Offer support to students who have been bullied and to those who are bullying to address the problems they have.

Involvement and liaison with parents/carers

We will:

- Make sure that key information about bullying (including policies and named points of contact) is available to parents/carers in a variety of formats, including via the charity's website
- Ensure all parents/carers know who to contact if they are worried about bullying and where to access independent advice.
- Work with all parents/carers and the local community to address issues beyond the school gates that give rise to bullying.
- Ensure that parents work with ELKOLET to role model positive behaviour for students, both on and offline.
- Ensure all parents/carers know about our complaints procedure and how to use it effectively, to raise concerns in an appropriate manner.

Monitoring, Review, and Implementation

ELKOLET will ensure that we regularly monitor and evaluate mechanisms to ensure that the policy is being consistently applied. Any issues identified will be incorporated into the ELKOLET's action planning. The Director of Education and Family Support will be informed of all bullying concerns. The named Trustee for bullying will report on a regular basis to the trustee board on incidents of bullying, including outcomes.