Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy

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Statement of intent

First Round believes that all pupils are entitled to learn in a safe and supportive environment; this means being free from all forms of bullying behaviour. This policy outlines how instances of bullying are dealt with, including the procedures to prevent occurrences of bullying.
These strategies, such as learning about tolerance and difference, aim to promote an inclusive, tolerant and supportive ethos within the provision.

All staff, parents/carers, and students work together to prevent and reduce any instances of bullying to which there is a zero-tolerance policy.

1 Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- Malicious Communications Act 1988.
- Public Order Act 1986.
- Communications Act 2003.
- Human Rights Act 1998.
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Education Act 2011.
- DfE (2017) 'Preventing and tackling bullying'.
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'.
- DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'.
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'.
- DfE (2024) 'Sharing nudes and semi-nudes: advice for education settings working with children and young people'.

This policy operates in conjunction with First Round's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

2 Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, "bullying" is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group. Bullying is generally characterised by:

- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over an extended period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.

- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.

Vulnerable students are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some students have towards those who are different from themselves. Vulnerable students may include, but are not limited to:

- students who are adopted.
- students suffering from a health problem.
- students with caring responsibilities.
- students from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

Students with certain characteristics are also more likely to be targets of bullying, including, but not limited to:

- students who are LGBTQ+, or perceived to be LGBTQ+.
- black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students.
- students with SEND.

3 Types of bullying

Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying, and bullying can be related to almost anything. Teasing another student because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, home life, culture, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.
Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:

- verbal
- physical
- emotional
- online (cyberbullying)

Racist bullying: Bullying another person based on their ethnic background or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.

Homophobic and biphobic bullying: bullying another person because of their actual, or perceived sexual orientation.

Transphobic bullying: Bullying based on another person's gender identity or gender presentation, or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.

Sexist bullying: Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.

Sexual bullying: Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension or dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.

Ableist bullying: Bullying behaviour that focuses on another person's disability or support needs; this can include mocking the individual's disability or their needs, using derogatory words or slurs in relation to an individual's disability, or deliberately excluding an individual because of their disability.

Prejudicial bullying: Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics or experiences, e.g. religion or mental health issues.

Relational bullying: Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone, usually through verbal and emotional bullying.

Socioeconomic bullying: Bullying based on prejudices against the perceived social status of the victim, including, but not limited to, their economic status, their parents' occupations, their health or nutrition level, or the perceived "quality" of their clothing or belongings.

4 Roles and responsibilities

The provision leads are responsible for:

- evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it does not discriminate against any students on the basis of their protected characteristics or backgrounds.
- the overall implementation and monitoring of this policy.
- ensuring the DSL has the appropriate status and authority within the provision to carry out the duties of the role.
- Ensuring that students are taught how to keep themselves and others safe, including online (should online work be undertaken).

- reviewing and amending this policy, accounting for new legislation and government guidance, and using staff experience of dealing with bullying incidents in previous years to improve procedures.
- keeping a bullying log of all reported incidents, including which type of bullying has occurred, to allow for proper analysis of the data collected.
- arranging appropriate training for staff members.

Students are responsible for:

- informing a member of staff if they witness bullying or are a victim of bullying.
- not making counter-threats if they are victims of bullying.
- walking away from dangerous situations and avoiding involving other students in incidents (where possible).
- keeping evidence of cyberbullying and informing a member of staff should they fall victim to cyberbullying.

5 Statutory implications

The provision understands that, under the Equality Act 2010, it has a responsibility to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the act.
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

6 Prevention

First Round will clearly communicate a commitment to addressing bullying and have a clear set of values and standards.

All staff members will receive training on identifying and dealing with the different types of bullying.

Staff will encourage student cooperation and the development of interpersonal skills using group and pair work. Diversity, difference and respect for others will be promoted and celebrated in every aspect of what is done. Opportunities to extend friendship groups and interactive skills will also be provided through a child's participation in any event undertaken.

The provision will be alert to, and address, any mental health and wellbeing issues amongst students, as these can be a cause, or a result, of bullying behaviour.

The provision will ensure potential perpetrators are given support as required, so their educational, emotional and social development is not negatively influenced by outside factors, e.g. mental health issues.

7 Signs of bullying

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a student is a victim of bullying:

- being frightened to travel to or from the provision.
- unwillingness to attend the provision.
- repeated or persistent absence.
- becoming anxious, withdrawn, short-tempered or lacking confidence.
- saying that they feel ill repeatedly.
- decreased involvement in learning activities.
- leaving the provision with torn clothes and/or having damaged/missing possessions.
- having a physical injury/injuries.
- lack of appetite.
- unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices.
- any change in behaviour and change in attitude at home.

Students who display a significant number of these signs will be approached by a member of staff to determine the underlying issues causing this behaviour.

Staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a student is likely to exhibit bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:

- they have experienced mental health problems, which have led to them becoming more easily aggravated.
- they have been the victim of abuse.

If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the DSL, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

8 Staff principles

The provision will ensure that prevention is a prominent aspect of its' anti-bullying vision.
Staff will treat reports of bullying seriously and will not ignore signs of suspected bullying. Staff will act immediately when they become aware of a bullying incident. Unpleasantness from one student towards another will always be challenged and will never be ignored.

Staff will always respect students' privacy, and information about specific instances of bullying is not discussed with others, unless the student has given consent, or there is a safeguarding concern. If a member of staff believes a student is in danger, e.g. of being hurt, they will inform the DSL immediately.
Follow-up support will be given to both the victim and perpetrator in the months following an incident to ensure all bullying has stopped.

9 Child-on-child abuse

- The provision has a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of child-on-child abuse, including sexual harassment and sexual violence.

To prevent child-on-child abuse and address the wider societal factors that can influence behaviour, the provision will educate students about abuse, it's forms, and the importance of discussing any concerns and

respecting others through every activity undertaken in line with the prevention section of this policy.

All staff will:

- be aware that students of any age and gender are capable of abusing their peers.
- be aware that abuse can occur inside and outside of academy/college settings.
- be aware of the scale of harassment or abuse, and that just because it is not being reported does not mean it is not happening.
- take all instances of child-on-child abuse equally seriously regardless of the characteristics of the perpetrators or victims.
- never tolerate abuse as "banter" or "part of growing up", and will never justify sexual harassment, e.g. as "boys being boys", as this can foster a culture of unacceptable behaviours and one that risks normalising abuse.
- Be aware that child-on-child abuse can be manifested in many ways, including sexting, sexual harassment and assault, and hazing or initiation-type violence.
- Always challenge any harmful physical behaviour that is sexual in nature, such inappropriate touching. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

Sexual harassment in particular can take many forms, including but not limited to:

- Telling sexual stories, making sexual remarks, or calling someone sexualised names.
- Sexual "jokes" or taunting.
- Deliberately brushing against someone.
- Displaying images or video of a sexual nature.
- Upskirting (this is a criminal offence).
- Online sexual harassment, e.g. creating or sharing sexual imagery, sexual comments on social media, or sexual coercion or threats.

Students will be made aware of how to raise concerns or make a report and how any reports will be handled – this includes the process for

reporting concerns about friends or peers. If a student has been harmed, is in immediate danger or is at risk of harm, a referral may be made to children's social care services (CSCS) and potentially the Police, where the DSL deems this appropriate in the circumstances.

All staff will be aware and sensitive towards the fact that students may not be ready or know how to tell someone that they are being abused. Students being abused may feel embarrassed, humiliated, scared, or threatened.

10 Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can take many forms and can go even further than face-to-face bullying by invading personal space and home life, and can target more than one person. It can also take place across age groups and target students, staff and others, and may take place inside the academy/college, within the wider community, at home or when travelling. It can sometimes draw bystanders into being accessories.
Cyberbullying can include the following:

- threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips disclosure of private sexual photographs or videos with the intent to cause distress silent or abusive phone calls.
- using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible.
- threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name.
- menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chatroom.
- unpleasant messages sent via messaging.
- unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites, e.g. *Facebook.*

NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and cyberbullying may take other forms.

First Round has a zero-tolerance approach to cyberbullying. The provision views cyberbullying with the same severity as any other form of bullying

and will follow the sanctions set out in section 12 of this policy if they become aware of any incidents.
All members of staff will receive training on an annual basis on the signs of cyberbullying, in order to identify students who may be experiencing issues and intervene effectively. Many of the signs of cyberbullying will be similar to those found in the 'Signs of bullying' section of this policy.
Staff will also be alert to the following signs which may indicate that a student is cyberbullying others:

- avoiding using the computer or turning off the screen when someone is near
- acting in a secretive manner when using the computer or mobile phone
- spending excessive amounts of time on the computer or mobile phone
- becoming upset or angry when the computer or mobile phone is taken away

Parents/carers will also be invited to attend annual informative sessions (where applicable) in order to educate them on the signs and symptoms of cyberbullying, and will be advised to report to the students' pastoral teacher if their son/daughter displays any of the signs outlined in this section.

Staff will be aware that a cyberbullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response. Significant differences may include the following:

- **Possible extensive scale and scope** – students may be bullied on multiple platforms and using multiple different methods that are made possible by virtue of the bullying taking place online
- **The anytime and anywhere nature of cyberbullying** – students may not have an escape from the torment when they are at home due to the bullying continuing through technology at all times

  The person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is – it is easy for individuals to remain anonymous online and on social

media, and students may be bullied by someone who is concealing their own identity

The perpetrator might not realise that their actions are bullying – sometimes, the culture of social media, and the inability to see the impact that words are having on someone, may lead to students crossing boundaries without realising

- **The victim of the bullying may have evidence of what has happened** – students may have taken screenshots of bullying, or there may be a digital footprint that can identify the perpetrator

Staff and students will be instructed not to respond or retaliate to cyberbullying incidents. Evidence of the incident should be recorded, e.g. taking screenshots. Staff will report incidents to their DSL or other provision lead for the incident to be investigated and support to be provided. Students will report incidents to a trusted member of staff.

Where offensive content is posted online targeting a staff member or student, the person targeted will be encouraged to use the reporting mechanism on the website or social media platform to request its removal. Where the person who has posted it is known to the provision, the DSL or other provision lead will request they remove it directly.

The provision will support students who have been victims of cyberbullying by holding formal and informal discussions with the student about their feelings and whether the bullying has stopped, in accordance with section 13 and section 14 of this policy.

11 Procedures

Minor incidents will still be reported to the DSL who will investigate, set appropriate sanctions for the perpetrator.

When investigating a bullying incident, the following procedures will be adopted:

- the victim, alleged perpetrator and witnesses are all interviewed separately.

- members of staff ensure that there is no possibility of contact between the students being interviewed, including electronic communication.
- if a student is injured, members of staff take the student immediately to the Health Care Assistant for a 'medical' opinion on the extent of their injuries.
- a room is used that allows for privacy during interviews.
- a witness is used for serious incidents.
- if appropriate, the alleged perpetrator, the victim and witnesses are asked to write down details of the incident; this may need prompting with questions from the member of staff to obtain the full picture.
- all students involved are informed that they must not discuss the interview with other students

Due to the potential for some specific forms of bullying to be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviour, staff members involved in dealing with the incident are required to consider whether there is a need for Safeguarding processes to be implemented.

12 Sanctions

If the DSL is satisfied that bullying did take place, the perpetrator will be helped to understand the implications of their actions and warned that there must be no further incidents. The DSL will also inform the perpetrator of the sanction that will follow as a result of what has occurred.

If possible, the DSL will attempt reconciliation and will obtain an apology from the perpetrator. This will either be in writing to the victim, and/or witnesses if appropriate, or face-to-face, but only with the victim's full consent. Discretion will be used here; victims will never feel pressured into a face-to-face meeting with the perpetrator.

Parents/carers (where applicable) are informed of bullying incidents and what action is being taken.

All staff involved in managing instances of bullying will be aware that taking disciplinary action and providing support are not mutually exclusive actions, and should be conducted simultaneously to encourage more positive behaviour in future.

The provision will avoid unnecessarily criminalising students for bullying or abusive behaviour where possible, as individuals with criminal records face stigma and discrimination in future aspects of their lives. The provision's focus when handling perpetrators will be supporting them to develop more positive behaviours and to refrain from abusive and bullying behaviours in the future.

The provision lead's will informally monitor the student involved during the course of their time at the provision.

13 Support

In the event of bullying, victims will be offered the following support:

- emotional support and reassurance from all staff.
- reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken.
- liaison with their parents/carers (where applicable) to ensure a continuous dialogue of support.
- advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show, or give it to their parent/carer (where applicable) or a member of staff.
- advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of cyberbullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents/carers (where applicable) to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online.
- discussion with their parent/carer (where applicable) on whether Police action is required (except in serious cases of child exploitation or abuse where the Police may be contacted without discussion with parents).

The DSL will carefully consider in each instance of bullying that is handled whether it is appropriate to split up the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), e.g. preventing them sharing classes or spaces where possible, and will split up other harmful group dynamics to prevent further occurrences where necessary. Victims will be encouraged to broaden their friendship groups.

Staff will work with the victim to build resilience, e.g. by offering emotional therapy.

The provision will acknowledge that bullying may be an indication of underlying mental health issues. The academy/college will work with the perpetrator regarding any underlying mental health or emotional wellbeing problems.

14 Follow-up support

The progress of both the perpetrator and the victim will be monitored by the DSL with regards to how the victim and perpetrator are progressing. If appropriate, follow-up correspondence will be arranged with parents/carers (where applicable) one month after the incident. Students who have been bullied will be offered continuous support.
Students who have bullied others will be supported in the following ways:

- receiving a consequence for their actions.
- being able to discuss what happened.
- being helped to reflect on why they became involved.
- being helped to understand what they did wrong and why they need to change their behaviour.
- appropriate assistance from parents.

Students who have been bullied will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and, if necessary, the DSL will refer the victim to CAMHS.

15 Bullying outside of the provision/home school

Staff will remain aware that bullying can happen both in and outside of the provision, and will ensure that they understand how to respond to reports of bullying that occurred outside of it in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Where bullying outside of the provision is reported to staff it will be investigated by the DSL and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the student on the provision's premises, or elsewhere when the student is under the lawful control of the

member of staff, e.g. on an educational visit. The provision leads are responsible for determining whether it is appropriate to notify the Police of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour is of a criminal nature, or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the Police will be informed.

16 Record keeping

The DSL will ensure that robust records are kept with regard to all reported or otherwise uncovered incidents of bullying.

The provision leads and DSL will ensure that all decisions and actions recorded are reviewed on a regular basis for the purposes of:

- identifying patterns of concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour on the part of certain students that may need to be handled, e.g. with 1:1 staff support.
- reflecting on whether cases could have been handled better and using these reflections to inform future practice.
- considering whether there are wider cultural issues at play e.g. whether the provision facilitates discriminatory bullying by not adequately addressing instances, and planning to mitigate this.
- considering whether prevention strategies could be strengthened based on any patterns in the cases that arise.
- responding to any complaints about how cases have been handled.

17 Monitoring and review

This policy is reviewed every year by the provision leads and any changes to it will be communicated via the First Round website. The scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2027.**