



Putting young people first

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# WHEELS VOCATIONAL & LIFE SKILLS CENTRE

## Safe to Learn (Anti-Bullying) Policy

**Adopted September 2013**

**Date of Last Review: September 2024**

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Company Registration No. 06608327

Registered Charity No. 1157795

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This Policy document should be read with specific regard to the following:

- The Behaviour for Learning Policy.
- Exclusion Policy.
- Care, Support and Guidance Policy.
- Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Wheels VLS Centre is committed to ensuring each Student in its care benefits from being safe to learn. The above Policies reflect the ethos of the Centre and the protocols it adheres to in this respect. This Policy has been revised with regard to the latest available DfE advice, "Preventing and Tackling Bullying – July 2017" and guidance from the Anti-Bullying Alliance – 2016, as well as referenced sources.

### **General Information**

- Bullying hurts and harms those subjected to it, sometimes significantly, and can have both short and long-term impacts on health and well-being. Bullying becomes a Safeguarding matter under the Children Act 2004 and should be addressed as a child protection concern.
- Bullying can be difficult to address, as groups develop hierarchies in which some members are ridiculed or become scapegoats.
- All young people have the potential to be bullied and bully, have witnessed bullying and may have colluded to bullying by not challenging it, often for fear of also being subjected to bullying.
- Bullying may also be defined as deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are:
  - ✓ Physical (hitting, kicking, theft).
  - ✓ Verbal (racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name calling).
  - ✓ Emotional (isolating the individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

The damage inflicted by bullying can frequently be underestimated. It can have multiple impacts that cause considerable distress to young people, affect their health and development. At the extreme, bullying can cause significant harm (including self-harm and possible suicide).

### **Policy Principles**

Therefore, Wheels VLS Centre's ethos is that:

- Everyone has the right to live, work and play free from fear, harassment, intimidation or violence.
- Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and to have their individual qualities and contributions recognised and valued.
- Bullying is less likely to flourish in a provision with an open and safe management culture for staff and volunteers.
- Wheels VLS Centre has:
  - ✓ Clear expectations for staff.
  - ✓ Systems that support staff in challenging bullying.
  - ✓ A culture that values differences, whilst also addressing insensitive use of language, humour, etc.
  - ✓ A system that clearly identifies and addresses the processes of bullying.
- All staff are required to report, respond and review situations where bullying takes place.
- Staff must use supervision to identify instances where bullying occurs and how best it can be challenged.

### **Best Practice with Young People**

- The safety of the young person is to be addressed as a priority.
- Work should take place where the young person feels safe.
- The young person should be listened to with the purpose of fully understanding what has happened.

- The impact on the young person is to be addressed and significant harm is to be immediately reviewed as a safeguarding issue.
- The needs, strengths, resilience and support systems of the young person are to be assessed in order for the young person to move forward.
- An action plan should be agreed which involves parents and staff as appropriate.

The experience of those witnessing bullying should be considered. It is probable that they may have issues of fear and powerlessness and this needs to be addressed. (See Care, Support and Guidance Policy.)

## **The Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 replaces previous anti-discrimination laws with a single Act. A key provision is a new public sector Equality Duty, which came into force on 5 April 2011. It replaces the three previous public sector equality duties for race, disability and gender, and covers age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The Duty has three aims. It requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, 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.

Wheels VLS Centre actively promotes the Equality Duty and both Staff and Students are protected by this duty.

## **Cyber-Bullying**

Whilst bullying is not a criminal offence in the UK it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986. Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to send an electronic communication to another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety or to send an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.

Bullying via mobile phone or on-line (e.g. email, social networking and instant messenger) is a development that Wheels VLS Centre guards against by the active monitoring of any electronic or digital device that is used by Students in the course of their studies. It must be noted that, the wider search powers included in the Education Act 2011 gives staff stronger powers to tackle cyber-bullying by providing a specific power to search for and, if necessary, delete inappropriate images (or files) on electronic devices, including mobile phones. The Centre endeavours to instil behaviours based upon mutual respect throughout its curriculum and this is highlighted in PSHEE and Citizenship work. Cyber-bullying and Internet Safety are key issues that the Centre Staff raise students' awareness to at every opportunity.

## **Bullying out of Centre Hours**

Where bullying outside Centre is reported to Centre staff, it will be investigated and acted on. The Centre will also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or anti-social behaviour coordinator in the local authority of the action taken against a student. If the misbehaviour could be criminal or poses a serious threat to a member of the public, the police will always be informed.

## **Linked Policies and Centre Reference Materials**

The Behaviour for Learning Policy and Exclusion Policy provide a framework for Students that is consistent, transparent and fair. Parents/Carers and Staff are involved at every stage to maximise support for both the bully and the bullied to minimise stress and uncertainty for all concerned.

Wheels VLS Centre uses and supports the following independent organisations to help everyone involved deal effectively with specific aspects of bullying.

**The Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA):** Founded in 2002 by NSPCC and National Children's Bureau, the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) brings together over 100 organisations into one network to develop and share good practice across the whole range of bullying issues.

**Kidscape:** Charity established to prevent bullying and promote child protection providing advice for young people, professionals and parents about different types of bullying and how to tackle it.

**The Diana Award:** Anti-Bullying Ambassadors programme to empower young people to take responsibility for changing the attitudes and behaviour of their peers towards bullying. It will achieve this by identifying, training and supporting Centre anti-bullying ambassadors.

**The BIG Award:** The Bullying Intervention Group (BIG) offer a national scheme and award for Centres to tackle bullying effectively.

**Restorative Justice Council:** Includes best practice guidance for practitioners 2011.

### **Cyber-Bullying**

**ChildNet International:** Specialist resources for young people to raise awareness of online safety and how to protect themselves.

**Think U Know:** resources provided by Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) for children and young people, parents, carers and teachers.

**Digizen:** provides online safety information for educators, parents, carers and young people.

**Advice on Child Internet Safety 1.0:** The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS) has produced universal guidelines for providers on keeping children safe online.

### **LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, (or sometimes questioning) Intersex, Asexual and others)**

**EACH:** (Educational Action Challenging Homophobia): provides a national Freephone Action line for targets of homophobic or transphobic bullying and training to Centres on sexual orientation, gender identity matters and cyber-homophobia.

**NSPCC – Safeguarding children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and NSPCC – Safeguarding child protection/deaf and disabled children and young people.**

**Centres Out:** Offers practical advice, resources (including lesson plans) and training to Centres on LGBT equality in education.

**Stonewall:** An LGB equality organisation with considerable expertise in LGB bullying in Centres, a dedicated youth site, resources for Centres, and specialist training for teachers.

### **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)**

**Mencap:** Represents people with learning disabilities, with specific advice and information for people who work with children and young people.

**Changing Faces:** Provide online resources and training to Centres on bullying because of physical difference.

**Cyberbullying and children and young people with SEN and disabilities:** Advice provided by the Anti-Bullying Alliance on developing effective anti-bullying practice.

**Anti-bullying Alliance SEND programme of resources:** Advice provided by the Anti-bullying Alliance for Centre staff and parents on issues related to SEND and bullying.

### **Racism**

**Show Racism the Red Card:** Provide resources and workshops for Centres to educate young people, often using the high profile of football, about racism.

**Kick it Out:** Uses the appeal of football to educate young people about racism and provide education packs for Centres.

**Anne Frank Trust:** Runs a Centre project to teach young people about Anne Frank and the Holocaust, the consequences of unchecked prejudice and discrimination, and cultural diversity.

This Policy is subject to all other Policies and Protocols of Wheels VLS Centre.