The Sir John Colfox Academy

Anti-Bullying Policy

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Policy Written by **The Sir John Colfox Academy**

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Signature of Chair _____

1. Our vision and commitment

As a Gold Rights Respecting School and part of Initio Learning Trust, The Sir John Colfox Academy's Anti-Bullying Policy has been produced in the belief that all students have the right to enjoy their education and flourish in an environment which recognises them as individuals and ensures they are protected from all forms of personal abuse.

We aim to create a calm, caring and purposeful environment based upon supportive relationships, mutual respect, inclusion and high expectations for all.

We recognise that bullying and other harmful behaviours can have a significant impact on a student's emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance, engagement and achievement. Every student has the right to feel safe, valued and able to participate fully in academy life.

The academy will never accept bullying, discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual violence or any other form of abusive or harmful behaviour.

Sexual harassment and harmful behaviour will never be dismissed as ‘banter’, ‘just a joke’, ‘part of growing up’ or an inevitable part of being in a particular group.

All concerns will be taken seriously, responded to promptly and dealt with sensitively and proportionately.

This policy should be read alongside the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Child on Child Abuse Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy and RSHE Policy.

2. What is bullying?

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to hurt, harm, humiliate or intimidate another person. It often involves repeated behaviour over time and an imbalance of power, which makes it difficult for the person experiencing it to defend themselves or stop it.

Bullying usually has the following characteristics:

1. **Repetitive and persistent:** Behaviour is repeated over time, although a single serious incident may have a similarly significant impact or require safeguarding intervention.
2. **Harmful:** Behaviour causes, or is likely to cause, physical or emotional harm, distress, humiliation or intimidation.
3. **An imbalance of power:** The person experiencing the behaviour may feel unable to defend themselves or stop it. This imbalance may arise from physical strength, age, popularity, social status, group dynamics, vulnerabilities or access to information.
4. **Impact:** The behaviour may result in distress, fear, loneliness, anxiety, reduced confidence, emotional harm or difficulties attending and engaging in school.
5. **Different forms:** Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, relational, discriminatory or online.
6. **Targeted behaviour:** Bullying may target a person's identity, characteristics, appearance, beliefs, disability, background, relationships or perceived differences.

Although bullying is often repetitive and persistent, a single incident may be sufficiently serious to constitute abuse or require safeguarding intervention. The absence of repetition does not mean that an incident should be minimised or disregarded.

The impact of behaviour, the context in which it occurs, the relationship between those involved and any previous or related incidents will be considered when determining the appropriate response.

We recognise that behaviour may be harmful even where the person responsible does not fully understand its impact or claims that harm was not intended.

Not every disagreement, conflict or unkind act constitutes bullying. However, all incidents of unkindness, aggression, intimidation, discrimination or harmful behaviour will be addressed appropriately and will not be ignored.

3. Child-on-child abuse

The academy recognises that children and young people can harm, abuse or exploit other children. Child-on-child abuse can occur in school, outside school, in the community and online. It may be experienced by children of any age, sex, gender, background or ability.

Bullying is one form of child-on-child abuse. However, not all child-on-child abuse is bullying.

Other forms of child-on-child abuse may include, but are not limited to:

- Physical abuse, assault, threats or intimidation.
- Sexual harassment, sexual violence and harmful sexual behaviour.
- Abuse within intimate or personal relationships between children.
- Misogynistic, sexist, degrading or sexualised comments and behaviour.
- Discriminatory abuse, including racism, faith-based prejudice, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and disability-related abuse.
- Initiation rituals, hasing, humiliation or coercive behaviour within friendship groups.
- Upskirting or other non-consensual recording or sharing of images.
- The consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images, including digitally manipulated or AI-generated images.
- Online abuse, threats, impersonation or abuse facilitated by digital technology.

All concerns about child-on-child abuse must be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or Deputy DSL and recorded in accordance with the academy's safeguarding procedures.

The academy will consider the needs and safety of all children involved, including the child who has experienced harm, the child alleged to have caused harm and any other children affected.

Appropriate support, safeguarding action and consequences will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

4. Sexual harassment and sexual violence

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that can occur online or offline, including sexual comments, sexual jokes, unwanted touching, sexualised remarks, inappropriate sexualised messages and other behaviours that violate a person's dignity or create an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Sexual violence includes sexual offences such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

The academy will not tolerate sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour. All reports will be taken seriously and acted upon promptly.

Such behaviour will never be dismissed as ‘banter’, ‘just a joke’, ‘part of growing up’ or an inevitable part of being in a particular group.

All concerns relating to sexual harassment, sexual violence or harmful sexual behaviour will be referred to the DSL or Deputy DSL and managed in accordance with the academy's Child

Protection and Safeguarding Policy and relevant statutory guidance, including Part Five of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Restorative approaches or mediation will not be used automatically in these circumstances. Any proposed intervention must follow an appropriate safeguarding assessment and be considered safe and in the best interests of the children involved.

5. Prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying

The academy recognises that bullying and harmful behaviour may be motivated by prejudice or discrimination.

This may include, but is not limited to:

- Racism or racial harassment.
- Faith-based prejudice or religious intolerance.
- Homophobia, biphobia or transphobia.
- Sexism, misogyny or sexualised discrimination.
- Disability-related bullying or discrimination.
- Bullying relating to appearance, body image, culture, nationality, language or social background.
- Bullying relating to family circumstances, care experience or other perceived differences.

All prejudice-based incidents will be challenged, recorded and addressed appropriately, whether or not they meet the definition of bullying.

The academy actively promotes equality, diversity and respect for individual identity. Discriminatory language and behaviour will not be normalised or excused as humour.

6. Online bullying and digital harm

Online bullying and harmful behaviour may occur through social media, messaging applications, gaming platforms, websites, digital communication or other online environments.

It may include:

- Sending threatening, abusive or humiliating messages.
- Sharing rumours, private information or images without consent.
- Impersonation or creating fake accounts.
- Exclusion from online groups or deliberately humiliating others in digital spaces.
- Encouraging others to target or abuse a student.
- Sharing or threatening to share nude or semi-nude images.
- Creating, manipulating or sharing AI-generated sexualised or humiliating images.
- Repeated unwanted contact, harassment or intimidation.

Online behaviour between students outside the academy may still have an impact on their safety, wellbeing, relationships and ability to attend or participate in education.

The academy will therefore consider concerns relating to behaviour outside school where appropriate and proportionate, including where there may be safeguarding implications or a significant impact on academy life.

Students will be encouraged to preserve relevant evidence and report concerns to a trusted adult. Staff will not ask students to forward, download or circulate indecent images of children. Such concerns will be referred to the DSL for appropriate safeguarding management.

7. Preventative measures

It is central to the academy's aims that students are safe and happy in school so they can enjoy their learning. We aim to prevent bullying through positive relationships, inclusion, early intervention, education and a culture of respect.

The following systems and approaches support our preventative work.

7.1 Pastoral structures and relationships

1. **House System:** Provides opportunities for students to build relationships and feel part of a supportive community, including working with older students.
2. **Form Tutors:** Act as daily points of contact and develop a tutor-group environment in which students feel welcome, secure and valued.
3. **Heads of Year:** Lead tutor teams in creating a positive year-group identity and ethos and encourage participation at all levels.
4. **Senior Leader responsible for Anti-Bullying:** Coordinates the overall approach to developing healthy relationships, including House Buddies and Anti-Bullying Ambassadors.
5. **Participation Coordinators:** Encourage and promote opportunities for students to participate in activities within the academy and wider community, positively targeting students who may benefit from additional encouragement.
6. **Pastoral Support Officers:** Work with students on restorative approaches, therapeutic support and developing successful relationships.
7. **House Buddies:** Support younger students in settling into the academy and provide help with lower-level concerns and friendship issues.

7.2 Rights, student voice and education

8. **Rights Respecting Schools framework:** Proactively teaches students about their rights, responsibilities, respect and where to seek help through assemblies, tutorials and PSHE.
9. **Anti-Bullying Ambassadors:** Students selected and trained through the Diana Award anti-bullying strategy meet regularly and promote key messages through assemblies, the Student Council and online. The group aims to be representative of the student community and develops a peer-led approach to tackling bullying.
10. **Student voice:** Tutor Forum and the School Council provide opportunities for students to contribute to whole-school issues. LGBTQ+ student voice and alternative student voice groups may be facilitated to ensure that students feel represented and included.
11. **Curriculum:** RSHE, PSHE, assemblies and tutorials provide opportunities to explore bullying, healthy relationships, consent, discrimination, online safety, respect and emotional wellbeing. Relevant themes are also addressed through Art, English, Drama, History and Religious Education.
12. **Staff responsibility:** All staff are responsible for student welfare and must remain alert to behaviour or actions that could constitute bullying, discrimination, child-on-child abuse or other safeguarding concerns. All concerns must be reported via MyConcern.
13. **Student-friendly policy:** A student-friendly version of this policy, developed with Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, is available in student planners, on the academy website and through the student portal on MCAS. It is reviewed regularly with students.
14. **Accessible reporting:** Students can contact the pastoral team through the anonymous Student Worry Button on the academy website: My Voice.

7.3 Additional preventative measures

15. **Staff training and awareness:** All staff receive regular safeguarding training, including recognising, preventing and responding to bullying, child-on-child abuse, sexual

harassment, discriminatory behaviour and online harm. Staff understand that harmful behaviour must be challenged and reported, even where it is presented as a joke or banter.

16. **Online safety and digital behaviour:** The academy promotes safe, respectful and responsible online behaviour through its curriculum, assemblies and pastoral programme. Students are taught about cyberbullying, online harassment, the sharing of images, impersonation, AI-generated content and how to seek help.
17. **Inclusive and anti-discriminatory culture:** The academy actively promotes equality, diversity and respect for individual identity. Prejudice-based incidents are challenged and recorded appropriately.
18. **Safeguarding and early identification:** Staff remain alert to changes in students' behaviour, emotional wellbeing, attendance, peer relationships and engagement that may indicate bullying or other harmful behaviour. Students experiencing bullying or abuse are supported through the academy's pastoral and safeguarding systems.
19. **Accessible reporting arrangements:** Students are regularly reminded how to report concerns, including through a trusted adult, the pastoral team and the anonymous Student Worry Button. The academy recognises that some students may find it difficult to disclose concerns and will provide appropriate support to enable them to do so.

8. Reporting concerns

All students, parents, carers, staff and members of the wider community are encouraged to report concerns about bullying, discrimination or harmful behaviour.

Students can report concerns to:

- Their Form Tutor.
- Their Head of Year.
- A Pastoral Support Officer.
- A member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- The DSL or Deputy DSL.
- A trusted member of staff.
- The anonymous Student Worry Button on the academy website.

Parents and carers should contact the academy through the relevant pastoral team or the main academy contact details.

Reports may be made in person, in writing or anonymously. Anonymous reports will be taken seriously, although anonymity may limit the academy's ability to investigate fully or provide feedback.

All concerns must be reported via MyConcern. Staff must not investigate safeguarding concerns independently or promise confidentiality.

Where a student discloses abuse or harmful behaviour, staff will:

  - Listen carefully and calmly.
  - Reassure the student that they have done the right thing by speaking out.
  - Avoid leading questions or unnecessary questioning.
  - Record the student's words as accurately as possible.
  - Explain that information will be shared only with those who need to know to help keep them safe.
  - Report the concern promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL in accordance with safeguarding procedures.

- # 9. Procedure for following up a complaint of bullying

  The circumstances of individual cases will vary. However, the key principles are that

every concern must be taken seriously, acted upon promptly and must not be ignored or minimised.

9.1 Reporting and recording

- The adult receiving or witnessing the concern will record it on MyConcern promptly, providing a clear account of the incident, relevant context and any immediate action taken.
- The DSL or Deputy DSL will review the concern and determine the appropriate safeguarding response, including allocation of a case owner and categorisation on MyConcern.
- Concerns will be categorised appropriately, distinguishing between alleged bullying, discriminatory incidents, child-on-child abuse and other safeguarding concerns.
- The academy recognises that incidents may involve overlapping categories and that a concern initially recorded as bullying may require further safeguarding assessment as information emerges.

9.2 Initial assessment and investigation

- The Head of Year, Pastoral Support Officer or other designated case owner will follow up promptly, in consultation with the DSL or Deputy DSL where appropriate.
- The child reporting or experiencing harm will be spoken to in a safe and supportive environment. Their views, wishes, feelings and concerns will be considered when determining appropriate action.
- Information will be gathered from relevant witnesses and other sources as appropriate. Written statements may be obtained where suitable, but staff will avoid unnecessary or repeated questioning, particularly where a safeguarding concern may require specialist investigation.
- The child alleged to have caused harm will be given an opportunity to respond to the concerns in an age-appropriate and fair manner, while ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of other children remain paramount.
- Any relevant evidence, including written accounts or appropriate digital evidence, will be recorded or uploaded securely to MyConcern in accordance with safeguarding and data protection procedures.
- Where a concern relates to sexual harassment, sexual violence, harmful sexual behaviour or other safeguarding risks, the DSL or Deputy DSL will determine whether further action, including referral to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies, is required.

9.3 Categorisation and outcome

- Following assessment, the concern will be categorised appropriately on MyConcern.
- Where an incident is not assessed as bullying, this does not mean that the behaviour is acceptable or that no further action is required.
- The incident will be categorised appropriately and any necessary safeguarding, pastoral or behavioural action will continue.
- Concerns will only be marked as resolved or filed when the appropriate action has been completed and the ongoing safety and wellbeing of the children involved have been considered.
- Where a concern involves child-on-child abuse, the DSL or Deputy DSL will ensure that it is recorded and managed in accordance with the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

9.4 Follow-up and monitoring

- The case owner will monitor the situation following intervention, with initial follow-up normally within two weeks and a further review at four weeks, or sooner where circumstances require.
- Follow-up will consider whether the behaviour has stopped, whether the child feels safe, whether there has been retaliation or escalation, and whether further support or action is required.

- The academy recognises that bullying and abuse may involve patterns of behaviour across different incidents, locations, online platforms or peer groups. Previous concerns will therefore be considered when assessing the current situation.
- Where concerns remain unresolved or further incidents occur, the case will be reviewed by the relevant pastoral leader and, where appropriate, the DSL or Deputy DSL to determine whether additional safeguarding measures or interventions are required.
- The Pastoral Team will review bullying and relevant child-on-child abuse categories on MyConcern each half-term, using reports to identify trends across year groups, incident types and students involved. Reviews will consider whether procedures have been followed and whether additional preventative or safeguarding action is needed.

10. Support and intervention

The academy recognises that bullying and harmful behaviour can affect all children involved. Support and intervention will be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking account of the nature, severity and impact of the incident, the needs and vulnerabilities of the children involved and any safeguarding risks.

Possible actions include:

- Contacting parents and carers of the children involved to share appropriate information and arrange meetings where necessary.
- Providing individual pastoral support to the child experiencing harm.
- Ensuring the child has trusted adults they can approach, including their Form Tutor, Head of Year, Pastoral Support Officer, school counsellor or other appropriate support.
- Developing an individual safeguarding or support plan for the child experiencing harm.
- Introducing appropriate risk-reduction measures, including supervision, adjustments to seating arrangements, movement around school or contact arrangements where necessary.
- Providing pastoral, therapeutic or external agency support.
- Providing appropriate intervention, education and support for the child displaying harmful behaviour, recognising that they may also have unmet needs or safeguarding vulnerabilities.
- Taking action to address wider peer-group dynamics, including bystander behaviour, group intimidation, exclusion or the encouragement of harmful behaviour.
- Reviewing whether the behaviour is affecting attendance, emotional wellbeing, participation or access to learning.
- Consulting the DSL, Deputy DSL or other relevant safeguarding professionals where the concern is more serious or complex.
- Referring to children's social care, the police or other relevant agencies where the safeguarding threshold is met.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of actions taken and making further adjustments where necessary.
- Providing educational work through assemblies, tutorials, PSHE or RSHE to address relevant themes and promote positive relationships.

- Parents and carers will be involved where appropriate. However, parental contact may be delayed or managed differently where the DSL determines that immediate contact could increase risk or compromise safeguarding.

11. Restorative and therapeutic approaches

The academy uses relational, restorative and therapeutic approaches where these are appropriate and safe to do so.

Restorative conversations, mediation or bringing children together will not be used automatically or where this could cause further distress, intimidation, harm or an

imbalance of power.
In cases involving sexual harassment, sexual violence, coercion, serious physical abuse or other significant safeguarding concerns, restorative approaches will only be considered following appropriate safeguarding assessment and where this is judged to be safe and in the best interests of the children involved.
Safeguarding action will not be delayed while restorative interventions or behaviour consequences are considered.
The academy's Behaviour Policy and Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be applied where appropriate.

12. Consequences and the Behaviour Policy

The subsequent follow-up action, including consequences, will vary according to the circumstances of each case and will depend on the seriousness, nature, impact and context of the behaviour.
Consequences will be proportionate, consistent and determined on a case-by-case basis. They will take account of the academy's Behaviour Policy, safeguarding considerations, the needs of the children involved and any relevant vulnerabilities.
Possible consequences may include:

- Lunchtime detention: one or more days.
- Isolation: one or more days, in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.
- Suspension: in accordance with the academy's Suspension and Permanent Exclusion procedures.
- Permanent exclusion: where the relevant criteria are met and in accordance with statutory guidance and the academy's exclusion procedures.

- Consequences will not be applied automatically. The academy will consider the full circumstances and will ensure that appropriate safeguarding action and support are provided alongside any behaviour-related consequence.
Where appropriate, the academy may consider additional measures to ensure that the child experiencing harm is protected and able to continue accessing their education safely.

13. Bullying and behaviour outside the academy

The academy recognises that bullying, child-on-child abuse and harmful behaviour may occur outside the school day, in the community or online.
Where such behaviour affects the safety or wellbeing of students, their relationships, attendance or ability to participate in education, the academy will consider what action is appropriate and proportionate.
This may include contacting parents and carers, providing support, implementing appropriate safeguarding measures, applying relevant aspects of the Behaviour Policy and referring concerns to external agencies where necessary.
The academy will work with relevant partners to address concerns where appropriate, recognising that its ability to investigate or take disciplinary action may depend on the circumstances and available evidence.

14. Responsibilities

All staff

All staff are responsible for:

- Promoting a culture of respect, inclusion and positive relationships.
- Recognising and challenging bullying, discriminatory behaviour and harmful conduct.
- Taking all reports seriously and responding sensitively.
- Recording and reporting concerns via MyConcern promptly.
- Referring safeguarding concerns to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Maintaining appropriate confidentiality and sharing information in accordance with safeguarding procedures.
- Supporting students affected by bullying and harmful behaviour.

- **Heads of Year and Pastoral Support Officers**

Responsible for:

- Following up concerns promptly and sensitively.
- Supporting students and families.
- Recording actions and outcomes on MyConcern.
- Monitoring incidents and identifying patterns or repeat behaviours.
- Working with the DSL or Deputy DSL where safeguarding concerns arise.
- Ensuring appropriate follow-up and review.

- **DSL and Deputy DSL**
  Responsible for:
  - Assessing safeguarding concerns relating to bullying and child-on-child abuse.
  - Ensuring appropriate categorisation and recording.
  - Determining whether referral to children's social care, the police or other agencies is necessary.
  - Ensuring appropriate safeguarding plans, risk assessments and support are in place.
  - Coordinating the response to serious or complex incidents.
  - Ensuring that concerns are managed in accordance with statutory guidance and the academy's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- **Senior Leader responsible for Anti-Bullying**
  Responsible for:
  - Coordinating the implementation and review of this policy.
  - Monitoring whole-school trends and patterns.
  - Working with pastoral and safeguarding teams to identify preventative action.
  - Promoting staff awareness and student education.
  - Reporting relevant themes and outcomes to academy and Trust leadership.

- # 15. Monitoring, evaluation and review
  The academy will monitor bullying and related harmful behaviours through MyConcern records, pastoral reviews, student voice, safeguarding oversight and relevant behaviour and attendance data.
  Monitoring will consider:
  - The number and nature of incidents.
  - Patterns across year groups, groups of students and locations.
  - Repeat incidents and cumulative harm.
  - Discriminatory and prejudice-based incidents.
  - Online and offline links.
  - The effectiveness of interventions and follow-up.
  - The impact on student wellbeing, attendance, engagement and access to learning.
  - Whether students feel safe, listened to and supported.
- The policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where there are changes to statutory guidance, safeguarding practice or academy procedures.

16. Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- The Sir John Colfox Academy Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.
- The Sir John Colfox Academy Behaviour Policy.
- The Sir John Colfox Academy Online Safety Policy.
- The Sir John Colfox Academy RSHE Policy.
- Initio Learning Trust policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, behaviour and inclusion.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children.
- Relevant statutory guidance on suspension and permanent exclusion.

UNICEF Rights of the Child

Article 19: Children have the right to be protected from being hurt or mistreated, physically or mentally.
Article 36: Children should be protected from any activities that could harm their development.
At The Sir John Colfox Academy, every student has the right to feel safe, respected, included and able to flourish.