



## **Anti-bullying Policy**

### **Aims and objectives**

The aim of the anti-bullying policy is to ensure that the students under Study Links' Guardianship, are at all times during their studies in the UK, in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.

Bullying is anti-social behaviour and affects everyone; it is unacceptable. We are committed to ensuring a caring, friendly and safe environment for all students in our care so they are, at all times, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. If bullying does occur, all students should be able to inform Study Links and know that we will ensure incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively.

### **Why do we need an Anti-Bullying Policy?**

Persistent bullying can severely inhibit a child's confidence, well-being and ability to learn effectively. The negative effects of bullying can have an impact on a person for their entire life. Our Guardianship Organisation wishes to ensure that students are in a secure and happy environment free from threat, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying occurs when an individual or a group uses strength or power to hurt, either physically or emotionally, by intimidating or demeaning others. Bullying can be emotional, physical, racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, verbal or cyber. It is usually persistent and is often covert, and is a conscious attempt to hurt, threaten or frighten someone. Students who are being bullied, may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or missing lessons.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- Physical bullying which can include kicking, hitting, pushing and taking away belongings;
- Verbal bullying which includes name calling, mocking and making offensive comments;
- Emotional bullying which includes isolating an individual or spreading rumours about them;
- Cyber-bullying where technology is used to hurt an individual – for instance text messaging or posting messages/images on the internet or any form of social media
- Racist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by racial, ethnic or cultural prejudice.
- Sexual bullying is where someone makes unwanted physical contact or makes sexually abusive comments.

- Homophobic and biphobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against lesbian, gay or bisexual people.
- Transphobic bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people who identify as trans.
- Disablist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against people with any form of disability.
- Sexist bullying occurs when bullying is motivated by a prejudice against someone because of their gender.

With the advance in new technologies, there is an increased risk of cyber bullying using e-mails, instant messenger, social networking sites, and public websites inappropriately. Please refer to our separate [Safe Use of Internet policy](#) for more details on this.

**Some warning signs that a student is being bullied:**

- Changes in academic performance
- Appears anxious
- Regularly feeling sick or unwell.
- Wanting to visit the nurse regularly.
- Reluctance to go to lessons or mix with other students.
- Clothes/bags torn or damaged.
- Money/possessions going missing.
- Unexplained cuts and bruises.
- Unexplained behaviour changes, e.g. moody, bad-tempered, tearful. Unhappiness.
- Loss of appetite. Not sleeping. Loss of weight
- Not very talkative

**Some reasons why people bully:**

- Desire to appear powerful
- Unhappiness
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Difficulties at home.
- Learned behaviour (They too have been bullied)

**Who should students talk to if they have any concerns about bullying?**

Study Links encourages students to talk to the people who are caring for them:

**In School.** Schools will have their own anti-bullying policy and bullying awareness training for students, including who to approach with concerns.

Study Links recommends students approach their houseparent, their form tutor or any teacher or member of staff they feel able to talk to. We advise students to contact Study Links if they are unable to take this further at school, either during normal work hours or on the emergency phone where appropriate.

Schools are asked to inform us when there are any incidents or concerns relating to students under our Guardianship including those concerning bullying. We will contact the student privately to hear

what they have to say and work with the school and parents to investigate and resolve matters as far as possible.

**In Homestay:** to speak to the Homestay or contact Study Links as above. Homestays are made aware in their induction training of signs to look out for in a student's behaviour or demeanour if all is not well and to report to Study Links if they have any concerns.

See the Study Links' Student and Homestay Handbook for further details.

### **Study Links Procedure**

Following concerns raised by students, parents, school staff, homestays, our office staff or staff who visit students in schools, we would contact the child and all other concerned parties to establish if bullying has occurred.

**If students have been bullied** we offer them the opportunity to discuss the experience and reassure them. We offer continuous support to try to restore self-esteem and confidence. This will be in agreement with the school, working closely with them, where they have implemented a process to support the student. Parents will be informed and advised on how best to support their child.

### **Students who have bullied will be helped by:**

Discussing what happened with them and other parties, discovering why they became involved, establishing their wrong-doing and need to change, eliciting what they need to do going forward to improve their behaviour and informing parents and ask them to support their child in making changes.

All incidents and reports will be actioned swiftly as above, all communication and action recorded and followed up on appropriately.

We will support parents in being realistic in their expectations as sometimes on-going problems can take time to resolve. We will keep them up-to-date with any further developments.

### **Review**

This policy is reviewed annually taking into account any changes in legislation, practice or roles concerned throughout the year.