Inspiring Futures through Learning

Anti-Bullying Core Values Policy

September 2026 to September 2027

Policy name:	Anti-Bullying Policy
Version:	V1
Date relevant from:	September 2026
Date to be reviewed:	September 2027 *This policy will be reviewed every two years unless legislation dictates otherwise. Recent changes in Legislation will need to be read and used to review this Policy.*
Role of reviewer:	IFtL Head of Safeguarding, Health, Children & Families.
Statutory (Y/N):	Y
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Policy level:**	1
Relevant to:	All employees through all IFtL schools and departments
Bodies consulted:	Employees Trade unions School / department governance bodies
Approved by:	IFtL Board of Trustees
Approval date:	August 2026

Key:

**** Publication on website:***

IFtL website		School website	
1	Statutory publication	A	Statutory publication
2	Good practice	B	Good practice
3	Not required	C	Not required

***** Policy level:***

1. Trust wide:
   - This one policy is relevant to everyone and consistently applied across all schools and Trust departments with no variations.
     - *Approved by the IFtL Board of Trustees.*
2. Trust core values:
   - This policy defines the values to be incorporated fully in all other policies on this subject across all schools and Trust departments. This policy should therefore from the basis of a localised school / department policy that in addition contains relevant information, procedures and / or processes contextualised to that school / department.
     - *Approved by the IFtL Board of Trustees as a Trust Core Values policy.*
     - *Approved by school / department governance bodies as a relevantly contextualised school / department policy.*

3. School / department policies
   - These are defined independently by schools / departments as appropriate
     - *Approved by school / department governance bodies.*

IFtL Anti-Bullying Core Values

Vision

At IFtL, we are relentlessly driven by our pursuit of excellence and high expectations of learning, behaviour, inclusion and respect. We believe every child has the right to feel safe, valued, respected and free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and abuse in all forms.

We are committed to creating school communities where positive relationships, belonging, inclusion and emotional wellbeing are actively promoted. We recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on a child's safety, wellbeing, attendance, mental health and educational outcomes and therefore take all concerns seriously.

All IFtL schools are committed to preventing bullying, responding promptly to concerns and ensuring that children who experience bullying receive appropriate support and protection. Where bullying behaviour may indicate wider safeguarding concerns, schools will respond in line with statutory safeguarding guidance and child protection procedures

Aspirations

We strive to promote and create nurturing, caring, inclusive and purposeful learning environments where children feel safe, protected, happy and secure. Bullying of any form, including online-bullying and any bullying related to any of the protected characteristics, is a 'non-negotiable' and will not be tolerated with or towards any members of our community - children, staff, governors, trustees, parents/ cares and any visitor. The IFtL Trust believes in nurturing responsible citizens where mutual-respect, kindness and care is core and underpins everything we do.

Core Values

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour that affects everyone. All schools within IFtL are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment so all children and staff can learn and work in a relaxed and secure environment without fear of being bullied or harassed. We actively promote and believe in creating a climate of co-operation and positive behaviour to reduce the number of incidents and likelihood of bullying occurring in all our schools.

We believe:

- All members of the IFtL community have a right to learn or work in an environment that is safe and free from intimidation and fear.
- Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and kindness.
- Preventative measures are paramount to help reduce any possible occurrences of bullying.
- Bullying procedures within each school will be clear and proactive with clear guidelines on how to report bullying should it occur and how to record incidents on CPOMS.
- The needs of the child experiencing harm/affected by behaviour are paramount. If a child feels they are being bullied we will always ensure they are heard, listened to, and the appropriate support put into place.
- Bullying behaviour of any form, including online-bullying and any bullying related to any of

the protected characteristics, must not be tolerated or minimalised.

- Any issues of bullying will be actively listened to and responded to in a timely fashion.
- Reported incidents will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated.

Success indicators

All schools within the trust will implement the following indicators:

- Pupils will learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied.
- All members of the IFtL community are protected from any form of bullying, intimidation, sexual harassment, discrimination and/ or abusive behaviour; this includes bullying in relation to any of the protected characteristics.
- Individual cases of bullying are dealt with promptly, consistently and in a constructive and fair manner.
- Bullying amongst any member of the IFtL community, whether to another member of staff, a child, a member of the local community, including parent/carers, is viewed as totally unacceptable and appropriate actions and consequences will be implemented according to the severity of the bullying.
- Any cases of bullying will be taken very seriously and timely interventions will occur.
- High quality support and care will be provided to any child experiencing harm/affected by behaviour of bullying to minimise the impact and empower them for future life choices.
- Children who have exhibited bullying tendencies or behaviour will be educated to understand the impact of their behaviour to help then adapt this behaviour in future to help them make more positive and informed choices.
- Proactive support and guidance will be given to help children learn from their mistakes and take ownership of them.
- Positive collaboration and close working partnership with parent/carers are promoted and valued.
- If bullying does occur, or a child expresses they are feeling bullied all pupils and staff will be confident to tell someone about it and know that all incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively.
- Anyone who knows that bullying is happening will know what to do and inform someone they trust.

Definition of Bullying

There are many different definitions of bullying in use, however most agree that the key factors that make behaviour bullying, as opposed to being unkind, venting frustration or a non-bullying incident of physical or verbal violence/aggression are:

- repetition of behaviour, systematically undermining a person over a period of time; and
- an imbalance of power between the person on the receiving end of the bullying and the person or persons doing the bullying.

Bullying is the repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where there is an actual or perceived imbalance of power. Bullying can be physical, verbal, emotional, psychological or online (cyberbullying), and can occur both face-to-face and through digital technologies. Bullying can have a significant impact on a child's welfare, wellbeing and educational outcomes and should be regarded as a safeguarding concern where it causes harm or indicates a risk of harm. Bullying, including prejudice-based and discriminatory bullying, can be a form of child-on-child abuse and will always be taken seriously. All concerns will be investigated and addressed promptly to safeguard children and promote their welfare.

Different types of bullying include:

Physical – hitting, kicking, spitting, tripping someone up, stealing/damaging someone's belongings, etc.

Verbal – name-calling, insulting a person's family, threats of physical violence, spreading rumours, constantly putting a person down.

Emotional/psychological – excluding someone from a group, humiliation.

Social bullying (gesture bullying)- is harder to recognise and can often occur behind the child experiencing harm/affected by behaviours back. Social bullying is designed to damage/harm someone reputation and/or cause humiliation. Social bullying can include lying and spreading rumours, encouraging others to exclude someone, mimicking unkindly, playing nasty jokes to humiliate or embarrass, negative facial or physical gestures, menacing or contemptuous looks, and damaging someone's social reputation or acceptance.

Racist – insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived ethnic origin or faith, name-calling, graffiti, racially motivated violence.

Sexual – sexually insulting language/gestures, name-calling, graffiti, unwanted physical contact. **Sexual harassment** is any kind of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature that makes anyone feel humiliated or intimidated, or that creates a hostile environment. This includes insulting sexual names, talks about someone in a sexual way that makes them feel uncomfortable, spreads sexual rumours. This can happen in person, over the phone, or online. We are aware and must be ultra-vigilant for signs of sexual violence and harassment as we recognise that sexual harassment and sexual violence are issues that can affect children and young people. We also recognise that it is considered to be underreported and children often do not talk out about this and even accept it as the 'norm'. We must ensure this is not the case in any of our schools.

Prejudicial or discriminatory bullying – any type of direct physical or verbal bullying, indirect bullying or online bullying based on protected characteristics such as age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and/ or sexual orientation

Homophobic bullying – insulting language/gestures based on a person's actual or perceived sexuality, name-calling, graffiti, homophobic violence.

Disablist bullying- when people are bullied because they have a disability. This includes verbal, physical, social, exclusion and extortion bullying.

Extortion bullying- where a bully threatens to hurt you if you do not do what they say. You may be forced to give money, possessions, or even your lunch. You may even be forced to steal

from school or others.

Exclusion bullying- where the bully isolated their child experiencing harm/affected by behaviour and leaves them out of things. So the child experiencing harm/affected by behaviour may be left alone at lunchtime because the bully makes sure that few people will speak to you.

Online Bullying and Online Harm

Online bullying can take place through social media platforms, gaming platforms, messaging services, artificial intelligence technologies, image sharing, websites, email or mobile devices.

Schools recognise that online bullying can occur both inside and outside of school and can have a significant impact on children's safety, wellbeing and access to education.

Staff should be alert to online abuse, the misuse of technology, AI generated images, manipulated images, deepfakes and harmful online behaviours. Serious online incidents may constitute a safeguarding concern and should be managed accordingly

Equality, Diversity and Protected Characteristics

IFtL will not tolerate bullying, harassment, child experiencing harm/affected by behaviourisation or discrimination related to any protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Incidents involving racism, sexism, misogyny, disability discrimination, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity, or other forms of prejudice will be recorded, investigated and addressed appropriately.

Such incidents may also require consideration through safeguarding processes where there is evidence of significant harm, abuse or vulnerability.

Bullying, Child-on-Child Abuse and Safeguarding

Schools within IFtL recognise that some incidents of bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and therefore require a safeguarding response in addition to any behaviour management response.

Bullying, prejudice-based incidents, discriminatory behaviour, sexual harassment, online abuse, harmful sexual behaviour, sexual violence and sexual harassment will always be considered through a safeguarding lens. The needs and safety of the child experiencing the behaviour will be prioritised.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, child-on-child abuse should not be tolerated, passed off as banter, part of growing up, or accepted as normal behaviour. All children should feel confident that concerns will be taken seriously and acted upon.

Schools will consider:

- Whether the incident constitutes bullying, child-on-child abuse, harassment or discrimination.
- Any actual or potential safeguarding risks.
- The wishes, feelings and safety of the child affected.
- Whether additional safeguarding support is required for either child.

- Whether external agencies need to be involved.

Both the child who has experienced harm and the child whose behaviour has caused harm may require support, intervention or safeguarding input.

Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence and Child-on-Child Abuse

IFtL recognises that sexual harassment and sexual violence are never acceptable and should never be dismissed as banter, part of growing up, having a laugh, or an inevitable part of school life.

Sexual harassment refers to unwanted conduct of a sexual nature which may occur online or offline and can include, but is not limited to:

- Sexual comments, remarks, jokes or taunting;
- Sexual name-calling;
- Deliberately displaying sexualised pictures or images;
- Sharing nude or semi-nude images without consent;
- Unwanted sexualised touching or physical behaviour;
- Upskirting/shorting
- Online sexual harassment, including through social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms or the misuse of technology and artificial intelligence.

Sexual violence refers to sexual offences and includes rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault.

In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, IFtL recognises that sexual harassment and sexual violence may constitute child-on-child abuse and must always be considered through a safeguarding lens. Such incidents will be managed in accordance with the IFtL Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, local safeguarding procedures and statutory guidance. Behaviour sanctions alone are not an appropriate safeguarding response.

The safety and wellbeing of the child who has experienced the behaviour will always be paramount. Appropriate support will be provided to all children involved, and a risk assessment may be undertaken where required. The Designated Safeguarding Lead must be informed of all incidents of sexual harassment or sexual violence so that appropriate safeguarding decisions can be made

Rights and responsibilities of our IFtL Community

Everyone within the IFtL community has rights and responsibilities in relation to any form of bullying, including prejudicial, discriminatory, sexual and online, and we must work proactively together to create an environment in which pupils can learn and develop and staff can have fulfilling careers free from harassment and bullying. Any form of bullying will never be tolerated and swift and effective investigations and actions, as appropriate, will be taken to address, educate and support all parties involved.

It is **every** member of the IFtL communities' responsibility to speak out and ensure IFtL and the schools provide a safe, happy and nurturing environment free from any form of bullying, intimidation or harassment.

IFtL schools will offer support to parents on how to help their children engage safely and responsibly, including social media, and relationships will be nurtured so mutual trust is created enabling parents/carers to be confident to raise concerns in an appropriate manner. All schools will actively listen to any concerns and respond immediately according to the issue. It is not acceptable for any pupil, parent or member of staff to carry out any form of bullying to any member of the IFtL community, including parents/carers with other parent/carers either face-to-face or via social media.

Separation of Behaviour Management and Safeguarding Responses

Whilst bullying behaviour may result in consequences under a school's Behaviour Policy, schools will ensure that safeguarding concerns are managed separately from behaviour processes.

The welfare, safety and support needs of children will not be dependent on the outcome of behaviour investigations or sanctions. Safeguarding concerns will be assessed and responded to immediately, regardless of any disciplinary action being considered.

Where bullying involves:

- sexual harassment;
- sexual violence;
- discriminatory behaviour;
- online abuse;
- hate incidents;
- child-on-child abuse;
- coercive or controlling behaviours;
- exploitation;
- threats of violence;

the matter will be referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and managed in accordance with safeguarding legislation, KCSIE 2026, Working Together to Safeguard Children and local safeguarding procedures.

Behaviour sanctions alone are not considered a safeguarding response and should not replace appropriate risk assessment, support planning or safeguarding intervention.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Many children and young people do not speak out when being bullied and may indicate by signs or behaviour that he or she is being bullied. It is therefore imperative all staff and parent/carers are fully aware and remain alert to the signs and symptoms a child may exhibit if they are being bullied. The possible signs and symptoms are extensive and will be included within the schools specific anti-bullying policy but essentially a change in behaviour is a key

indicator.

Outcomes:

Each school will clearly define the specific processes and actions they will take in their Anti-Bullying Policy adopting the core values and aspirations of IFtL Trust. Every school will ensure that outcomes are communicated appropriately, support is provided to those involved and actions are reviewed to assess effectiveness."

Procedures and Reporting

Any form of bullying should be formally recorded on CPOMS. Bullying will be reported to IFtL on a half termly basis and this will formulate part of the evaluation and monitoring process.

Staff Conduct, Dignity and Respect

As IFtL, we are committed to fostering a culture of dignity, respect, inclusivity and professional accountability across all areas of our organisation. We believe that positive and respectful relationships between staff are fundamental to achieving our vision, supporting wellbeing and creating environments in which children and young people can thrive.

Bullying, harassment, intimidation, victimisation or any behaviour that undermines an individual's dignity or wellbeing is inconsistent with our core values and will not be tolerated. Concerns relating to the treatment of staff will always be taken seriously and addressed promptly, fairly and appropriately.

Whilst this policy primarily focuses on the values, behaviours and expectations that underpin our culture, staff experiencing or witnessing bullying, harassment or other workplace concerns should refer to the relevant IFtL policies and procedures, including the Staff Code of Conduct, Dignity at Work Policy, Grievance Policy, Whistleblowing Policy and any other employment-related policies. These documents provide clear guidance on reporting concerns and accessing support.

IFtL is committed to promoting a positive working environment where all employees, volunteers and trustees feel valued, respected and empowered to raise concerns without fear of reprisal. Everyone has a responsibility to contribute to a culture of mutual respect and to uphold the Trust's values in all professional interactions.

Safeguarding Statement

Safeguarding is everybody's responsibility.
IFtL is committed to creating environments where children feel safe, heard, respected and protected from harm. All schools within the Trust recognise that bullying, harassment, discrimination, child-on-child abuse and online abuse can be safeguarding concerns and will respond accordingly.
All concerns will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with the safety and wellbeing of children remaining paramount. Where bullying behaviour indicates abuse, significant harm, exploitation, harmful sexual behaviour or other safeguarding concerns, the matter will be managed through safeguarding procedures as well as behaviour processes where appropriate.

All staff have a responsibility to identify, report and respond to concerns in accordance with the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and Working Together to Safeguard Children.
Concerns relating to bullying, child-on-child abuse, sexual harassment, discrimination, online harm or harmful sexual behaviour must be recorded promptly in accordance with local school procedures and escalated to the Designated Safeguarding Lead where required.