

# Best Foot Forward – Anti-Bullying Policy

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**Review Cycle:** Annually (Next review due: October 2026)

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## 1. Policy Statement

Best Foot Forward believes every student has the right to learn in a safe, supportive environment, free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. Bullying damages wellbeing, relationships and learning; it will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

We adopt a proactive, restorative approach to preventing and tackling bullying, while ensuring robust safeguarding responses when bullying causes harm.

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## 2. Purpose

This policy ensures that:

- Students, staff, parents and carers understand what bullying is and how it will be addressed.
- Clear systems are in place for reporting, recording and responding to incidents.
- Students are supported to develop positive relationships and resilience.
- Best Foot Forward complies with statutory safeguarding and equality duties.

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## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All students supported by Best Foot Forward.
- All staff, tutors, mentors, contractors and volunteers.
- Parents/carers and partner agencies engaged in our provision.

It covers bullying that occurs on-site, off-site (e.g. during community learning), and online (cyberbullying).

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## 4. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by:

- *Education Act 2002* – duty to safeguard and promote welfare.
- *Education and Inspections Act 2006* – duty to promote good behaviour and prevent bullying.
- *Equality Act 2010* – protection from harassment and discrimination.
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)* – recognising bullying as a safeguarding concern.
- DfE *Preventing and Tackling Bullying* (2017).

## 5. Definition of Bullying

Bullying is **repeated behaviour** that is intended to hurt someone physically, emotionally, or socially. It involves an imbalance of power and can be carried out by individuals or groups.

Bullying may be:

- **Physical** – hitting, kicking, pushing, theft.
- **Verbal** – name-calling, insults, racist, sexist or homophobic remarks.
- **Social/Relational** – exclusion, spreading rumours, humiliation.
- **Cyberbullying** – abusive messages, online harassment, sharing of inappropriate images or personal information.
- **Discriminatory** – targeting based on protected characteristics under the *Equality Act 2010*.

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## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

- **CEOs and Senior Leaders:** Ensure the policy is implemented, monitored, and reviewed.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Record and respond to bullying as safeguarding where appropriate; liaise with external agencies.
- **Staff and Mentors:** Model respectful behaviour, challenge bullying, report incidents, and support restorative resolutions.
- **Students:** Treat others with respect, report bullying, and support peers.
- **Parents/Carers:** Encourage children to share concerns and work in partnership with staff.

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## 7. Prevention

- Embedding respect, equality, and inclusion across the curriculum and mentoring.
- Promoting **British values** (democracy, rule of law, liberty, tolerance, respect).
- Encouraging peer support, kindness, and restorative approaches.
- Providing online safety education to tackle cyberbullying.
- Training staff to recognise early warning signs of bullying and discriminatory behaviour.

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## 8. Reporting and Responding

- Bullying concerns can be reported by students, staff, or parents to any member of staff.
- All reports are taken seriously and must be recorded and shared with the DSL.
- The DSL will assess whether the incident is a safeguarding concern requiring referral to external agencies.
- Where appropriate, restorative approaches will be used to rebuild relationships and resolve conflict.
- Sanctions may be applied in line with the Behaviour and Positive Relationships Policy if bullying persists.

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## 9. Support for Students

Victims of bullying will be supported through:

- A trusted adult/key worker.
- Mentoring sessions focused on confidence and resilience.
- Restorative conversations (if appropriate).
- External agency support (e.g. CAMHS, counselling) if required.

Students who engage in bullying behaviour will also be supported to understand the impact of their actions, with mentoring to encourage behaviour change.

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#### 10. Cyberbullying

- Cyberbullying will be treated as seriously as face-to-face bullying.
  - Staff, parents and students will be educated on safe online behaviour.
  - Inappropriate or harmful online activity will be reported to the DSL and may be escalated to police if illegal (e.g. upskirting, hate crime, harassment).
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#### 11. Equality and Inclusion

Bullying related to protected characteristics (race, religion, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity) will be treated as discriminatory harassment under the *Equality Act 2010*.

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#### 12. Monitoring and Review

- All bullying incidents are logged and monitored by the DSL.
  - Patterns and trends are analysed to inform preventative action.
  - This policy is reviewed annually, or earlier if statutory guidance changes.
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