**Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy**

14th February 2024 (next review February 2025)

**Overview**

This policy has due regard to the following documents:

* DFE Advice ‘Preventing & Tackling Bullying’ (2017)
* Keeping Children Safe in Education (2023)
* The Equality Act (2010)

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Ambrose Lynch Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy: the Online Safety Policy and the Codes of Conduct for both staff and students. All policies can be found on the website at [www.ambroselynch.com](http://www.ambroselynch.com) and hard copies are available on request.

**Aims**

* Eliminate unlawful discrimination of any kind
* Promote equality of opportunity
* Value qualities of respect, tolerance, inclusion and kindness
* Promote diversity and a culture of inclusion

**Bullying**

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can be defined by the victim and not by the perpetrator. For example, the perpetrator may argue their actions were ‘just banter’ and not meant to offend but if the victim has shown their unhappiness over these actions and asked the perpetrator to stop then Ambrose Lynch views this as bullying. Bystanders in bullying incidents can also be considered to be perpetrators if they do not intervene to support the victim.

Due to the nature of bullying, the child may find it difficult to tell anyone for fear that things will get worse if they do. Bullies rely on this fear to continue bullying, resulting in the bullied child feeling ashamed or embarrassed about what’s happening. Bullying is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability, or because a child is adopted.

There are 3 identified types of bullying:

* Indirect bullying also known as social bullying or relational bullying (spreading rumours, social exclusion, disclosing another’s secrets to a third party).
* Direct verbal bullying (yelling abuse at another, name-calling, insulting someone, using verbal threats)
* Direct physical bullying (pushing, hitting, punching, kicking)

Early intervention in bullying is crucial to ensure that light hearted ‘banter’ does not cross the line into bullying and to ensure that boundaries are set. Where it is thought a child is suffering ‘significant harm’ the bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern.

Bullying itself is not a criminal offence in the UK but some types of harassment are, as these could be defined as a hate crime. If this were to be the case, Ambrose Lynch would notify the police.

The NSPCC explains that no single sign will indicate for certain that a child is being bullied, but watch out for:

* belongings getting 'lost' or damaged;
* physical injuries, such as unexplained bruises;
* being afraid to go to school, being mysteriously 'ill' each morning, or skipping school;
* not doing as well at school; • asking for, or stealing, money (to give to whoever is bullying them);
* being nervous, losing confidence, or becoming distressed and withdrawn;
* problems with eating or sleeping;
* bullying others.

**Cyberbullying**

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved.

Ambrose Lynch would liaise closely with the student’s school in any cyberbullying cases using, if necessary, powers prescribed in the Education Act 2011 to enable the searching and deletion of electronic images or files on electronic devices including phones.

If Ambrose Lynch believes the police need to be involved because of pornographic images of a child or extreme pornography, then images must not be deleted.

**Possible signs of cyberbullying / online abuse**

The NSPCC list the possible signs of a child who may be experiencing online abuse if they demonstrate a change in behaviour or begin to display unusual behaviours such as;

* Being upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
* Unwilling to talk or secretive about their online activities and mobile phone use
* Spending much more or much less time texting, gaming or using social media
* Many new phone numbers, texts or e-mail addresses show up on their mobile phone, laptop or tablet
* After texting or being online they may seem withdrawn, upset or outraged
* Not wanting to go to school and/or avoiding meeting friends
* Avoiding formerly enjoyable social situations
* Difficulty sleeping
* Low self-esteem

**Training**

Ambrose Lynch staff, host families and drivers receive basic training in anti-bullying and cyberbullying during their induction and regular updates at least once a year as part of their ongoing safeguarding training.

**Procedures**

Ambrose Lynch fosters an ethos of inclusion, inculcating respect for others, their property and their individuality. These values also pay heed to the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. All Ambrose Lynch staff are aware that bullying is unacceptable and should not be tolerated at any time. All staff are prepared and skilled to recognise, listen and act upon any bullying incident. Advice and support are offered to all.

Ambrose Lynch does not tolerate any form of bullying involving students or staff and investigates all allegations of bullying/cyberbullying, dealing with each incident swiftly and effectively. Our aim is to protect the victims of bullying and to educate the perpetrator about the consequences of their inappropriate behaviour. It is hoped, in most cases, that all people involved will learn from the experience and that relationships can be rebuilt positively.

If a student is being bullied they should immediately inform Dominic Lynch, the Ambrose Lynch Designated Safeguarding Lead by phone 0776 7273863 or email dominic@ambroselynch.com If the bullying is taking place at school they should also inform the relevant member of staff in charge of their pastoral well being this may their House Master/ Mistress or Form Tutor. If in any doubt or unable to find the relevant member of staff the student should inform the first member of staff available.

If a member of Ambrose Lynch or a Host family receives a report of suspected bullying from a student, parent or other source via a face to face disclosure, email or phone call they should record the disclosure and email that to the DSL, Dominic Lynch at dominic@ambroselynch.com . The disclosure should be reported verbally as soon as possible to the DSL, Dominic Lynch on 0776 7273863. The DSL will report the incident and written disclosure to the student’s school DSL and will ask that they assess the alleged threat and risk to the student and implement an immediate action plan. We will continue to review the situation until a positive resolution has been achieved. If there is a concern a young person has been harmed the incident should be referred to the police by dialling 101. If the student is considered to be at immediate risk of harm the incident should be referred to the police by dialling 999. The first person to hear of an incident that they feel requires police attention should report this so there is no delay in getting help to the child involved. This should take priority over any other form of reporting. Once the incident has been reported to the police the incident should be recorded as above. Incidents such as those listed below are all cases where police involvement is the correct and appropriate response:

* The incident involves an adult
* There is reason to believe that a young person has been coerced, blackmailed or groomed, or if there are concerns about their capacity to consent (for example owing to special educational needs).
* What you know about the imagery or other content suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person’s developmental stage, or are violent.
* You have reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of the imagery, for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming .

The Ambrose Lynch DSL will work with the school to ensure the student is well supported. If the alleged bullying incident involves a member of the host family, or another student staying with the host family, Ambrose Lynch will investigate the circumstances fully and if necessary, find alternative accommodation for the student and review their working relationship with the host family. All concerns are recorded on the student file to ensure we are kept up to date with the situation and can escalate our input if necessary.

**Further Resources**

The following websites provide useful advice and guidance for recognising, supporting and dealing with bullying incidents:

 [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

 [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

 [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)