



Anti-Bullying with Child-on-Child Abuse Policy 2026

At the Link Academy Trust, our vision is clear:

Flourishing schools for all at the heart of our communities.

Inspired by, *“Life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)*, we strive to create environments where every individual can thrive.

Our mission is underpinned by three core values that guide everything we do:

- **Belonging** – Every interaction matters; we nurture relationships and ensure everyone feels valued and included.
- **Curiosity** – We embrace ambition, creativity, and innovation to inspire lifelong learning.
- **Collaboration** – We foster an open culture of accountability and shared success, working together for the benefit of all.

These principles shape our approach to equality and diversity, ensuring that every policy, decision, and action reflects our commitment to inclusion and excellence.

Anti-Bullying with Child-On-Child Abuse Policy 2026

The Link Academy Trust (the Trust) is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Department of Education (DfE). All Members of the Board of Trustees are Directors of the company as well as Trustees of the exempt charity; the term 'Trustee' used in this Policy also means Director. This Policy applies to all academies within the Trust.

Rationale

It is every child's right to enjoy their school life feeling safe, secure and free from hurtful or harmful experiences. We aim to provide a caring and friendly environment for all our pupils, to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them to maximise their potential. The Trust strives to always promote positive behaviour and encourage good relationships throughout the Trust.

This policy, alongside other relevant policies, is designed to ensure that as a Trust we are alert to the signs of bullying and act promptly and fairly against it. If an incident arises, we deal with the situation robustly, swiftly and appropriately. We will not tolerate any form of bullying or child-on-child abuse within the Trust, academies or by association.

Aim of the Policy

The aims in managing incidents of bullying are:

- to provide a secure environment in which pupils can report incidents confidently
- to show all pupils and parents that bullying is taken seriously
- to enable staff to respond calmly and consistently to any bullying or child-on-child incidents
- to reassure pupils that the academy will protect and support all parties whilst the issues are resolved
- to provide long term and positive programmes of personal development to ensure all stakeholders understand behaviour expectations- to be kind and caring to everyone.

What is bullying?

There is no legal definition of bullying, however the Trust defines bullying as to be when an individual or a group of people with more power, repeatedly and intentionally cause hurt or harm to another person or group of people who feel helpless to respond. Bullying can continue over time, is often hidden from adults, and will probably continue if no action is taken.

It is usually defined as behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at certain groups, for example *bullying could be related to someone's identity, family background, and/or protected characteristics.*

What bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- mutual arguments, disagreements or fights.

It is inevitable that conflicts will sometimes occur. In these conflicts, children may hurt each other's feelings. This behaviour is never desirable, but it does happen. We use a restorative

approach believing that it is appropriate to help children understand how they may have hurt each other, and to teach them different ways to behave, than it is to punish them. Occasionally, hurtful behaviour can become bullying. Bullying differs from teasing or falling out with friends or other types of aggressive behaviour when it is persistent and either:

- i. There is a deliberate intention to hurt or humiliate, or
- ii. There is a power imbalance that makes it hard for the victim to defend themselves. Friendship fall outs are seen as accidental or occasional, with no power imbalance or hierarchy.

We teach children the acronym 'STOP' (Several Times On Purpose) or similar, to help them differentiate between bullying and other situations as not all hurtful behaviour is bullying. We also use 'STOP' to encourage the children to 'Start Telling Other People'.

Forms of bullying/Child-on-child abuse (see KCSiE 2025 for more information) can include:

- Verbal abuse e.g. name calling, hurtful remarks, taunting, threats
- Physical abuse, e.g. kicking, hitting, biting, damaging property.
- Cyber bullying e.g. inappropriate messages, degrading photos, inappropriate comments
- Sexting e.g. sending explicit texts or images
- Initiation/hazing e.g. initiation ceremony to join a group
- Prejudice/hate e.g. range of hurtful behaviours, including physical and emotional referring to their ethnicity, culture and/or religion.
- SEND e.g. bullying a target because of their additional need.
- LGBTQ+ e.g. comments, taunting or rumour.
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment (see further information below).

Child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment

Schools will respond to all signs, reports and concerns of child-on-child sexual violence and sexual harassment, including those that have happened outside of the school and/or online.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two or more children of any age and sex. It can occur also through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap; they can occur online and face-to-face (both physically and verbally) and are never acceptable.

At the Trust, we have a zero-tolerance approach to sexual violence and sexual harassment, it is never acceptable, and it will not be tolerated. It will never be passed off as "banter", "just having a laugh", "a part of growing up" or "boys being boys".

We will:

- recognise, acknowledge, and understanding the scale of harassment and abuse and that even if there are no reports it does not mean it is not happening, it may be the case that it is just not being reported
- challenging physical behaviour (potentially criminal in nature) such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, pulling down trousers, flicking bras and lifting up skirts.
- Keep details records of any events and actions taken

- Ensure that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe

Prevention of Bullying or child-on-child abuse

We work in a proactive way to teach children the essential social and emotional skills they need to make happy and effective relationships. To fulfil our aim of providing a friendly and safe environment for all pupils, so that they can learn in a relaxed and secure atmosphere, the following strategies are used:

- Restorative approaches
- Staff training and use of tools to identify 'typical' age behaviours e.g. Aims Tool
- Anti-bullying committee
- Raising awareness of bullying/antibullying week
- High quality scheme programme for PSHE and RSHE
- Regular e-safety updates and training
- Positive, active play is encouraged, for example, play leaders
- Child-friendly anti-bullying resources
- Celebrating success
- School Values and behaviour policy
- Open door policy
- Student Council/ gathering student voice

Support/ procedure of dealing with bullying

The academy will regularly emphasise to pupils that bullying is not acceptable and that all incidents will be taken seriously.

Pupils will also be encouraged to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff or their parents. Parents should raise any concerns they have with the class teacher or Academy Head at the earliest opportunity.

All incidents of bullying will be taken seriously, investigated, and appropriate action taken. Incidents will be dealt with speedily, fairly, and positively.

Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity where an incident is considered serious enough to warrant further investigation or where there are repeated incidents of a minor nature. Parents will be made aware of the Trust complaints procedure. Any complaints made through that procedure will be taken seriously and dealt with accordingly.

Advice and support will be offered to the victim of bullying.

The perpetrator will be supported in understanding their unsociable behaviour and offered support to modify that behaviour.

Staff will also ensure that, where necessary, action is taken to prevent further incidents. Such action may include:

- imposition of sanctions
- obtaining an apology
- informing parents of the situation
- provision of mentor support for both victim and the perpetrator
- following safeguarding procedures

- Risk assessment

All staff, teaching and non-teaching will be vigilant and deal with all observed incidents of bullying even where the individual has not reported the incident.

All teaching staff, non-teaching staff and parents will be made aware of the contents of this policy and will receive regular updates and reminders in line with its implementation.

Reporting

Staff should keep good chronologies of all incidents on CPOMS

Where further investigation is considered necessary a report must be written and retained-dated and signed in full with a clear print of the name. This record will include detail of the incident(s), the investigation and outcome.

All BPRI (bullying, prejudice, racism) incidents are also reported to Devon LEA & referred to the Director of Safeguarding DoS.

[Bullying, Prejudice and Racism Incidents Report - Schools and Early Years settings 25/26](#)

A monthly log of any BPRI is kept by the Academy Head and returned termly to the DoS Director of Safeguarding.

Links to other policies & documents

- Behaviour policy
- Equality statement
- Equal opportunity policy
- Online safety policy
- RSHE policy
- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- SEND policy
- KCSiE (2025), Working together to safeguard children (2023), Equality act (2010)

Evaluation and Review

All staff will be asked to ensure that they are familiar with the contents of this policy and will be encouraged to provide feedback on its effectiveness on an ongoing basis. It will be available online and in the Staff Handbook.

This policy will be brought to the attention of all parents and will be freely available to any parent wishing to see a copy.

This Policy is reviewed by the Standards & Curriculum Committee on an annual cycle.

Approved by the Board of Trustees 07 February 2022

Approved by Standards and Curriculum Committee: 30th January 2024

Approved by Standards and Curriculum Committee: 3rd February 2026

Next review: Spring 2027