



Bullying, Harassment and Respectful Behaviour Policy

Version: V1 2026-2027

Owner: Directors

Responsible Lead: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Approved by: Board of Directors / Governors

Review Date: August 2027

1. Policy Statement

The Link Training Academy is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful learning environment where all learners, apprentices, staff, employers and visitors are treated with dignity and respect.

We believe that everyone has the right to learn and work free from bullying, harassment, discrimination, victimisation and intimidation.

Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated, whether it occurs:

- During face-to-face training sessions;
- Online or through remote learning platforms;
- In the workplace;
- During reviews, assessments or examinations;
- On work placements;
- Through social media, messaging services or other digital platforms;
- At events organised by or connected with The Link Training.

All concerns will be taken seriously, investigated appropriately and dealt with promptly.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- Learners and apprentices;
- Adult learners;
- Learners under 19 years of age;
- Staff, associates and volunteers;
- Employers and workplace mentors;
- Visitors and contractors involved in training activities.

The policy applies regardless of where learning takes place, including remote learning environments, employer premises and training venues.

3. Legal Framework

This policy operates in accordance with:

- Equality Act 2010;
 - Human Rights Act 1998;
 - Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (where applicable to learners under 18);
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children;
 - Current Ofsted Further Education and Skills Inspection Framework and expectations;
 - The Link Training Safeguarding Policy;
 - Prevent Duty Guidance.
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4. Definitions

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that is intended to hurt, intimidate, humiliate, threaten or undermine another person.

Bullying may be:

- Repeated over time;
- A one-off serious incident;
- Deliberate or reckless;
- Carried out by an individual or a group.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted conduct that violates a person's dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Harassment may relate to a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010, including:

- Age;
 - Disability;
 - Race;
 - Religion or belief;
 - Sex;
 - Sexual orientation;
 - Gender reassignment;
 - Pregnancy and maternity;
 - Marriage and civil partnership.
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5. Types of Bullying and Harassment

Bullying and harassment may include, but are not limited to:

Verbal

- Name-calling;
- Insults;
- Offensive jokes;
- Threatening language;
- Humiliation or ridicule;
- Repeated criticism intended to undermine.

Physical

- Physical assault;
- Intimidating behaviour;
- Deliberate damage to personal belongings;
- Aggressive physical conduct.

Emotional or Psychological

- Deliberately excluding someone;
- Spreading rumours;
- Manipulation;
- Intimidation;
- Coercive behaviour;
- Persistent undermining.

Discriminatory

Behaviour based on protected characteristics, including:

- Racist incidents;
- Homophobic behaviour;
- Transphobic behaviour;
- Sexist comments;
- Disability-related bullying;
- Religious discrimination.

Workplace Bullying

Bullying occurring:

- Between colleagues;
- Between mentors and learners;
- Between managers and apprentices;
- By customers or members of the public;
- During work-based learning activities.

Cyberbullying

Bullying through technology, including:

- Emails;
- Text messages;
- Social media;
- Messaging applications;
- Video conferencing platforms;
- Learning platforms;
- Workplace communication systems.

Examples include:

- Offensive messages;
- Sharing images without consent;
- Excluding individuals from online groups;
- Harassing comments;
- Anonymous abuse;
- Impersonation;
- Online threats.

6. Child-on-Child Abuse and Learner-on-Learner Abuse

The Link Training Academy recognises that learners can abuse other learners.

Peer-on-peer abuse may include:

- Bullying;
- Cyberbullying;
- Prejudice-based behaviour;
- Harassment;
- Coercion;
- Hate-related incidents;
- Emotional abuse;
- Behaviour that causes significant distress or harm.

All allegations will be taken seriously and addressed promptly.

Where safeguarding concerns arise, The Link Training Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

7. Online Safety

As much of The Link Training Academy's provision is delivered remotely, learners and staff are expected to use digital platforms responsibly and respectfully.

The following behaviours are unacceptable:

- Abusive or offensive online communication;
- Sharing inappropriate content;
- Recording sessions without permission;
- Sharing personal information without consent;
- Deliberately excluding others from online activities;
- Using technology to intimidate, threaten or harass.

Concerns relating to online safety should be reported immediately.

8. Responsibilities

All Staff

All staff must:

- Promote respectful behaviour;
- Challenge inappropriate conduct;
- Remain alert to signs of bullying or harassment;
- Take concerns seriously;

- Report safeguarding concerns in accordance with safeguarding procedures;
- Maintain appropriate records.

Learners

Learners are expected to:

- Treat others with respect;
- Follow behaviour expectations;
- Report concerns promptly;
- Support a positive learning environment;
- Avoid behaviour that may cause distress or harm to others.

Employers and Workplace Mentors

Employers supporting learners are expected to:

- Promote respectful workplaces;
- Address workplace concerns appropriately;
- Notify The Link Training of safeguarding concerns affecting learners;
- Work in partnership with The Link Training to resolve issues.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL will:

- Receive and review reports;
- Assess safeguarding risks;
- Coordinate investigations;
- Maintain records;
- Implement support measures;
- Monitor themes, trends and organisational learning;
- Refer concerns to external agencies where appropriate.
- Contribute to safeguarding and quality improvement activities.

9. Reporting Concerns

Bullying or harassment may be reported to:

- Tutors;
- Assessors;
- Quality staff;
- Managers;
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead;
- The Designated Safeguarding Officer;

- Workplace mentors (where appropriate).

Concerns may be raised:

- In person;
- By telephone;
- By email;
- During reviews;
- Through safeguarding reporting procedures.

All reports will be treated seriously and handled sensitively.

No learner or staff member will be disadvantaged for making a genuine complaint.

10. Responding to Concerns

When a concern is reported, The Link Training will:

1. Listen carefully and take the concern seriously.
2. Record relevant details.
3. Assess any safeguarding risks.
4. Investigate proportionately.
5. Gather evidence where available.
6. Speak with those involved.
7. Agree appropriate actions.
8. Monitor outcomes.

Support may be offered to:

- The person experiencing bullying or harassment;
 - Witnesses;
 - The individual whose behaviour is being challenged.
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11. Safeguarding and Escalation

Bullying or harassment may become a safeguarding matter where it involves:

- Threats of violence;
- Hate incidents;
- Discriminatory abuse;
- Sexual harassment;
- Stalking;
- Coercive behaviour;

- Exploitation;
- Online abuse;
- Persistent victimisation.

Particular consideration will be given where concerns involve adults at risk, learners under 18, learners with disabilities or individuals experiencing additional vulnerabilities.

Where appropriate, referrals may be made to:

- Children's Social Care;
- Adult Social Care;
- Police;
- Local safeguarding partners;
- Other support agencies.

If there is an immediate risk of harm, emergency services should be contacted by dialling 999.

12. Support for Learners

The Link Training Academy will seek to support learners affected by bullying or harassment through:

- Welfare discussions;
- Safeguarding interventions;
- Referral to support services;
- Employer liaison;
- Reasonable adjustments where appropriate;
- Ongoing monitoring and review.

Particular consideration will be given to:

- Learners under 18;
 - Adults at risk;
 - Learners with disabilities;
 - Learners experiencing mental health difficulties.
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13. Confidentiality

Information relating to bullying and harassment concerns will be shared only with those who need to know in order to safeguard individuals and investigate concerns appropriately.

Absolute confidentiality cannot be guaranteed where safeguarding concerns exist.

14. Record Keeping

The Link Training Academy will maintain secure records of:

- Reports received;
- Investigations undertaken;
- Actions taken;
- Support provided;
- Outcomes achieved.

Records will be retained and managed in accordance with data protection requirements and organisational policies.

15. Monitoring and Review

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor incidents and identify any patterns or trends requiring action.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if:

- Legislation changes;
 - Safeguarding guidance changes;
 - Organisational requirements change;
 - Monitoring identifies a need for review.
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Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures
- Information Technology, Cyber Security, Online Safety and Acceptable Use Policy
- Health, Safety, Wellbeing and Welfare Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Belonging Policy
- Learner Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Staff Handbook and Professional Standards Manual
- Whistleblowing, Fraud Prevention and Anti-Bribery Policy