



# **Anti-Bullying Policy**

**September 2024**

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## **Important contacts**

ROLE/ORGANISATION	NAME	CONTACT DETAILS
Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	Sean Di Sora	<a href="mailto:Sean.disora@lintonschool.co.uk">Sean.disora@lintonschool.co.uk</a> 01772 957062 07840 803896
Deputy DSL	Steph White	<a href="mailto:Steph.white@lintonschool.co.uk">Steph.white@lintonschool.co.uk</a> 01772 957062 07958 717282
Deputy DSL	Paul Barton	<a href="mailto:Paul.barton@lintonschool.co.uk">Paul.barton@lintonschool.co.uk</a> 01772 957062
Regional Lead	Declan Tuer	<a href="mailto:Declan.tuer@caretech-uk.com">Declan.tuer@caretech-uk.com</a> 07827 302334
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Lancashire County Council	Tim Booth	<a href="mailto:Tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk">Tim.booth@lancashire.gov.uk</a> 01772 536694
Lancashire County Council – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)		0300 123 6720 0300 123 6722 (out of office hours)
Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Blackpool Council	Amanda Quirke	<a href="mailto:Amanda.quirke@blackpool.gov.uk">Amanda.quirke@blackpool.gov.uk</a> 01253 477541
Blackpool Council – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)		01253 477299
Channel helpline		020 7340 7264
Prevent / Channel Referrals		<a href="mailto:concern@lancashire.pnn.police.uk">concern@lancashire.pnn.police.uk</a>

**If the child is at immediate risk, please call the police on 999.**

# Terminology and Definitions

**Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children** means:

- Protecting children from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

**Child protection** is part of this definition and refers to activities undertaken to prevent children suffering, or being likely to suffer, significant harm.

**Abuse** is a form of maltreatment of a child, and may involve inflicting harm or failing to act to prevent harm. Appendix 1 explains the different types of abuse.

**Neglect** is a form of abuse and is the persistent failure to meet a child’s basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child’s health or development. Appendix 1 defines neglect in more detail.

**Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes** (also known as sexting or youth-produced sexual imagery) is where children share nude or semi-nude images, videos or live streams.

**Children** includes everyone under the age of 18.

The following 3 **safeguarding partners** are identified in Keeping Children Safe in Education (and defined in the Children Act 2004, as amended by chapter 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017). They will make arrangements to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of local children, including identifying and responding to their needs:

- The Local Authority (LA)
- Integrated care boards (previously known as clinical commissioning groups) for an area within the LA
- The chief officer of police for a police area in the LA area

**Victim** is a widely understood and recognised term, but we understand that not everyone who has been subjected to abuse considers themselves a victim, or would want to be described that way. When managing an incident, we will be prepared to use any term that the child involved feels most comfortable with.

**Alleged perpetrator(s)** and **perpetrator(s)** are widely used and recognised terms. However, we will think carefully about what terminology we use (especially in front of children) as, in some cases, abusive behaviour can be harmful to the perpetrator too. We will decide what’s appropriate and which terms to use on a case-by-case basis.

<b>Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL &amp; Deputy DSL)</b>	<p>The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is the person appointed to take lead responsibility for child protection issues in school. The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead support the DSL when required and also will act as the DSL in their absence.</p> <p>Contact details for the local LADO can be found on page 3 of this document.</p>
<b>Regional Lead / Proprietor Representative</b>	<p>This is the senior person who ensures that the people with leadership and management responsibility for the school:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;</li> <li>b. fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and</li> <li>c. actively promote the well-being of pupil</li> </ol> <p>This is Declan Tuer for Linton School and his contact details can be found on page 3.</p>

<p><b>The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)</b></p>	<p>The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) service provides management and oversight of individual cases of allegations of abuse made against those who work with children.</p> <p>The LADO <b>must</b> be contacted when any allegation or concern about any person who works with children who may have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaved in a way that has harmed, or may have harmed a child</li> <li>• Possibly committed a criminal offence against, or related to, a child; or</li> <li>• Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates they may pose a risk of harm to children</li> <li>• Behaved or may have behaved in a way that indicates they may not be suitable to work with children</li> </ul> <p>These procedures may also be used where concerns arise about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The person's behaviour with regard to his/her own children</li> <li>• The behaviour in the private or community life of a partner, member of the family or other household member</li> <li>• A person's behaviour in their personal life, which may impact upon the safety of children to whom they owe a duty of care.</li> </ul> <p>Contact details for the local LADO can be found on page 3 of this document.</p>
<p><b>Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH Team)</b></p>	<p>The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) service was established in 2013 and is the single point of access in Lancashire for all safeguarding concerns across all service areas for both Children &amp; adults with care and support needs aged 18 years and over. The MASH consists of representatives from the county council's adult safeguarding and children's social care departments working alongside the police, health, Education, Children's Youth Justice Service, Early Help Officers, Lancashire fire and rescue, probation and other partners.</p> <p>Children's Social workers within the Children's Services Support Hub (MASH) undertake initial screening / safeguarding checks to determine the level of need or safeguard. This is in line with the Lancashire Working well with children and families document, working together to safeguard Children 2018 and the Children's Act 1989 &amp; 2004. This is including information sharing, Information gathering, risk assessing and analysis and decision making.</p> <p>Contact details for the local LADO can be found on page 3 of this document.</p>

## Our School

Linton School is an independent special school for young people with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) difficulties for both boys and girls aged 8-18 years old. The school is registered for up to 12 learners and consists of 4 small classes to provide a nurturing environment to develop and progress throughout their learning journey. We are a trauma informed school that is able to support children and teenagers who suffer with trauma or mental health problems and whose troubled behaviour acts as a barrier to learning. Located in rural Preston we therefore benefit from some amazing outdoor space where we develop our outdoor, equestrian and horticulture skills. All the staff at Linton School are committed to creating a setting which not only focuses on academic success, but also provides our learners opportunities to develop their social, communication and independent skills.

## Culture and Ethos

We are committed to providing a nurturing, safe and ambitious learning environment that supports every young person to achieve lifelong skills through a diverse learner centred curriculum. Respectful and supportive relationships are at the heart of all we do; we value every member of the school community equally. Through bespoke curriculums tailored towards each individual pupil's needs, experiences, interests and strengths we foster a love for learning and support our young people to achieve their full potential. As an educational setting our main aim is to prepare our pupils to make a positive contribution towards society by giving our students the skills they need to be successful, resilient and inspirational young adults. Linton schools purpose is to improve the quality of life for our young people both now, and in the future, 'building our futures together'.

## The Vision

Linton School provides a safe, nurturing learning environment to provide skills for lifelong opportunities, which gives the young people an ambitious outlook towards their future.

The vision drives everything we do and will be achieved through:

- Outdoor enrichment activities to promote life skills through play, nurture and teamwork.
- Promoting independence, patience and listening skills through Equestrian lessons.
- Multi-disciplinary links from both internal and external companies to provide a bespoke, broad and balanced curriculum that develops the education of our pupils.
- Empowering each learner to achieve their personal goals and develop a lifelong love of learning.
- A positive and ambitious school environment that promotes learning for all.
- Offering a broad range of learning experiences within the curriculum that values academic attainment as well as developing social skills, experiences and resilience.

**More information about the school can be found in the school Prospectus.**

# 1. Definition of bullying

## Definition

Bullying is hurtful, unkind or threatening behaviour which is deliberate and repeated.

Bullying can be carried out by an individual or a group of people towards another individual or group, where the bully or bullies hold more power than those being bullied. If bullying is allowed it harms the perpetrator, the target and the whole school community. The vision and values of the school should lead to a diminishing of any such behaviour.

The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as: "The repetitive, intentional hurting of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power" (2015). It can happen face-to-face or through cyberspace (on-line, via social media or texting).

We make reference to the acronym below to help children understand that bullying is hurtful behaviour that happens:

- **S**everal
- **T**imes
- **O**n
- **P**urpose

The nature of bullying can be:

- Physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, pushing or inappropriate/unwanted physical contact)
- Verbal (e.g. name calling, ridicule, comments)
- Cyber (e.g. messaging, social media, email)
- Emotional/indirect/segregation (e.g. excluding someone, spreading rumours)
- Visual/written (e.g. graffiti, gesture, wearing racist insignia)
- Damage to personal property
- Threat with a weapon
- Theft or extortion
- Persistent bullying

Bullying could be based on many things, including:

- Race
- Religion or belief
- Special Educational Needs or disability
- Culture or class
- Appearance or health conditions
- Sexual orientation or Gender identity (homophobic, biphobic, transphobic)
- Gender
- Related to home or other personal circumstances
- Power imbalance

**Please see Linton School's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Online Safety policy for more details.**

## 2. Reporting bullying

### **Advice taken from ‘Preventing and tackling bullying’ July 2017**

When there is ‘reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm’ a bullying incident should be addressed as a child protection concern under the Children Act 1989. Where this is the case, the school staff should discuss with the school’s Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and report their concerns to their Local Authority children’s social care and work with them to take appropriate action. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.

However, external support can be given to pupils whether or not it is deemed a Child Protection concern. Even where safeguarding is not considered to be an issue, schools may need to draw on a range of external services to support the pupil who is experiencing bullying, or to tackle any underlying issue which has contributed to a child engaging in bullying. Full details can be found in Part 1 of Keeping Children Safe in Education and Chapter 1 of Working Together to Safeguard Children.

### **Harassing or threatening behavior/communications**

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal offence in the UK, it is important to bear in mind that some types of harassing or threatening behaviour – or communications – could be a criminal offence, for example under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003, and the Public Order Act 1986.

If school staff feel that an offence may have been committed they should seek assistance from the police. For example, under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, any person who sends an electronic communication which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender, is guilty of an offence if their purpose in sending it was to cause distress or anxiety to the recipient.

Staff, volunteers and Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative must follow the procedures set out below in the event of a safeguarding issue (**also see Figure 1 page 9**).

Please note – in this and subsequent sections, you should take any references to the DSL to mean “the DSL (or deputy DSL)”.

### **If you think a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger**

Make a referral to children’s social care and/or the police (999) **immediately** if you believe a child is suffering or likely to suffer from harm, or is in immediate danger. **Anyone can make a referral.**

- **Lancashire County Council – School Safeguarding Helpline: 01772 531196**
- **Blackpool Council – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH): 01253 477299**

Tell the DSL as soon as possible if you make a referral directly.

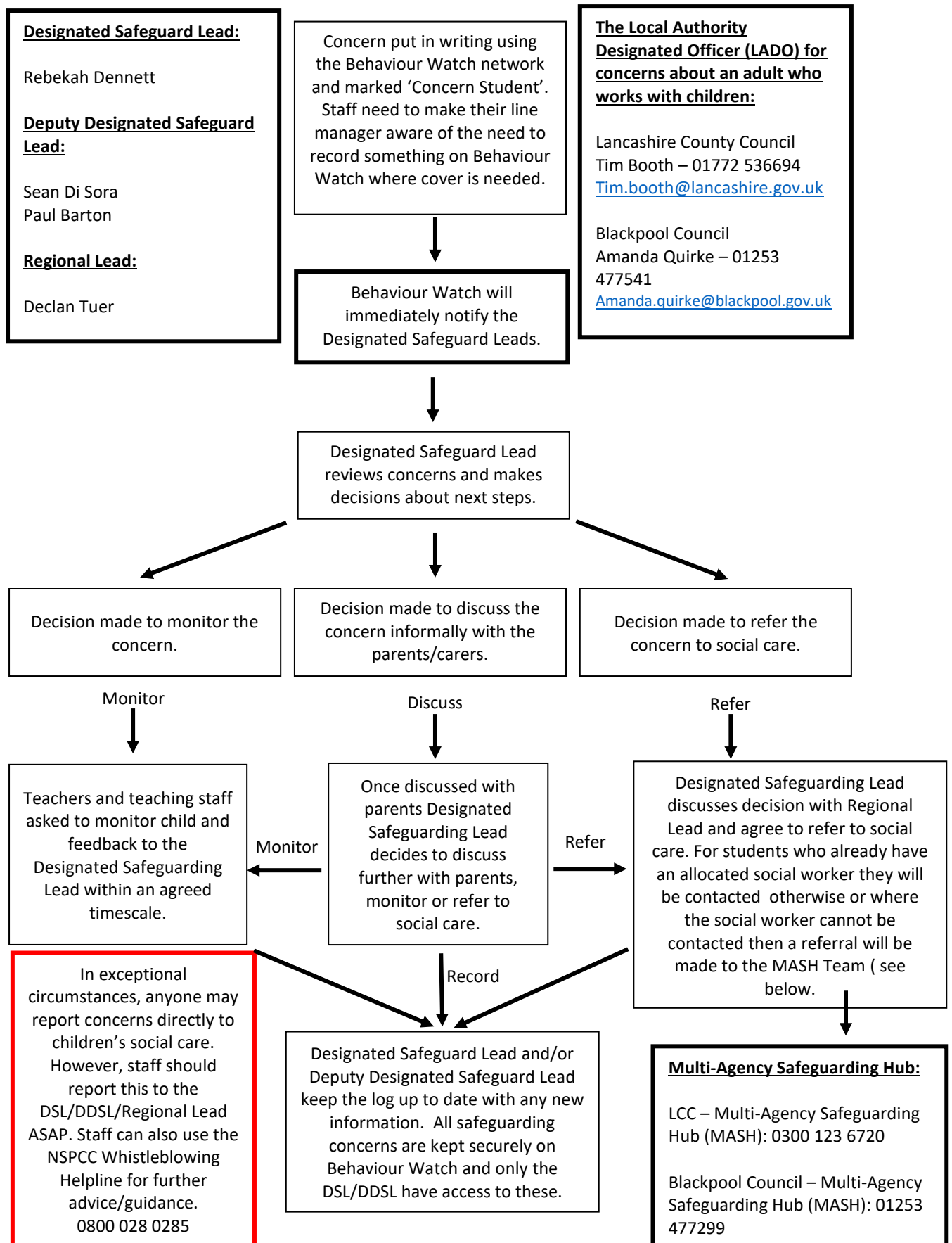
**Please see Linton School’s Safeguarding and Child Protection policy for more details.**

Also see the below the following link to the GOV.UK webpage for reporting child abuse to your local council:

<https://www.gov.uk/report-child-abuse-to-local-council>



**Figure 1** - Process that should be followed should you think a child is suffering or likely to suffer harm, or in immediate danger.



### **3. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Staff Roles and Responsibilities**

All staff are to be made clear about their roles and responsibilities in preventing and responding to bullying incidents including their responsibility to model positive relationships. The SLT are responsible for dealing with anti-bullying incidents.

#### **The role of the Head Teacher/DSL:**

- All incidents involving allegations of bullying have to be immediately referred to the Head Teacher or in his absence a member of the Senior Management Team. All allegations will be investigated on the same day and parents will be informed immediately. Exclusion may be considered but advice will be taken by the Local Education Authority.
- The Senior Leadership team and the Head Teacher have overall responsibility for ensuring that the anti-bullying policy is followed by all members of staff and that the school upholds its duty to promote the safety and wellbeing of all young people.
- It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher to implement the school anti-bullying strategy and to ensure that all staff (both teaching and non-teaching) are aware of the school policy and know how to deal with incidents of bullying.
- The Head Teacher reports to the governing body about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on request.
- The Head Teacher ensures that all children know that bullying is wrong, and that it is unacceptable behaviour in this school.
- The Head Teacher draws the attention of children to this fact at suitable moments. For example, if an incident occurs, the Head Teacher may decide to use form times as a forum in which to discuss with other children why this behaviour was wrong, and why a pupil is being punished.
- The Head Teacher ensures that all staff receive sufficient training to be equipped to deal with all incidents of bullying.
- The Head Teacher sets the school climate of mutual support and praise for success, so making bullying less likely. When children feel they are important and belong to a friendly and welcoming school, bullying is far less likely to be part of their behaviour.

#### **The role of Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative:**

- The Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative supports the Head Teacher in all attempts to eliminate bullying from our school. This policy statement makes it very clear that the governing body does not allow bullying to take place in our school, and that any incidents of bullying that do occur are taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.
- The Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative monitors the incidents of bullying that occur, and reviews the effectiveness of the school policy regularly. The Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative require the Head Teacher to keep accurate records of all incidents of bullying and to report to the Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative on request about the effectiveness of school anti-bullying strategies.
- Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative ensures the implementation of the anti-bullying policy and monitors reports of bullying in the school on a termly basis.
- The Head Teacher responds within ten days to any request from a parent to investigate incidents of bullying. In all cases, the Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative notifies the Head Teacher and asks him/her to conduct an investigation into the case and to report back to the Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative.

### **The role of staff:**

- All staff have a duty to challenge bullying, report bullying, be vigilant to signs of bullying and play an active role in the school's efforts to prevent bullying.
- All incidents involving allegations of bullying have to be immediately referred to the Head Teacher or member of the Senior Management Team. All allegations will be investigated on the same day and parents / carers will be informed immediately. Exclusion may be considered but advice will be taken by the Local Education Authority.
- Teachers / teaching assistants in our school take all forms of bullying seriously, and intervene to prevent incidents from taking place. We keep records of all incidents, on Behaviour Watch that happen in the schools.
- If teachers / teaching assistants witness an act of bullying, they do all they can to support the child who is being bullied.
- If a child is being bullied over a period of time, then, after consultation with the Head Teacher, the teacher informs the child's parents / carers.
- If, as teachers, we become aware of any bullying taking place between members of a class, we deal with the issue immediately.
- This may involve counselling and support for the victim of the bullying, and punishment for the child who has carried out the bullying.
- We spend time talking to the child who has bullied: we explain why the action of the child was wrong, and we endeavour to help the child change their behaviour in future.
- If a child is repeatedly involved in bullying other children, we inform the Head Teacher and the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). We then invite the child's parents / carers into the school to discuss the situation.
- In more extreme cases, for example where these initial discussions have proven ineffective, the Head Teacher may contact external support agencies such as the social services. Teachers and teaching assistants routinely attend training, which enables them to become equipped to deal with incidents of bullying and behaviour management.
- Teachers and teaching assistants attempt to support all children in their class and to establish a climate of trust and respect for all. By praising, rewarding and celebrating the success of all children, we aim to prevent incidents of bullying.

### **The role of parents or carers:**

- Parents and carers also have a responsibility to look out for signs of bullying (e.g. distress, feigning illness, lack of concentration). Parents and carers should support their child to report the bullying while also supporting the school in following policy.
- Parents or carers, who are concerned that their child might be being bullied, or who suspect that their child may be the perpetrator of bullying, should contact their child's class teacher immediately or the Head Teacher.
- Parents have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and to actively encourage their child to be a positive member of the school.

## 4. Responding to bullying

1. Staff will record the bullying incident centrally on Behaviour Watch.
2. The Head Teacher will monitor incident reporting on Behaviour Watch.
3. If an incident does occur the designated school staff will produce a report summarising the information which the Head Teacher will report to the governing body.
4. Support will be offered to the victim of the bullying from staff within the school setting.
5. Staff will proactively respond to the bully who may require support from the Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists or the Counsellor.
6. Staff will assess whether parents and carers need to be involved.
7. Staff will assess whether any other authorities (such as police or local authority) need to be involved, particularly when actions take place outside of school.

## 5. Bullying outside of school

Within ROC Northwest's Educational provisions we do not tolerate injustice and bullying whether it takes place inside or outside of school. The nature of cyber bullying in particular means that it can impact on pupils beyond the school day. Staff, parents, carers, and pupils must be vigilant to bullying outside of school and report and respond according to their responsibilities outlined in this policy. Where bullying outside school is reported to school staff, it will be investigated and acted upon. In all cases of misbehaviour or bullying, members of staff can only discipline the pupil on school premises, or elsewhere when the pupil is under the lawful control of the member of staff, e.g. on a school trip. The school is active in addressing responsible and respectful use of social media. The school is active in supporting parents and carers to take responsibility for their child's respectful use of social media especially in such a fast changing environment. Staff will assess whether any other authorities (such as police or Local Authority) need to be involved.

**Please see Linton School's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Online Safety policy for more details.**

## 6. Derogatory language

Derogatory or offensive language is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. This type of language can take any of the forms of bullying listed in our definition of bullying. It will be challenged by staff and recorded and monitored on Behaviour Watch and follow up actions and sanctions, if appropriate, will be taken for pupils and staff found using any such language. Staff are also encouraged to record the casual use of derogatory language using Behaviour Watch

## 7. Prejudice based incidents

A prejudice based incident is a one-off incident of unkind or hurtful behaviour that is motivated by a prejudice or negative attitudes, beliefs or views towards a protected characteristic or minority group. It can be targeted towards an individual or group of people and have a significant impact on those targeted. All prejudice based incidents are taken seriously and recorded and monitored in school, with the Head Teacher regularly reporting incidents to the governing body. This not only ensures that all incidents are dealt with accordingly, but also helps to prevent bullying as it enables targeted anti-bullying interventions.

## 8. Allegations of abuse made against other pupils

We recognise that children are capable of abusing their peers. Abuse will never be tolerated or passed off as “banter”, “just having a laugh” or “part of growing up”, as this can lead to a culture of unacceptable behaviours and an unsafe environment for pupils.

We also recognise the gendered nature of peer-on-peer abuse. However, all peer-on-peer abuse is unacceptable and will be taken seriously.

Most cases of pupils hurting other pupils will be dealt with under our school’s Behaviour policy, but the Child protection and Safeguarding policy will apply to any allegations that raise safeguarding concerns. This might include where the alleged behaviour:

- Is serious, and potentially a criminal offence
- Could put pupils in the school at risk
- Is violent
- Involves pupils being forced to use drugs or alcohol
- Involves sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment, such as indecent exposure, sexual assault, upskirting or sexually inappropriate pictures or videos (including the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes)

All staff should be aware that children can abuse other children (often referred to as peer on peer abuse). This is most likely to include, but may not be limited to:

- bullying (including cyberbullying);
  - physical abuse such as hitting, kicking, shaking, biting, hair pulling, or otherwise causing physical harm;
  - sexual violence, such as rape, assault by penetration and sexual assault;
  - sexual harassment, such as sexual comments, remarks, jokes and online sexual harassment, which may be stand-alone or part of a broader pattern of abuse;
  - upskirting, which typically involves taking a picture under a person’s clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm;
  - sexting (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); and
  - initiation/hazing type violence and rituals.
- NB. The above list is not exhaustive, and online bullying may take other forms.

### **Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges**

Sexual violence and sexual harassment can occur between two children of any age and sex. It can also occur through a group of children sexually assaulting or sexually harassing a single child or group of children.

Children who are victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment will likely find the experience stressful and distressing. This will, in all likelihood, adversely affect their educational attainment. Sexual violence and sexual harassment exist on a continuum and may overlap, they can occur online and offline (both physical and verbal) and are never acceptable. It is important that all victims are taken seriously and offered appropriate support. Staff should be aware that some groups are potentially more at risk. Evidence shows girls, children with SEND and LGBT children are at greater risk.

Staff should be aware of the importance of:

- making clear that sexual violence and sexual harassment is not acceptable, will never be tolerated and is not an inevitable part of growing up;
- not tolerating or dismissing sexual violence or sexual harassment as “banter”, “part of growing up”, “just having a laugh” or “boys being boys”; and
- challenging behaviours (potentially criminal in nature), such as grabbing bottoms, breasts and genitalia, flicking bras and lifting up skirts. Dismissing or tolerating such behaviours risks normalising them.

### Sexual violence

It is important that school and college staff are aware of sexual violence and the fact children can, and sometimes do, abuse their peers in this way. When referring to sexual violence we are referring to sexual violence offences under the Sexual Offences Act 2003/109 as described below:

- **Rape:** A person (A) commits an offence of rape if: he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person (B) with his penis, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Assault by Penetration:** A person (A) commits an offence if: s/he intentionally penetrates the vagina or anus of another person (B) with a part of her/his body or anything else, the penetration is sexual, B does not consent to the penetration and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.
- **Sexual Assault:** A person (A) commits an offence of sexual assault if: s/he intentionally touches another person (B), the touching is sexual, B does not consent to the touching and A does not reasonably believe that B consents.

### What is consent?

Consent is about having the freedom and capacity to choose. Consent to sexual activity may be given to one sort of sexual activity but not another, e.g. to vaginal but not anal sex or penetration with conditions, such as wearing a condom. Consent can be withdrawn at any time during sexual activity and each time activity occurs. Someone consents to vaginal, anal or oral penetration only if s/he agrees by choice to that penetration and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.

### Sexual harassment

When referring to sexual harassment we mean ‘unwanted conduct of a sexual nature’ that can occur online and offline. When we reference sexual harassment, we do so in the context of child on child sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is likely to: violate a child’s dignity, and/or make them feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated and/or create a hostile, offensive or sexualised environment.

Whilst not intended to be an exhaustive list, sexual harassment can include:

- sexual comments, such as: telling sexual stories, making lewd comments, making sexual remarks about clothes and appearance and calling someone sexualised names;
- sexual “jokes” or taunting;
- physical behaviour, such as: deliberately brushing against someone, interfering with someone’s clothes (schools and colleges should be considering when any of this crosses a line into sexual violence - it is important to talk to and consider the experience of the victim) and displaying pictures, photos or drawings of a sexual nature; and
- online sexual harassment. This may be standalone, or part of a wider pattern of sexual harassment and/or sexual violence. It may include:
  - non-consensual sharing of sexual images and videos;
  - sexualised online bullying;
  - unwanted sexual comments and messages, including, on social media;
  - sexual exploitation; coercion and threats; and
  - upskirting.

## **Upskirting**

'Upskirting' typically involves taking a picture under a person's clothing without them knowing, with the intention of viewing their genitals or buttocks to obtain sexual gratification, or cause the victim humiliation, distress or alarm. It is now a criminal offence.

## **The response to a report of sexual violence or sexual harassment**

The initial response to a report from a child is important. It is essential that all victims are reassured that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.

If staff have a concern about a child or a child makes a report to them, they should follow Linton School's Safeguarding and Child Protection policy. As is always the case, if staff are in any doubt as to what to do they should speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) (or a deputy DDSL).

## **Sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (sexting)**

### **Your responsibilities when responding to an incident**

If you are made aware of an incident involving the consensual or non-consensual sharing of nude or semi-nude images/videos (also known as 'sexting' or 'youth produced sexual imagery'), you must report it to the DSL immediately.

You must **not**:

- View, copy, print, share, store or save the imagery yourself, or ask a pupil to share or download it (if you have already viewed the imagery by accident, you must report this to the DSL)
- Delete the imagery or ask the pupil to delete it
- Ask the pupil(s) who are involved in the incident to disclose information regarding the imagery (this is the DSL's responsibility)
- Share information about the incident with other members of staff, the pupil(s) it involves or their, or other, parents and/or carers
- Say or do anything to blame or shame any young people involved

You should explain that you need to report the incident, and reassure the pupil(s) that they will receive support and help from the DSL.

**Please see Linton School's Safeguarding and Child Protection, Behaviour and Online Safety policy for more details.**

## **Procedures for dealing with allegations of peer-on-peer abuse**

If a pupil makes an allegation of abuse against another pupil:

- You must record the allegation and tell the DSL, but do not investigate it
- The DSL will contact the Local Authority children's social care team and follow its advice, as well as the police if the allegation involves a potential criminal offence
- The DSL will put a risk assessment and support plan into place for all children involved (including the victim(s), the child(ren) against whom the allegation has been made and any others affected) with a named person they can talk to if needed
- The DSL will contact the children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), if appropriate

## **Creating a supportive environment in school and minimising the risk of peer-on-peer abuse**

We recognise the importance of taking proactive action to minimise the risk of peer-on-peer abuse, and of creating a supportive environment where victims feel confident in reporting incidents.

To achieve this, we will:

- Challenge any form of derogatory or sexualised language or inappropriate behaviour between peers, including requesting or sending sexual images
- Be vigilant to issues that particularly affect different genders – for example, sexualised or aggressive touching or grabbing towards female pupils, and initiation or hazing type violence with respect to boys
- Ensure our curriculum helps to educate pupils about appropriate behaviour and consent
- Ensure pupils are able to easily and confidently report abuse using our reporting systems
- Ensure staff reassure victims that they are being taken seriously
- Ensure staff are trained to understand:
  - How to recognise the indicators and signs of peer-on-peer abuse, and know how to identify it and respond to reports
  - That even if there are no reports of peer-on-peer abuse in school, it does not mean it is not happening – staff should maintain an attitude of “it could happen here”
  - That if they have any concerns about a child’s welfare, they should act on them immediately rather than wait to be told, and that victims may not always make a direct report. For example:
    - Children can show signs or act in ways they hope adults will notice and react to
    - A friend may make a report
    - A member of staff may overhear a conversation
    - A child’s behaviour might indicate that something is wrong
  - That certain children may face additional barriers to telling someone because of their vulnerability, disability, gender, ethnicity and/or sexual orientation
  - That a pupil harming a peer could be a sign that the child is being abused themselves, and that this would fall under the scope of this policy
  - The important role they have to play in preventing peer-on-peer abuse and responding where they believe a child may be at risk from it
  - That they should speak to the DSL if they have any concerns

### **Initial review meeting**

Following a report of an incident, the DSL will hold an initial review meeting with appropriate school staff – this may include the staff member who reported the incident and the safeguarding or leadership team that deals with safeguarding concerns. This meeting will consider the initial evidence and aim to determine:

- Whether there is an immediate risk to pupil(s)
- If a referral needs to be made to the police and/or children’s social care



- If it is necessary to view the image(s) in order to safeguard the young person (in most cases, images or videos should not be viewed)
- What further information is required to decide on the best response
- Whether the image(s) has been shared widely and via what services and/or platforms (this may be unknown)
- Whether immediate action should be taken to delete or remove images or videos from devices or online services
- Any relevant facts about the pupils involved which would influence risk assessment
- If there is a need to contact another school, college, setting or individual
- Whether to contact parents or carers of the pupils involved (in most cases parents/carers should be involved)

**The DSL will make an immediate referral to police and/or children’s social care if:**

- 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 the DSL knows about the images or videos suggests the content depicts sexual acts which are unusual for the young person’s developmental stage, or are violent
- The imagery involves sexual acts and any pupil in the images or videos is under 13
- The DSL has reason to believe a pupil is at immediate risk of harm owing to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes (for example, the young person is presenting as suicidal or self-harming)

If none of the above apply then the DSL, in consultation with the Head Teacher and other members of staff as appropriate, may decide to respond to the incident without involving the police or children’s social care. The decision will be made and recorded in line with the procedures set out in this policy.

**Further review by the DSL**

If at the initial review stage a decision has been made not to refer to police and/or children’s social care, the DSL will conduct a further review to establish the facts and assess the risks.

They will hold interviews with the pupils involved (if appropriate).

If at any point in the process there is a concern that a pupil has been harmed or is at risk of harm, a referral will be made to children’s social care and/or the police immediately.

**Informing parents**

The DSL will inform parents at an early stage and keep them involved in the process, unless there is a good reason to believe that involving them would put the pupil at risk of harm.

**Referring to the police**

If it is necessary to refer an incident to the police, this will be done through by dialing 101 and in line with the new NPCC document ‘When to call the police’.

**Recording incidents**

All incidents of sharing of nudes and semi-nudes, and the decisions made in responding to them, will be recorded.

### **Curriculum coverage**

Pupils are taught about the issues surrounding the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes as part of our Relationships and Sex Education and computing programmes. Teaching covers the following in relation to the sharing of nudes and semi-nudes:

- What it is
- How it is most likely to be encountered
- The consequences of requesting, forwarding or providing such images, including when it is and is not abusive and when it may be deemed as online sexual harassment
- Issues of legality
- The risk of damage to people's feelings and reputation

Pupils also learn the strategies and skills needed to manage:

- Specific requests or pressure to provide (or forward) such images
- The receipt of such images

## **9. Cyber-bullying**

### **Cyber-Bullying Definition**

Cyber-bullying takes place online, such as through social networking sites, messaging apps or gaming sites. Like other forms of bullying, it is the repetitive, intentional harming of one person or group by another person or group, where the relationship involves an imbalance of power.

### **Preventing and addressing cyber-bullying**

To help prevent cyber-bullying, we will ensure that pupils understand what it is and what to do if they become aware of it happening to them or others. We will ensure that pupils know how they can report any incidents and are encouraged to do so, including where they are a witness rather than the victim.

The school will actively discuss cyber-bullying with pupils, explaining the reasons why it occurs, the forms it may take and what the consequences can be. Form Tutors will discuss cyber-bullying with their tutor groups.

Teaching staff are also encouraged to find opportunities to use aspects of the curriculum to cover cyber-bullying. This includes Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education, and other subjects where appropriate.

All staff, Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative and volunteers (where appropriate) receive training on cyber-bullying, its impact and ways to support pupils, as part of safeguarding training.

In relation to a specific incident of cyber-bullying, the school will follow the processes set out in the school behaviour policy. Where illegal, inappropriate or harmful material has been spread among pupils, the school will use all reasonable endeavours to ensure the incident is contained.

The DSL will consider whether the incident should be reported to the police if it involves illegal material, and will work with external services if it is deemed necessary to do so.

## **10. School strategies to prevent and tackle bullying**

We use a range of measures to prevent and tackle bullying including:

- Our school vision is at the heart of everything we do and ensures that all members of the school community are revered and respected as members of a community.
- We use a pupil-friendly information to ensure that all pupils understand what bullying is and know how to report bullying.
- The whole school curriculum is used to highlight and explore the anti-bullying commitment of the school. There are more extensive opportunities to explore anti-bullying themes within the PSHE programme of study which includes opportunities for pupils to understand about different types of bullying and what they can do to respond and prevent bullying.
- Bespoke curriculums explore the importance of inclusivity, dignity and respect as well as other themes that play a part in challenging bullying.
- Through a variety of planned activities and time across the curriculum pupils are given the opportunity to gain self-confidence and develop strategies to speak up for themselves and express their own thoughts and opinions.
- Circle time provides regular opportunities to discuss issues that may arise in class and for teachers to target specific interventions.
- Stereotypes are challenged by staff and pupils across the school.
- Restorative justice systems provide support to victims of bullying and those who show bullying behaviour.
- Pupils are continually involved in developing school-wide anti-bullying initiatives through consultation with the school council.
- Working with parents and carers, and in partnership with community organisations to tackle bullying where appropriate.

## **11. Intervention support for children and young people who are or have been bullied**

In all cases Linton School has a responsibility to support children who are bullied and make appropriate provision for a child's needs. The nature and level of support will depend on the individual circumstances and the level of need. These can include a quiet word from a teacher that knows the pupil well. Asking the pastoral team to provide support. Providing formal counselling, engaging with parents, referring to Local Authority children's services, completing a Common Assessment Framework/Early Help or referring to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Reassurance that it was right to report the incident and that appropriate action will be taken. Liaison with their parents to ensure a continuous dialogue of support. Advice on aspects of online safety, in the event of online bullying, to prevent re-occurrence, including, where appropriate, discussion with their parents to evaluate their online habits and age-appropriate advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked online.

## **12. Training**

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that all school staff and adults working in school receive training on the vision and values of the school and on the Anti-Bullying Policy. Staff complete training to enhance their knowledge of bullying, how to identify when someone is being bullied, how to support them and reporting incidents.



### 13. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Head Teacher. At every review, it will be approved by the Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative. **Next review September 2025.**

### 14. Evaluating and reviewing

The Head Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the vision and values of the school are rigorously applied to the anti-bullying work in the school and in reporting termly to the Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative (and the Local Authority where applicable) on how the policy is being enforced and upheld. The Regional Lead/Proprietor Representative are in turn responsible for supporting the vision and values and evaluating the effectiveness of the policy via the termly report and by in-school monitoring

#### Current government guidance used to develop this policy

- Preventing and tackling bullying (DFE-00160-2017)
- Safe to learn: Embedding anti bullying work in schools (DCFS-00656-2007)
- Cyberbullying (DCFS 00658-2007)
- [www.education-uk.org/documents/pdfs/2007-dcsf-homophobic-bullying.pdf](http://www.education-uk.org/documents/pdfs/2007-dcsf-homophobic-bullying.pdf)
- DfE (2021) 'Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges'
-  DfE (2018) 'Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools'
-  DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2024'

### 15. Linked policies

This policy links to the following policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Safer Recruitment Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour and Positive Handling Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Assessments Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Whistle-Blowing Policy
- Additional Learning Needs Policy