



Reconnect Learning Anti-Bullying Policy

Version 1.0 · Approved September 2026 · Policy Owner: Ellen Kerr · Review Date: September 2027

OFFICIAL POLICY DOCUMENT

EFFECTIVE SEPTEMBER 2026

Policy Statement

Reconnect Learning is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where all learners, staff, volunteers and visitors are treated with dignity and respect.

Bullying of any kind is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Reconnect Learning is committed to preventing bullying, responding effectively when concerns arise and supporting all individuals affected.

We recognise that bullying can have a significant impact on a child's emotional wellbeing, mental health, attendance, engagement and educational progress. We are committed to creating a culture where learners feel safe to speak out and know that concerns will be taken seriously.



This policy should be read alongside Reconnect Learning's **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy** and **Prevent Duty and Radicalisation Policy**.

Purpose of This Policy

This policy exists to create a clear framework for preventing and addressing bullying across all Reconnect Learning provision.



Prevent Bullying

Prevent bullying and harassment before it occurs through proactive culture-building.



Promote Positive Relationships

Foster respectful, inclusive relationships between all members of the community.



Protect Learners

Protect learners from harm and ensure their safety and wellbeing at all times.



Identify Concerns Promptly

Ensure concerns are identified and addressed quickly and effectively.



Meet Legal Responsibilities

Fulfil all safeguarding and legal obligations under current legislation.



Support All Individuals

Support victims and address harmful behaviour through appropriate interventions.

Scope — Who This Policy Applies To

People Covered

- Learners
- Staff
- Tutors
- Volunteers
- Visitors
- Contractors

Settings and Contexts Covered

- Face-to-face provision
- Home tuition
- Alternative Provision
- Outreach programmes
- Educational visits
- Online learning environments
- Social media and digital communications where they impact learners or staff

Legal Framework

This policy has been developed with regard to the following legislation, statutory guidance and current safeguarding expectations applicable at the date of approval:

Statutory Guidance

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2026

The primary statutory safeguarding guidance for education providers, updated September 2026.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026

Sets out multi-agency responsibilities for safeguarding and child protection.

DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying

Provides practical guidance on preventing and responding to bullying in educational settings (latest applicable guidance).

Primary Legislation

Children Act 1989

Establishes the foundational duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Children Act 2004

Strengthens multi-agency duties and the framework for children's services.

Education and Inspections Act 2006

Provides the legal basis for providers to address bullying beyond the immediate setting.

Equality Act 2010

Protects individuals from discrimination based on protected characteristics.

Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR

Governs the lawful processing and secure storage of personal data, including safeguarding records.



This policy should be read alongside Reconnect Learning's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, which is the organisation's overarching safeguarding policy.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group that is **repeated, intentional** and causes **physical or emotional harm** to another person.

Bullying can occur between learners, between staff, between learners and staff, and between individuals online. A single serious incident may also be treated as bullying where appropriate.

Bullying May Involve:

Physical
Aggression

Verbal Abuse

Emotional Abuse

Social Exclusion

Online Abuse

Intimidation

Threats

Harassment

Discrimination

Types of Bullying



Physical

Hitting, kicking, pushing, damaging or stealing belongings.



Verbal

Name-calling, insults, threats and offensive language.



Emotional

Humiliation, isolation, manipulation and intimidation.



Cyberbullying

Online harassment, image sharing without consent, fake profiles and group chat abuse.



Prejudice-Based

Targeting a person's disability, race, religion, sex, gender reassignment or sexual orientation.

Each type of bullying is taken equally seriously. Prejudice-based bullying incidents may also constitute discrimination under the Equality Act 2010 and will be treated with the utmost seriousness.

Physical Bullying

What It Looks Like

Physical bullying involves the use of physical force or actions to harm, intimidate or control another person. It is often the most visible form of bullying.

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Pushing
- Damaging or stealing belongings

⚠ Physical bullying may constitute assault and could require referral to external agencies including the police.



Verbal & Emotional Bullying

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying uses words as weapons to cause harm, distress or humiliation.

- Name-calling
- Insults
- Threats
- Offensive language

Emotional Bullying

Emotional bullying targets a person's sense of self-worth and belonging, often leaving no visible marks but causing deep harm.

- Humiliation
- Isolation
- Manipulation
- Intimidation

Emotional bullying can be particularly difficult to identify. Staff should be alert to subtle changes in a learner's behaviour, confidence and social engagement that may indicate this form of bullying is occurring.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can occur at any time and follow a learner into their home environment, making it particularly harmful and difficult to escape.



Social Media Abuse

Harmful posts, comments or messages on social platforms.



Online Harassment

Persistent unwanted contact through messaging platforms.



Image Sharing

Sharing images or videos without consent to cause embarrassment or harm.



Fake Profiles

Creating false accounts to impersonate or harass others.



Group Chat Bullying

Using group messaging to exclude, humiliate or target individuals.



Online Threats

Sending threatening messages or content through digital channels.



Cyberbullying will be treated as seriously as face-to-face bullying. Serious concerns will be reported to relevant agencies.

Prejudice-Based Bullying

Prejudice-based bullying is motivated by prejudice or hostility towards a person's actual or perceived identity. Such incidents may also constitute discrimination under the Equality Act 2010.



- ⊗ Prejudice-based bullying incidents will always be recorded and may require referral to safeguarding leads or external agencies. These incidents are treated with the highest level of seriousness.

Signs of Bullying

Not all children experiencing bullying will display obvious signs. Staff should be alert to a range of indicators and trust their professional judgement when something does not seem right.

→ **Anxiety and Withdrawal**

A learner may become increasingly anxious, withdrawn or reluctant to engage with sessions or peers.

→ **Reduced Attendance**

Unexplained absences or reluctance to attend sessions may indicate a learner is trying to avoid a bullying situation.

→ **Changes in Behaviour**

Noticeable shifts in mood, behaviour or personality that are out of character for the learner.

→ **Loss of Confidence**

A decline in self-esteem, confidence or willingness to participate in learning activities.

→ **Emotional Distress**

Signs of upset, distress, self-harm concerns or changes in academic engagement that cannot be easily explained.

Responsibilities — Managing Director

The Managing Director & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) holds overall responsibility for ensuring Reconnect Learning maintains an effective anti-bullying culture and that all concerns are addressed appropriately.

1 Promote an Anti-Bullying Culture

Champion a whole-organisation approach to preventing bullying and fostering respect.

2 Ensure Concerns Are Addressed

Oversee that all reported concerns are investigated and resolved appropriately.

3 Monitor Incidents

Review incident data termly to identify patterns and inform preventative action.

4 Support Staff

Ensure staff have the training, guidance and support needed to respond effectively.

5 Review Policy Effectiveness

Ensure this policy is reviewed annually and updated in line with legislative changes.

Responsibilities — Staff and Tutors

Core Duties

All staff and tutors play a vital role in creating a safe environment. Their responsibilities include:

- Challenge bullying behaviour when observed
- Report concerns promptly to the appropriate person
- Support learners who are affected by bullying
- Promote respectful relationships in all interactions
- Record incidents accurately and in a timely manner

Why This Matters

Staff are often the first to notice signs of bullying. Their prompt action can make a significant difference to a learner's experience and wellbeing.

-  Staff who are unsure how to respond to a concern should seek guidance from the Managing Director & DSL immediately. No concern is too small to raise.

Responsibilities — Learners

Learners are encouraged to:

- Treat others with respect at all times
- Report bullying concerns to a trusted adult
- Support peers appropriately and with kindness
- Avoid retaliatory behaviour

Preventing Bullying

Prevention is the most effective response to bullying. Reconnect Learning takes a proactive, whole-organisation approach to creating a safe and respectful culture.



Positive Relationships

Building strong, trusting relationships between learners and staff as the foundation of a safe environment.



PSHE Education

Embedding personal, social, health and economic education to develop empathy and resilience.



Diversity and Inclusion

Actively promoting respect for difference and celebrating diversity across all provision.



Clear Expectations

Establishing and communicating clear behavioural expectations for all members of the community.



Online Safety Education

Equipping learners with the knowledge and skills to stay safe in digital environments.



Restorative Approaches

Using restorative practices to repair relationships and address harm constructively.

Reporting Bullying Concerns

Reconnect Learning encourages all learners, parents/carers, staff and professionals to report concerns without hesitation. All reports will be taken seriously and no learner will ever be discouraged from raising a concern.

Verbally

Speak directly to any member of staff or the Managing Director & DSL.

By Email

Contact the organisation at
info@reconnectlearning.co.uk

Through Safeguarding Processes

Use established safeguarding channels where concerns are serious.

Directly to Staff

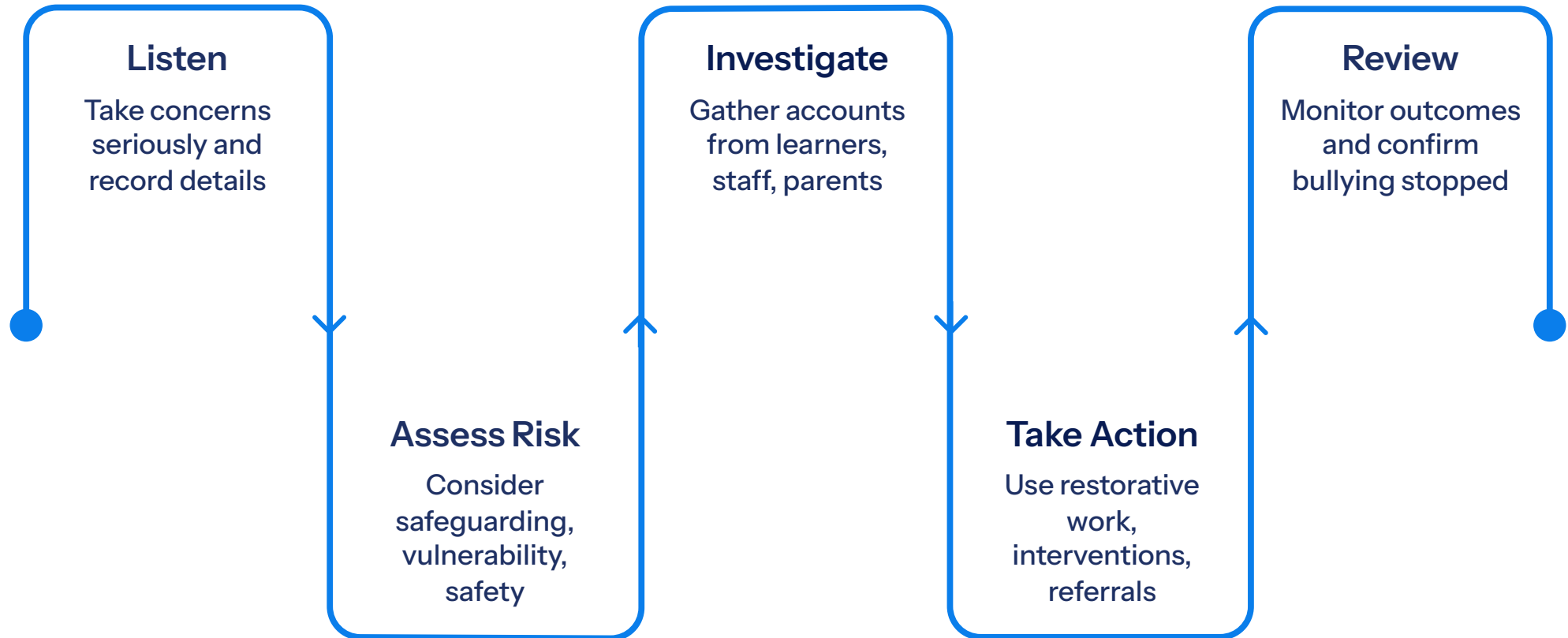
Approach any trusted member of staff during or outside of sessions.



Learners should never be discouraged from reporting concerns. Every report will be treated with care, confidentiality and respect.

Responding to Bullying — Our 5-Step Process

When a bullying concern is raised, Reconnect Learning follows a structured five-step response to ensure concerns are handled consistently, fairly and effectively.



This structured approach ensures that every concern receives a consistent, thorough and child-centred response. No step is skipped — each builds on the last to achieve a safe and lasting resolution.

Step 1 – Listen

Take Concerns Seriously

Every concern raised must be treated as valid and important, regardless of how it is presented or by whom.

Reassure the Learner

The learner must be reassured that they have done the right thing by speaking out and that they will be supported.

Record Information Accurately

All information shared must be recorded accurately, using the learner's own words where possible, and stored securely.

Step 2 — Assess Risk

Following the initial listening stage, staff must assess the level of risk to the learner and others involved.

Safeguarding Implications

Consider whether the concern meets the threshold for a safeguarding referral under the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Vulnerability Factors

Assess whether the learner has additional vulnerabilities that increase their risk of harm, such as SEND, mental health needs or previous trauma.

Immediate Safety Concerns

Determine whether immediate action is required to ensure the physical or emotional safety of the learner or others.



Where immediate risk to safety is identified, safeguarding procedures must be followed without delay. Do not wait for a full investigation before acting to protect a learner.

Steps 3, 4 & 5 — Investigate, Act, Review



Step 3 — Investigate

Gather information from learners, staff, parents/carers where appropriate, and relevant records. Ensure all parties are heard fairly and without prejudgement.



Step 4 — Take Action

Actions may include restorative conversations, behaviour interventions, safeguarding referrals, increased supervision, support plans and parental involvement. Actions will be proportionate and child-centred.



Step 5 — Review

Monitor outcomes to ensure the bullying has stopped. Follow up with the learner and their family to confirm that the situation has been resolved and that support remains in place where needed.

Bullying and Safeguarding

Bullying may constitute a safeguarding concern. Where this threshold is met, safeguarding procedures will be followed in accordance with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Particular consideration will be given where bullying involves any of the following:

Hate Incidents

Sexual Harassment

Sexual Violence

Exploitation

Radicalisation

Online Abuse

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Discriminatory Behaviour

⊗ Such concerns may require immediate safeguarding action, including referral to children's social care or the police.

Peer-on-Peer Abuse

Reconnect Learning recognises that bullying may form part of a wider pattern of peer-on-peer abuse. Children can and do abuse other children, and this must always be taken seriously.

Forms of Peer-on-Peer Abuse

- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Sexual violence
- Harmful sexual behaviour
- Online abuse

Our Commitment

All peer-on-peer abuse concerns will be managed in accordance with the **Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**.

Reconnect Learning will never dismiss or minimise concerns about peer-on-peer abuse. All concerns will be taken seriously, investigated thoroughly and responded to appropriately.

Cyberbullying – Our Response

Cyberbullying can occur through social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms, online learning platforms and email. It can follow a learner into their home and cause significant harm.

1

Promote Online Safety

Embed online safety education across all provision to equip learners with the skills to protect themselves.

2

Investigate Concerns

Take all cyberbullying reports seriously and investigate promptly using the five-step response process.

3

Work with Families

Engage parents and carers where appropriate to support a coordinated response to cyberbullying.

4

Report to Agencies

Report serious cyberbullying concerns to relevant agencies, including the police where criminal behaviour is suspected.

Supporting Victims

Reconnect Learning is committed to providing meaningful, tailored support to every learner who has experienced bullying. Support will be responsive to individual needs and reviewed regularly.



Emotional Support

Access to a trusted adult for regular, supportive conversations to help the learner process their experience.



Regular Check-Ins

Scheduled follow-up meetings to monitor the learner's wellbeing and ensure the bullying has stopped.



Wellbeing Interventions

Targeted wellbeing activities and interventions tailored to the individual learner's needs and preferences.



Safety Planning

Co-produced safety plans developed with the learner to help them feel secure and confident going forward.

i Where internal support is insufficient, learners will be referred to appropriate external support services, including CAMHS, counselling services or other specialist agencies.

Supporting Behaviour Change

Reconnect Learning believes that harmful behaviour can be addressed through education, reflection and support — not solely through punishment.

Where appropriate, individuals responsible for bullying will be supported to understand the impact of their behaviour and to make positive changes. This approach is grounded in restorative practice and a belief in the capacity for growth.

01	02	03
Education	Reflection	Restorative Approaches
Help the individual understand why their behaviour was harmful and its impact on others.	Create structured opportunities for the individual to reflect on their actions and take responsibility.	Use restorative conversations and practices to repair harm and rebuild relationships where appropriate.
04	05	
Behaviour Support	Clear Consequences	
Provide targeted behaviour support to address underlying needs that may be contributing to harmful behaviour.	Apply proportionate and consistent consequences in line with the Behaviour Policy where necessary.	

Record Keeping

What Will Be Recorded

- Concerns raised
- Investigations undertaken
- Actions taken
- Outcomes achieved
- Safeguarding referrals made

How Records Will Be Maintained

All records relating to bullying concerns will be:

Accurate

Factual, objective and recorded promptly.

Confidential

Shared only on a need-to-know basis.

Securely Stored

Held in accordance with data protection legislation.

- ❏ Good record keeping is essential for monitoring patterns, demonstrating compliance and supporting any future safeguarding or legal processes.

Child-Centred Approach

The welfare of the child remains paramount in all decisions made under this policy.

Reconnect Learning is committed to placing children at the heart of everything it does. This means actively listening to learners, valuing their perspectives and involving them in decisions that affect their lives.

Children's Voices Are Heard

Learners are given meaningful opportunities to share their experiences and views.

Wishes and Feelings Are Considered

The wishes and feelings of the child are taken into account in all decisions made on their behalf.

Safe to Report

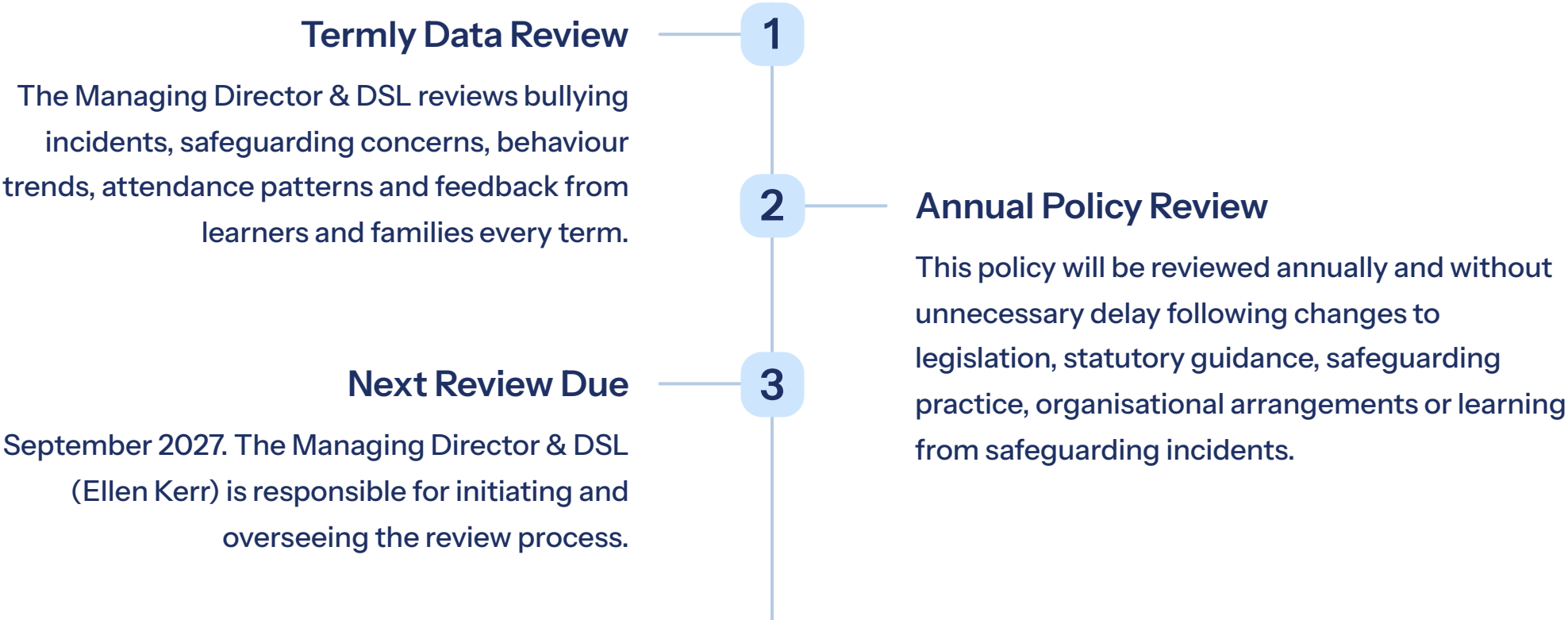
Learners feel safe, supported and confident to report concerns without fear of negative consequences.

Participation in Decisions

Learners are involved in decisions affecting them where appropriate and in a manner suited to their age and understanding.

Monitoring and Review

Reconnect Learning is committed to continuously improving its approach to anti-bullying through robust monitoring and regular policy review.



i Data gathered through monitoring will be used to inform staff training, prevention strategies and policy updates to ensure Reconnect Learning's approach remains effective and evidence-based.

Related Policies

This Anti-Bullying Policy does not stand alone. It forms part of a wider framework of policies that together create a safe, inclusive and well-governed organisation. This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy**
The primary policy for managing safeguarding concerns, including those arising from bullying.
- Behaviour Policy**
Sets out expectations for behaviour and the consequences for breaching those expectations.
- Online Safety Policy**
Addresses the safe use of technology and the internet across all provision.
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy**
Underpins the commitment to treating all individuals with fairness and respect.
- SEND Policy**
Ensures learners with special educational needs and disabilities receive appropriate support.
- Whistleblowing Policy**
Provides a mechanism for staff to raise concerns about practice without fear of reprisal.
- Prevent Duty and Radicalisation Policy**
Supports the identification and appropriate referral of concerns relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- Low-Level Concerns Policy**
Provides a framework for recording and responding to low-level concerns about staff conduct.

Additional related policies include the **Safer Recruitment Policy**, **Staff Code of Conduct**, **Complaints Policy** and **Use of Reasonable Force Policy**.

Compliance Status

This policy has been developed with regard to the relevant legislation, statutory guidance and current safeguarding expectations applicable at the date of approval.



KCSIE 2026

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2026)



Children Act 1989 & 2004

Foundational child welfare legislation



Equality Act 2010

Protection from discrimination



Education and Inspections Act 2006

Legislative basis for anti-bullying action



DfE Bullying Guidance

Preventing and Tackling Bullying



Working Together 2026

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026)



Ofsted AP Expectations

Ofsted Expectations for Alternative Provision



Local Authority Standards

Local Authority Provider Standards

Version Control & Approval

Version	Date	Author	Changes
1.0	September 2026	Ellen Kerr	Initial Issue

Approved By

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Bullying concerns should be reported immediately to a member of staff. Do not wait — early reporting saves harm.