

Children's University Trust

Anti-bullying Policy

Review Date: December 2024

Approved by Trustees on: June 2022

Next Review Date: December 2025

You are advised that a printed version may not be the latest available version. The latest version, which supersedes all previous versions, is available on in Drop Box. Those to whom this policy applies, are responsible for familiarising themselves with the latest version and for complying with the policy requirements at all times.

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1. Rationale

Children's University Trust is committed to providing an effective working and learning environment that is safe, secure and free from bullying. Bullying of any kind is not acceptable within our organisation. Bullying can be a barrier to learning, seriously damage confidence and self-esteem, and lead to serious and prolonged emotional damage. Those who conduct the bullying or witness it can also experience emotional harm. Bullying of children does not only affect an individual during childhood but can have a lasting effect on their lives well into adulthood. Bullying is therefore a key safeguarding concern. By effectively preventing and tackling bullying, we can help to create safe, disciplined environments where everyone can fulfil their potential. If bullying does occur, all victims should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly. To challenge bullying, we have set out clear procedures which will help everyone associated with Children's University Trust understand their obligations regarding bullying, to assist them in meeting their responsibilities, and to inform them about where they can go for advice and support.

The term 'staff' in this policy refers to: paid staff, volunteers, anyone undertaking work experience or a work placement with Children's University Trust and our Trustees; where mentioned, 'parents' will include 'carers', and 'children' will include children and young people up to the age of 18.

2. Aims

We aim to:

- create an environment in which bullying is unacceptable;
- ensure that staff, children, parents and volunteers all work together to deal effectively with incidents that arise;
- ensure that all adults are aware that bullying will always be investigated whether it is with children or with adults; and
- foster an anti-bullying ethos within the Trust.

3. Definition

Bullying is considered to be repeated violence, mental or physical, conducted by an individual or a group and directed against other individuals, and can take place between children, between children and staff, or between staff. Bullying can take many forms (for instance, cyber-bullying via text messages, social media or gaming, which can include the use of images and video or verbal bullying, such as name calling or making comments considered offensive). It can occur for a variety of reasons, all of which should be taken equally seriously and dealt with appropriately, and is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example on grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, special educational needs or disabilities. It might be motivated by actual differences, or perceived differences. Emotional bullying can be more damaging than physical. Many experts say that bullying involves an imbalance of power between the perpetrator and the victim. This could involve perpetrators of bullying having control over the relationship which makes it difficult for those they bully to defend themselves. The imbalance of power can manifest itself in several ways, it may be physical, psychological (knowing what upsets someone), derive from an intellectual imbalance, or by having access to the support of a group, or the capacity to socially isolate. It can result in the intimidation of a person or persons through the threat of violence or by isolating them either physically or online. It is important that incidents of bullying are distinguished from isolated incidents. Bullying may also occur outside of the Children's University Trust activities, or through social networking sites.

4. Law and Guidance

Children Act 1989

Public Order Act 1986

Malicious Communications Act 1988

Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Communications Act 2003

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Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 89 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Equality Act 2010

The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014

Children and Families Act 2014

Children's University Trust follows the guidance 'Preventing and tackling bullying Advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies' (2017)

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/669e7501ab418ab055592a7b/Working_together_to_safeguard_children_2023.pdf

4. Implementation

This policy is the responsibility of everyone who works at, or visits Children's University Trust. The Chief Executive (CEO) will ensure that arrangements will be made to bring this policy to the notice of all staff during induction and throughout their time at Children's University Trust so that they fulfil their duties to co-operate with this policy. The CEO will ensure that all staff are given appropriate training and support to meet these responsibilities and monitor closely and treat all incidents of unfair treatment and any incidents of bullying with due seriousness. All staff have a responsibility to keep up-to-date with issues regarding bullying, and must support the anti-bullying ethos of Children's University Trust through their actions. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring Children's University Trust complies with this policy, and that anti-bullying practice and related procedures and any action plans are implemented and regularly reviewed and monitored. This policy and procedure will apply in all contexts, including any activities with children and within our staff and governing body. Children's University Trust expects services delivered by partner organisations to have anti-bullying policies in place. Learning providers and partner organisations should undertake all their work activities mindful of bullying in their settings. They should demonstrate an awareness of how to promote an anti-bullying culture and how to respond to and deal with any bullying incidents which occur. This policy should appear on the Children's University Trust website.

5. Other policies:

This policy works with the following related policies:

- Complaints
- Equalities
- Online Safety
- Privacy
- Safer Recruitment
- Safeguarding and Child Protection; and
- Whistleblowing.

6. Monitoring and Review

Children's University Trust will seek to continually improve all its related safeguarding policies, procedures and guidelines and will review this policy on a regular basis to confirm that the content and approach is still appropriate. The review will take place whenever there are significant changes and not later than 12 months from the previous review date. Bullying incidents within the Trust will be recorded and monitored by the CEO, and regular reports made to the Trustees under a rolling Safeguarding agenda item at Board meetings.

7. Signs of bullying

There are a number of signs that may indicate that someone is being bullied:

- behavioural changes such as reduced concentration and / or becoming withdrawn, clinging, depression, tearful, emotionally up and down, absenteeism;
- a drop off in performance;
- physical signs such as; stomach aches, headaches, difficulty in sleeping, bed wetting, scratching and bruising, or damaged clothes;

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- bingeing for example on food, cigarettes or alcohol; and
- shortage of money or frequent loss of possessions.

Staff are requested to be sensitive to the signs of bullying and to be able to recognise that it can occur in a number of contexts and be experienced in a number of ways.

8. Prevention

Children's University Trust aims to prevent bullying through:

- creating a respectful working environment and thus lowering the chances of individuals gaining power over others;
- raising awareness of bullying through publications, events and activities
- creating a listening culture where any incidents can be highlighted and dealt with early
- providing protection for particularly vulnerable individuals; and
- encouraging everyone to listen to each other and resolve any conflicts without resorting to aggression or violence.

Where appropriate and possible, staff and partner organisations should talk to parents about their anti-bullying policy and make it available to them. Partner organisations should ensure that parents know what measures are being taken to prevent bullying, as well as how incidents are responded to, and may also encourage positive messages about good behaviour and respect for others at home.

Children's University Trust is committed to promoting and implementing the policy throughout our community and reviews this policy annually to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose.

9. Vulnerability

Children's University Trust should aim to support all who are bullied. This means being alert to the effect any form of bullying can have and being especially alert to where it may have a severe impact. Some individuals are more likely to be the target of bullying because of the attitudes and behaviours that some have towards those who are different from themselves. For example, children with special educational needs or disabilities, those who are adopted, those who are suffering from a health problem or those with caring responsibilities may be more likely to experience bullying because of difference. Children in care that are frequently on the move may also be vulnerable because they are always the newcomer. These children are often the same children who might need greater support to deal with the impact of bullying, for example those who are going through a personal or family crisis. In addition, children with special educational needs or disabilities can often lack the social or communication skills to report such incidents so it is important that staff are alert to the potential bullying this group faces and that their mechanisms for reporting are accessible to all. There will also be a range of other local or individual factors that result in some people being more vulnerable to bullying and its impact than others. Being aware of this will help staff to develop strategies to prevent bullying from happening. It will also help the Trust be alert to those who may be severely affected when it does occur.

10. Procedures to deal with bullying

Children's University Trust staff will be encouraged to report incidents of perceived bullying. Low-level disruption and the use of offensive language can in itself have a significant impact on its target. If left unchallenged or dismissed as banter or horseplay it can also lead to reluctance to report other behaviour. Early intervention can help to set clear expectations of the behaviour that is and is not acceptable and help stop negative behaviours escalating. In this way everyone knows that incidents of bullying will be taken seriously, and it will also make the incidents that occur much easier to deal with.

All incidents of bullying at the Trust will be logged and a record kept by the CEO. If an incident of bullying happens outside Children's University Trust or online and is reported to the Trust, it is also important that it is investigated, and appropriate action is taken. This will send a strong signal that bullying will not be tolerated, and perpetrators

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will be held to account in any context. The Trust should also consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police.

When tackling bullying between children, immediate physical safety obviously comes first. All bullying between children, whatever the motivation or method, is unacceptable and should not be tolerated. Disciplinary measures must be applied fairly, consistently, and reasonably taking account of any special educational needs or disabilities and taking into account the needs of victims. Staff will encourage children to think about the effects of their actions on others. Depending on the child's developmental level, staff will help the children to develop an awareness of right and wrong and where appropriate to say 'sorry'. The victim should be reassured to ensure that they feel safe and secure, and the incident be reported to parents. The identity of the bully will not be shared with parents. It is also important to consider the motivations behind bullying behaviour and whether it reveals any concerns for the safety of the perpetrator. Where this is the case the perpetrator may need support themselves. 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 staff member that knows the child well, asking the partner organisation to provide support and/or formal counselling or engaging with parents. If a child continues to bully other children, staff may, for the safety of other children, temporarily exclude the child in an activity and ask the partner organisation to seek to support the child over time, or the Trust may decide to contact local referral agencies.

The Trust's CEO should initially use supervision sessions as an opportunity to address bullying between staff members in the first instance. If staff fail to respond, or if the incidence of bullying is very serious, concerns can be addressed as a formal disciplinary matter.

Concerns of bullying can be addressed by staff through the grievance procedure, or by the Whistleblowing policy.

Action will be taken to address any recurrent bullying. Outside agencies will be consulted for advice and information as required. Observations will be made by an appropriate person to ascertain a detailed picture of any bullying situation.

In some circumstances the consequences of bullying may lead to the victim experiencing pronounced social, emotional or mental health difficulties. The Trust should always ensure it makes appropriate provision for the needs of any victim.