



Anti Bullying Policy

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Pod81 recognises that this *Anti-Bullying Policy* is interconnected with other key policies and should comply with them:

- Curriculum
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour and Discipline
- Equality and Diversity
- Health and Safety.

1. Statement of Ethos and Aims, Principles and Objectives

Introduction

Pod81 is an alternative provider for students at Key Stage 3 and Key stage 4 struggling in mainstream education. Many of our students come to Pod81 with complex emotional, physical, social, and mental health challenges. Many students have SEMH as their primary need.

All our staff and stakeholders at Pod81 understand that all students are individuals. Pod81 supports all the needs of our students in both coping with education and succeeding in education and social interaction.

Ethos

Student's Best Interests

At Pod81, all our preparation, environment, work, curriculum, and support are geared around the best interests of each student.

Student's Right to Education

Many of our students have been referred from mainstream schools and have a history of exclusion and daily struggles. At Pod81, staff strive to be inclusive and give our students their right to education.

Respect Views of Every Student

Every student should have their views, feelings, thoughts, and doubts respected. At Pod81, all of our staff will listen attentively and caringly to every student who wishes to express whatever concern they are anxious about. The student will be taken seriously, and all concerns will be acted upon in the student's best interests.

Aims

Our aims are:

- To provide a safe, secure, and respectful environment for all our students

- To make clear to all our students that any form of bullying will be taken seriously
- All staff are trained and practised in spotting early signs of bullying by being vigilant
- To make clear to all our students that every one of them can feel confident they can report instances of bullying, they will be listened to very seriously, and actions will be taken.
- When students feel bullied, they can feel reassured and safe in their claim.
- Pod81 will support all parties in achieving a successful resolution of bullying incidents, including anti-bullying training programs for the perpetrator(s) of any bullying incident.

Principles and Objectives

At Pod81, we understand that a raft of social, personal, emotional, and psychological factors can trigger a bullying incident. Whilst we are aware of this, our primary goal and focus are to put in place explicit frameworks that will enable students to understand that any form of bullying is not acceptable.

Pod81 will efficiently address each bullying episode by listening to the victim and effectively providing anti-bullying training programs for the perpetrator(s).

We aim at Pod81 for all our staff to demonstrate a consistent and shared understanding of all aspects of bullying, such as harassment, targeting etc. Once a shared understanding is in place, all staff will follow the same procedures to deal with the bullying incident as are set out in this policy.

Only by pursuing a blanket and consistent approach to bullying can we at Pod81 deal with it successfully.

Failing to address any part of the bullying act is not an option. Decisive and supportive action is the only option.

2. Bullying Defined

There are many definitions of bullying relating to many different environments. The Government defines bullying in a school environment as:

‘.....behaviour that is:

- repeated
- intended to hurt someone either physically or emotionally
- often aimed at specific groups, for example, because of race, religion, gender or sexual orientation

[\(<https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition>\)](https://www.gov.uk/bullying-at-school/bullying-a-definition)

This definition can be used to identify bullying in the Pod81 environment but not exclusively.

Examples of Bullying (*alphabetically arranged*)

- Deliberating and knowingly isolating another student and excluding them from activities, including not talking to the student and getting other students to do likewise
- Forcing a student to engage in sexual activity
- Hitting, punching, kicking, and ‘pretend’ play-fighting

- Identifying a weakness in another student, amplifying and picking on that weakness
- Making racist, homophobic or sexist comments
- Making unkind comments about another student's family
- Name-calling
- Pressurising a student to do 'favours' for them
- Spitting
- Spreading rumours about another student(s)
- Throwing nasty looks at another student
- Unkind comments and actions, including text messages and other misuses of social media, such as cyber-bullying
- Vandalising

(Please note: *As previously mentioned, this list of bullying examples is not exhaustive or exclusive.*)

Effects of Bullying

Every student will feel different emotional and physical adverse effects of bullying. Every student and their circumstance is different.

Bullying is often a sly activity perpetrated by the bully when nobody is watching. Although staff at Pod81 are vigilant to early signs of bullying, they may not always be there when the bullying act is perpetrated, such as off-site or cyber-bullying.

In these cases, the victim of the bully is often reluctant to approach staff and voice their concerns.

Pod81 staff must be aware of some of the symptoms in student behaviour arising from bullying.

3. Potential Emotional and Physical Symptoms of Bullying

Examples of Emotional Symptoms of Bullying *(arranged alphabetically)*

- Acutely irritable
- Argumentative
- Depression
- Loss of confidence
- Loss of self-esteem
- Panic attacks
- Suicide thoughts
- Uncharacteristic aggression

Examples of Physical Symptoms of Bullying *(arranged alphabetically)*

- Bouts of nausea
- Change in sleeping patterns, including sleeplessness
- Developing skin conditions
- Headaches and migraines
- Lethargy
- Palpitations

- Stomach ache(s)

(Please note: This list of bullying symptoms is not exhaustive or exclusive. Erratic attendance is one example: When a student only attends on days when other students are not there.)

5) All these examples could have other causes, but be mindful that bullying could be one of them.

6) If it is found that the victim has been trying to 'buy off' the bully with gifts, all staff have a duty and responsibility to stop this from happening. This should be done through the support measures and sanctions outlined above.

7) The victim of bullying should know that *standing up for yourself* doesn't mean *hitting out* at the bully. The victim must feel supported and trust the staff at Pod81 that action will be taken. The victim needs to understand that *hitting out* could lead to severe consequences for the victim.

8) Staff should put on regular activities and materials to highlight the damaging effects of bullying. This will not only help to prevent instances of bullying, but it will also give confidence to potential victims that they are in a safe and caring environment.

All these examples could have other causes but be mindful that bullying could be one of them.

The Bully

'Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behaviour among school-aged student that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behaviour is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.'

<https://www.stopbullying.gov/bullying/what-is-bullying>

As with other aspects of the bullying act, there can be many different reasons why the bully acts the way they do.

At Pod81, the role of staff is to try to identify the causes for a student being a bully and, through anti-bullying support packages, get the student to be aware of the harm bullying causes and to stop bullying.

Many times, the causes of bullying come from outside Pod81, such as unsuitable peers, low-income family relations, and social media, to name a few.

Staff at Pod81 have little influence over these factors; therefore, they must endeavour to change a student's attitude toward what is causing the bullying.

4. Victims of Bullying

Anyone can be bullied, depending on their personal and present circumstance to their environment in which they find themselves. Nevertheless, in Pod81, the environment is known, and there are a few characteristics our staff need to be aware of, which can lead to a student being bullied. (arranged alphabetically)

- Appearing 'different'

- Different demographics
- Few or no friends
- Looked after student
- SEMH needs
- Shy or withdrawn

These are only a few examples, but there are others, and staff at Pod81 have to be aware that the list is private and exclusive.

5. Good Practice

At Pod81, we believe in providing a framework to challenge all aspects of bullying, provide guidance and training on bullying and anti-bullying, and control and reduce all forms of bullying.

- Before any student attends Pod81, they will be made explicitly aware that all forms of bullying will not be tolerated, and action will be taken. Students and parents/staff will sign in the '*Student Code of Conduct*' an agreement that states the student will abide by this principle. On the student's first day at Pod81, there will be some initial training and education given to a student to help them better understand all forms of bullying and why it is unacceptable.
- All staff at Pod81 will take this seriously and give due and careful consideration to all accusations of bullying. All investigations must be recorded in the '*Bullying Logbook*'.
- From the initial concern or accusation of bullying, all staff at Pod81 should deal with the bullying incident and investigation immediately or at the first available moment or time afforded.

Procedures to Follow Bullying Incidents

1. The staff member dealing with the bullying incident or allegation should decide the severity of the situation. Any staff or adults deemed to witness the bullying incident must complete the *Bullying Incident Report*. The *Bullying Incident Report* will ask:

- When did the incident occur?
- Where did the incident occur?
- What happened?
- Which students were involved?
- Identify victims and perpetrators.
- How was it dealt with?
- What actions have been taken?

2. Any bullying incident must be recorded in the *Bullying Incident Log-Book*.

3. All support must be given to the victim of bullying. This must be done in a careful and considerate manner. Staff need to reassure the victims that they are listening and will act. Staff should be discreet and trustworthy and there to help the victim of bullying.

4. When staff are investigating an allegation or act of bullying and dealing with the bully, staff need to be supportive so that they might be able to get to the root of the student's bullying.

Aggressively dealing with the matter nearly always increases tension and distances the bully by allowing them to believe they are being bullied. Staff should purposefully remind the bully that it is the act of bullying staff wish to discuss and not the student.

5. Any student implicated in bullying or aiding bullying must go through an anti-bullying program. The course must be thorough and aim to show the bully what bullying is and how it can be harmful. The session should be constructive and not punitive. If the incident is criminal or deemed severe, then the incident should be referred back to the referral school to be dealt with.

In the *Pod81 – Behaviour and Discipline Policy*, there are numerous support plans and sanctions that staff may use to deal with the bullying incident. Exclusion should only be used under dire circumstances.

6. Preventing Bullying

Bullying is best dealt with through education and training. Pod81 starts anti-bullying education and training before a student formally attends its education:

- Before any student attends Pod81, they will be made explicitly aware that all forms of bullying will not be tolerated, and that action will be taken. Students and parents will sign in their *Student Code of Conduct* an agreement that states the student will abide by this principle.
- All forms of bullying should be challenged. (*see list of examples of bullying*)
- All staff at Pod81 are aware there are possible areas with an increased risk of bullying. These risk areas will have increased surveillance, and students should be aware whenever the occasion presents itself.
- All staff should maintain constant supervision, particularly over 'risk areas' or when students have been rewarded with 'free time.' These areas are student-centred and, by their nature, need to be more structured than the classroom environment. At these places, increased supervision will be administered.
- All Pod81 staff must be vigilant and aware of some of the symptoms of student behaviour arising from bullying.

7. Acts of Bullying Outside Pod81

Staff at Pod81 have the right to deal with bullying outside Pod81, just as though the incident were on the grounds of Pod81. The investigation and procedures should be the same as earlier identified in this anti-bullying document.

8. Online Bullying or Cyber-Bullying

Bullying doesn't only happen within a physical environment. It can and does happen online. Generally, when bullying happens online, it's mainly done through phones, computers, laptops and tablets.

Cyberbullying happens on social media, networking sites, webcams, chat, photo-sharing places, YouTube, gaming sites, text and email, to name a few of the most common.

On these various platforms, bullying can happen at any time. Once the act of bullying is published, it can remain visible for some considerable time, and the bullying act can reach a much wider audience than in a classroom or school environment.

To help deal with guidance on dealing with electronic devices, the following guidance is taken from the Government's document: **'Searching, Screening, and Confiscation'**.

Statutory guidance for dealing with electronic devices

- *Where the person searching finds an electronic device that is prohibited by the school rules or that they reasonably suspect has been, or is likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property, they may examine any data or files on the device where there is an excellent reason to do so. They may also delete data or files if they think there is an excellent reason to do so unless they give the device to the police. This power applies to all schools, and there is no need to have parental consent to search through a young person's mobile phone if it has been seized in a lawful 'without consent' search and is prohibited by the school rules or is reasonably suspected of being, or being likely to be, used to commit an offence or cause personal injury or damage to property.*
- *The member of staff must have regard to the following guidance issued by the Secretary of State when determining what is a "good reason" for examining or erasing the contents of an electronic device:*
- *In determining a 'good reason' to examine or erase the data or files, the staff member should reasonably suspect that the data or file on the device in question has been, or could be, used to cause harm, disrupt teaching or break the school rules.*
- *Suppose an electronic device prohibited by the school rules has been seized, and the staff member has reasonable grounds to suspect that it contains evidence concerning an offence. In that case, they must give the device to the police as soon as it is reasonably practicable. Material on the device suspected to be evidence relevant to an offence, a pornographic image of a student or an extreme pornographic image should not be deleted before giving the device to the police.*

- *Suppose a staff member does not find any material they suspect is evidence concerning an offence and decides not to give the device to the police. In that case, they can decide whether it is appropriate to delete any files or data from the device or to retain the device as evidence of a breach of school discipline.*
- *All school staff should be aware that behaviours linked to sexting put a student in danger. Governing bodies should ensure sexting and the school's approach to it is reflected in the student protection policy. The UK Council for student Internet Safety, 4 Section 62 of the Coroners and Justice Act 2009, defines prohibited images of studenten. Section 63 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 defines extreme pornographic images. 14 (UKCCIS) Education Group has recently published advice – sexting in schools and colleges – responding to incidents and safeguarding young people*
- *Also note: Teachers should consider additional guidance and procedures on the retention and disposal of items put in place by the school.'*

You can read further guidance on the Government website:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1091133/Searching_screening_and_confiscation_advice_2014_updated_2018_.pdf

9. Monitoring

Pod81 will monitor both the short-term and long-term effects of bullying and the impact of Pod81 anti-bullying interventions and their accompanying effectiveness. 'The Bullying Incident Form' and the 'Bullying Logbook' hold that information securely.

In addition, keeping accurate records and data on bullying can help identify bullying patterns, which, in turn, can help staff take proactive measures to prevent bullying incidents.

10. Evaluation

Evaluating data taken from incidents of bullying and of anti-bullying procedures is necessary to draw an overall picture of bullying.

If bullying were wholly absent from Pod81, or there were infrequent events, then this could be deemed a huge success. However, in reality, there is always the possibility of bullying incidents. Evaluating the extent of these is necessary.

If students at Pod81 felt safe and secure from acts of bullying and had confidence that staff at Pod81 deal with bullying quickly and effectively, then the procedures set out in this policy would be a success. Evaluating every aspect of bullying and anti-bullying measures is necessary to gain an overall analysis of its impact.