Title	**ANTI-BULLYING POLICY**
Cross References	**External:** • Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004 • KCSIE 2026 • Kidscape Guidance • Preventing and Tackling Bullying (DfE) • Education and Inspections Act 2006 **Internal:** Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy Safer Recruitment Policy Online Safety Policy Strategies for Managing Behaviour in the online environment Policy
Date	**October 2026**

Introduction
Apricot defines bullying as deliberate, offensive, intimidating, malicious, abusive or insulting behaviour which causes individuals to feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable.

Bullying may be physical, verbal, emotional, relational or online (cyberbullying).

Whilst there is no physical contact between individuals in the context of our virtual learning environment, we recognise there is still potential for bullying to occur and that it may take the following forms:

- emotional – being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting
- racist – racial taunts
- sexual – unwanted sexualised comments
- homophobic – because of, or focusing on the issue of sexuality
- cyberbullying – using technology, messaging, social media, online platforms or digital communications to intimidate, threaten or harass another person
- discriminatory – relating to disability, race, religion, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation or any other protected characteristic

Objectives
Apricot recognises that in order to learn effectively, children must first feel safe. We are committed to creating a positive learning environment where students can be confident and happy and feel supported by the adults and peers who share their classrooms. We therefore operate a policy of zero tolerance of bullying.

Context
Our learning platform provides a secure and all-inclusive means of communication for our students and our teachers. Our online learning environment provides the advantage of transparent communication that can be monitored where appropriate.

We cannot monitor behaviour outside of the context of our platform. We will however pursue any reference made to bullying outside of our platform. Cyber bullying education and support materials and reporting mechanisms are available to all students on our platform and their availability forms part of our student induction.

Procedures

Reporting and Responding to Bullying

Prior to accessing our learning platform, all students must agree to our Acceptable Use Policy, which establishes expectations for appropriate behaviour and communication within the online learning environment.

Teachers monitor classroom communication, including chat, microphone use and discussion boards. Where communication privileges are misused, teachers may restrict access to the relevant classroom functions in accordance with Apricot's behaviour management procedures.

Students are encouraged to report bullying to their teacher, Apricot's administrative team or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Parents, carers and commissioning organisations may also raise concerns directly with Apricot.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and addressed promptly, fairly and proportionately.

Where bullying is identified or reported, Apricot will:

- Take appropriate action to protect and support the students involved.
- Record the incident factually, including relevant communications and available evidence.
- Refer safeguarding concerns promptly to the DSL or Deputy DSL.
- Review relevant classroom communications and lesson recordings where appropriate.
- Inform parents/carers and commissioning organisations as appropriate, taking account of safeguarding considerations.
- Consider the individual needs of the students involved, including SEND and communication difficulties.
- Agree suitable interventions and support arrangements.
- Monitor the situation and follow up to establish whether the bullying has stopped.

Safeguarding Concerns

Where bullying involves suspected abuse, exploitation, sexual harassment, threats or other safeguarding concerns, Apricot will follow its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

The DSL will assess the concern and determine appropriate actions, including liaison with commissioning organisations and statutory agencies where required.

Staff must not undertake independent child protection investigations.

Persistent or Serious Bullying

Where bullying is persistent or serious, Apricot will work with the relevant commissioning organisation to determine appropriate interventions that protect all students involved.

This may include additional behaviour support, reasonable adjustments, restrictions on classroom privileges or consideration of alternative teaching arrangements, including one-to-one provision where appropriate.

Any decision to change or withdraw educational provision will be considered individually, proportionately and in consultation with the commissioning organisation.

Prevention and Awareness
Apricot promotes respectful behaviour and positive relationships through student induction, acceptable-use arrangements and relevant curriculum activities.

Students are provided with information about bullying and cyberbullying, including how to recognise inappropriate behaviour, report concerns and seek support.

Staff will be made aware of their responsibilities through induction, safeguarding training and relevant policy updates.

Incidents and recurring concerns will be reviewed to identify patterns and opportunities to strengthen safeguarding and anti-bullying practice.

Authorised by: Jodie Phillips Operations Director

Date: October 2026

Review date: October 2027