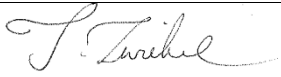


Sunbeams

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Document Control Sheet

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Signature	

Revision History

Version	Date	Author	Description of Change	Approved By
1.0	Sep 2014	DSL	Initial release establishing principles, definitions, and procedures.	Board of Trustees
2.0	Sep 2015	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
3.0	Sep 2016	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
4.0	Sep 2017	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
5.0	Sep 2018	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
6.0	Sep 2019	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
7.0	Sep 2020	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
8.0	Sep 2021	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
9.0	Sep 2022	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
10.0	Mar 2023	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
11.0	Sep 2023	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
12.0	Apr 2024	DSL	Review	Board of Trustees
13.0	May 2025	DSL	Comprehensive annual review; alignment with safeguarding framework and refreshed layout.	Board of Trustees

1. Introduction

At Sunbeams, we believe every person—whether they are a young person, volunteer, or staff member—has the right to feel safe, respected, and included.

This policy sets out how we prevent, identify, and respond to bullying across all our programmes and ensures that everyone knows how to act if bullying happens.

We work with girls aged 8–16, including those who may be vulnerable or have additional needs. Protecting everyone from harm—physical or emotional—is central to everything we do.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Sunbeams activities, including 1:1 mentoring, group programmes, off-site trips, and any online contact related to our work.

It covers interactions between young people, mentors, staff, volunteers, and parents/carers.

3. Our Commitment to Equality

We follow the Equality Act 2010, which protects people from being treated unfairly because of:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender or gender reassignment
- Sexual orientation
- Marriage or civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief

We do not accept bullying for any reason.

Our approach links closely with our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy, which promotes fairness and dignity for all.

4. What Is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone deliberately hurts, intimidates, or excludes another person—and it happens repeatedly. It can be done by one person or a group, in person or online.

Examples of Bullying

- Verbal: name-calling, teasing, threats, or offensive jokes
- Physical: hitting, pushing, or stealing belongings
- Emotional: spreading rumours, isolating someone, or making them feel unwelcome

- Cyberbullying: sending nasty or threatening messages, sharing private photos or comments online
- Discriminatory: targeting someone because of race, religion, disability, gender, or any other protected characteristic

Normal Conflict vs. Bullying

Not all disagreements are bullying. Children sometimes fall out or argue; bullying involves a pattern of repeated, targeted, and harmful behaviour.

5. How We Know Bullying Might Be Happening

A young person or colleague who is being bullied might:

- Appear anxious, withdrawn, or upset
- Avoid attending sessions or particular people
- Complain of frequent headaches or stomach aches
- Lose confidence or cry easily
- Have damaged or missing belongings
- Show a sudden drop in participation or performance

All staff and volunteers must stay alert and raise any concerns early.

6. Why It Matters

Bullying can cause long-lasting emotional, mental, and social harm.

It goes directly against Sunbeams' values of kindness, respect, and empowerment.

We will not tolerate bullying in any form, and we will act swiftly and sensitively to stop it.

7. How We Prevent Bullying

Sunbeams focuses on prevention through culture — promoting kindness, empathy, and understanding through everything we do.

We work to:

- Create a safe and respectful environment in every session
- Share clear behaviour expectations through our Code of Conduct
- Model positive behaviour as staff and mentors
- Use mentoring and group activities to teach communication, empathy, and respect
- Involve parents in addressing early signs of conflict
- Supervise sessions closely and keep open communication with participants

8. What Staff and Volunteers Must Do

If a staff member, volunteer, or mentor sees or hears about bullying, they must:

1. Take it seriously – never dismiss or ignore it.
2. Stay calm and listen carefully to the young person.
3. Reassure them that they were right to speak up.
4. Report immediately to the Project Manager or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
5. Record the incident using the internal Incident Form on the same day.
6. Follow safeguarding procedures if there are concerns about harm or ongoing risk.

All concerns about online or digital bullying must follow the Sunbeams IT & Internet Policy and be logged through the same safeguarding channels.

9. Support for Those Affected

We offer support to:

- The person who was bullied — through mentoring, trusted adult check-ins, and emotional support.
- Witnesses — who may also be affected or need reassurance.
- The person who displayed bullying behaviour — through guided reflection and, if needed, behaviour support plans.

Where appropriate, Sunbeams may liaise with external services such as CAMHS, social care, or school pastoral leads.

10. How to Report Bullying

Young people can:

- Speak to their mentor, group facilitator, or staff member
- Ask to meet privately with the Volunteer Coordinator
- Use a “worry box” in group settings
- Ask a parent/carer to help them raise the issue

Staff and volunteers can:

- Speak to their line manager or Project Manager
- Report via the Incident Form and follow escalation procedure
- Use the Whistleblowing Policy for serious or unresolved concerns

11. What Happens After a Report

All incidents are reviewed by the Project Manager and DSL within five working days.

Possible outcomes:

- Restorative or reflective conversations

- Apology or mediation session
- Temporary or permanent removal from a session (for persistent or serious cases)
- Disciplinary action for staff or volunteers
- Referral to external agencies if safeguarding thresholds are met

Those who report bullying will be updated appropriately, while maintaining confidentiality.

Confidentiality:

All records are stored securely and handled in line with the Sunbeams Data Protection and Confidentiality Policies.

12. Bullying Among Staff or Volunteers

Sunbeams treat workplace bullying as seriously as bullying among young people.

Staff or volunteers who experience bullying from colleagues can:

- Use the Grievance Policy
- Raise concerns directly with the Project Manager or a Trustee
- Expect protection from retaliation for speaking up

If substantiated, disciplinary action may be taken in line with Sunbeams' Disciplinary Policy.

13. Monitoring and Oversight

- All bullying incidents are logged and reviewed by the DSL.
- Patterns or concerns are discussed in termly safeguarding reviews.
- Anonymised data is shared with Trustees to inform training and prevention strategies.
- This policy will be reviewed annually or after any significant incident.

14. Linked Policies

- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Data Protection & Confidentiality Policies
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Complaints, Grievance & Disciplinary Policies
- Code of Conduct for Staff and Volunteers
- IT & Internet Policy

15. Making the Policy Work for Everyone

- Young people will be involved in reviewing and shaping anti-bullying messages.
- Staff and volunteers receive training on this policy during induction.
- A young-person-friendly summary will be displayed in all group and mentoring spaces.