



ANTI-BULLYING AND HATE CRIME POLICY 2025-2026

Reviewed: April 2025
Next Review due: April 2026
Approved by the Senior Leadership Team



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1. Introduction

Bespoke Mentoring and Training Services Limited ("the Organisation") is committed to fostering a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for learners aged 6-25 with special educational needs (SEN) and social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH) needs, and all staff (including employees, contractors, and volunteers) within our alternative provision. Bullying and hate crimes are unacceptable and will not be tolerated. This policy outlines our approach to preventing, identifying, and addressing bullying and hate crimes, with specific consideration for the vulnerabilities of learners with SEN/SEMH, ensuring compliance with the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Equality Act 2010, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and Department for Education (DfE) guidance.

This policy applies to all learners, staff, parents/carers, and visitors. It covers incidents on our premises, during off-site activities, or online (e.g., cyberbullying, digital hate) that impact the Organisation's community.

2. Aims

- To prevent bullying and hate crimes by promoting respect, equality, and inclusion.

- To ensure learners with SEN/SEMH and staff understand bullying and hate crimes and how to report them.
- To respond promptly, proportionately, and sensitively to incidents, supporting victims and addressing perpetrators.
- To protect individuals with protected characteristics (e.g., disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion) and those with SEN/SEMH vulnerabilities.
- To meet legal and statutory obligations, fostering a culture of safety and well-being.

3. Definitions

3.1 Bullying

Bullying is behaviour that is:

- **Intentional:** Deliberately intended to cause harm or distress.
- **Repetitive:** Occurs repeatedly or forms a pattern.
- **Imbalanced:** Involves a power imbalance, making it difficult for the victim to defend themselves.

Forms of bullying include:

- **Physical:** Hitting, pushing, or damaging property.
- **Verbal:** Name-calling, teasing, or threats, including remarks targeting SEN/SEMH.
- **Social/Relational:** Exclusion, spreading rumours, or damaging relationships.
- **Cyberbullying:** Harassment via digital platforms (e.g., social media, texts).
- **Discriminatory:** Targeting protected characteristics, SEN, or SEMH needs (e.g., mocking a learner's disability or mental health).

3.2 Hate Crime

A hate crime is any criminal offence perceived by the victim or others to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on:

- **Protected Characteristics:** Disability, race, religion, sexual orientation, or transgender identity (Equality Act 2010).
- **Other Factors:** Locally recognised characteristics, such as SEN or SEMH needs, where hostility is evident.

Examples include:

- Physical assault or vandalism motivated by prejudice (e.g., targeting a learner's disability).

- Verbal abuse or threats (e.g., racist or homophobic slurs).
- Online hate, such as targeted abuse on social media.

Hate incidents (non-criminal acts motivated by prejudice) are also addressed to prevent escalation and support vulnerable learners.

4. Scope

This policy covers:

- Bullying or hate crimes involving learners, staff, or external individuals.
- Incidents on Organisation premises, during educational activities (e.g., off-site trips, work placements), or online impacting our community.
- Behaviours targeting SEN, SEMH, protected characteristics, or other vulnerabilities common in alternative provisions.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

- **Senior Leadership Team:** Ensures policy implementation, staff training, and consistent incident handling. Monitors outcomes and reviews the policy.
- **Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):** Coordinates responses to bullying and hate crimes, especially those linked to safeguarding or SEMH concerns.
- **Anti-Bullying and Hate Crime Coordinator:** A named staff member contact: laura.davis@bespokementoring.org oversees prevention programs, supports incident resolution, and liaises with SENCO for SEN/SEMH needs.
- **SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator):** Ensures responses consider SEN/SEMH needs, aligning with EHCPs.
- **All Staff:** Model inclusive behaviour, report incidents, and support learners. Complete training on bullying, hate crimes, and SEN/SEMH.
- **Learners:** Treat others respectfully, report incidents, and engage in prevention initiatives.
- **Parents/Carers:** Support the policy, report concerns, and collaborate on resolutions, particularly for learners with SEN/SEMH.
- **External Partners:** Work with police, local authorities, or charities to address serious incidents and support learners.

6. Prevention

We prevent bullying and hate crimes through:

- **Inclusive Culture:** Embedding respect, equality, and diversity in our curriculum, mentoring, and daily interactions, with sensitivity to SEN/SEMH needs.
- **Education and Awareness:**

- Age-appropriate, SEN-accessible workshops (e.g., simplified formats for ages 6-14, mental health focus for SEMH learners, cyberbullying for ages 14-25).
 - Annual staff training on recognising bullying, hate crimes, and discriminatory behaviour, with modules on SEN/SEMH vulnerabilities.
 - Participation in Anti-Bullying Week and Hate Crime Awareness Week, using accessible resources (e.g., visuals, role-plays).
- **Clear Expectations:** Communicated via learner handbooks (in SEN-friendly formats) and staff training, reinforced through mentoring.
- **Safe Reporting Channels:** Anonymous options (e.g., suggestion boxes, online forms) and trusted staff contacts, with support for learners with SEN/SEMH to report (e.g., verbal or written assistance).
- **Targeted Support:** Personalised interventions for learners with SEN/SEMH, per EHCPs, including social skills groups, counselling, or de-escalation strategies.
- **Online Safety:** Digital literacy sessions addressing cyberbullying and online hate, tailored to learners' cognitive and emotional needs.
- **Community Engagement:** Partnerships with local authorities, police, and inclusion charities (e.g., Stop Hate UK) to promote tolerance and address community issues.

7. Reporting Incidents

- **Learners:** Report to a trusted staff member, the Anti-Bullying and Hate Crime Coordinator, or via anonymous, accessible channels (e.g., visual reporting forms). Support is provided for SEN/SEMH learners to articulate concerns.
- **Staff:** Report observed or suspected incidents to the DSL or Coordinator immediately, noting SEN/SEMH factors.
- **Parents/Carers:** Contact the Coordinator or a learner's mentor.
- **External Individuals:** Please contact the LA.

Reports are handled confidentially, with information shared only on a need-to-know basis. Reporters, especially vulnerable learners, are protected from retaliation.

8. Responding to Incidents

When bullying or hate crimes are reported or identified:

1. **Immediate Action:**
 - a. Ensure victim safety and well-being, with immediate SEMH support (e.g., calming strategies, safe spaces).
 - b. Record the incident in the bullying and hate crime log, noting if it's a hate crime/incident and any SEN/SEMH factors.
 - c. Notify the DSL for safeguarding concerns or police for criminal hate crimes (e.g., assault, threats).
2. **Investigation:**
 - a. Led by the Coordinator, with SENCO input, within 48 hours.
 - b. Involves impartial interviews with the victim, alleged perpetrator, and witnesses, using SEN-accessible methods (e.g., visual aids, simplified questions).

- c. Considers SEN/SEMH needs, mental health, or contextual factors (e.g., trauma, sensory triggers).
 - d. For hate crimes, assesses evidence of prejudice/hostility per CPS guidance.
3. **Support for Victims:**
 - a. Provide tailored support (e.g., mentoring, counselling, peer groups, or CAMHS referrals) considering SEN/SEMH needs.
 - b. Inform parents/carers (for learners under 18 or lacking capacity) and co-develop a support plan.
 - c. Offer external support (e.g., Victim Support) for hate crime victims.
 - d. Monitor well-being with regular, SEN-appropriate check-ins.
4. **Action for Perpetrators:**
 - a. **Bullying:** Apply sanctions per the Behaviour Policy (e.g., warnings, loss of privileges, suspension, or exclusion). Use restorative approaches (e.g., mediated apologies) if safe and agreed by the victim, adapted for SEN/SEMH.
 - b. **Hate Crimes/Incidents:** Escalate criminal acts to police. For non-criminal incidents, use sanctions and education (e.g., diversity workshops, SEN-tailored reflection).
 - c. Address underlying issues (e.g., SEMH interventions, social skills training).
5. **Communication:**
 - a. Inform parents/carers of involved learners, respecting confidentiality and SEN/SEMH sensitivities.
 - b. Update victims and reporters on outcomes, using accessible formats.
 - c. Report hate crimes to police and local authority hate crime systems, as required.
6. **Follow-Up:**
 - a. Monitor to prevent recurrence, with SENCO oversight for SEN/SEMH learners.
 - b. Review support plans termly or as needed.
 - c. Evaluate incident handling to improve processes.

9. Support for Staff

Staff experiencing bullying or hate crimes can:

- Access confidential support from the DSL or HR lead, with sensitivity to mental health impacts.
- Use the grievance procedure for colleague-related incidents.
- Access external counselling via the employee assistance program.
- Report hate crimes to police with Organisational support.

Victims are protected from retaliation, and incidents are handled discreetly.

10. Cyberbullying and Online Hate

We address digital incidents by:

- Providing SEN-accessible education on safe online behaviour (e.g., simplified guides, role-plays).

- Enforcing the IT Acceptable Use Policy for device use.
- Investigating online incidents, collaborating with platforms or police if needed.
- Supporting victims with SEN/SEMH-appropriate guidance (e.g., visual instructions for blocking/reporting perpetrators).

11. Recording and Monitoring

- Incidents are logged securely, detailing the nature (bullying or hate crime), SEN/SEMH factors, actions, and outcomes.
- The Coordinator, with SENCO input, reviews logs termly to identify patterns (e.g., repeat perpetrators, targeted characteristics).
- Findings inform prevention strategies and are reported to the Senior Leadership Team.
- Data complies with the Data Protection Policy and UK GDPR, with heightened security for SEN/SEMH records.

12. Training

- **Staff:** Annual training on bullying, hate crimes, equality, and SEN/SEMH, covering de-escalation, trauma-informed approaches, and legal duties. New staff complete induction training.
- **Learners:** Regular, SEN-accessible workshops tailored to age and needs (e.g., social skills for younger learners, online safety and prejudice for older learners).
- **Parents/Carers:** Guidance sessions on recognising bullying/hate crime signs and supporting SEN/SEMH learners.

13. Collaboration with Stakeholders

We work with:

- **Parents/Carers:** To resolve incidents and support SEN/SEMH learners at home.
- **Local Authorities:** For safeguarding, SEN/SEMH coordination, and hate crime reporting.
- **Police:** For criminal hate crimes or serious bullying (e.g., assaults).
- **External Agencies:** Such as Stop Hate UK, CAMHS, or SEN charities for specialist support.
- **Learners:** Via learner councils to co-design accessible prevention initiatives.

14. Monitoring and Review

- This policy is reviewed every two years or after significant changes (e.g., new legislation, incident trends).
- The Coordinator and SENCO collect feedback from staff, learners, and parents/carers, ensuring SEN-accessible methods (e.g., surveys with visuals).
- Termly incident reports are shared with the Senior Leadership Team to refine strategies.

15. Consequences of Non-Compliance

- **Learners:** Face sanctions per the Behaviour Policy, up to exclusion for serious or persistent offences. Hate crimes may lead to police involvement.
- **Staff:** Face disciplinary action, up to dismissal, for bullying, hate crimes, or failing to report incidents.
- Non-compliance undermines our commitment to a safe, inclusive environment for SEN/SEMH learners.

16. Legal Framework

This policy complies with:

- **Education and Inspections Act 2006:** Duty to promote well-being and address bullying.
- **Equality Act 2010:** Protection against discrimination and harassment, with reasonable adjustments for SEN.
- **Crime and Disorder Act 1998:** Hate crime definitions and reporting.
- **Children Act 1989:** Safeguarding duties.
- **DfE Guidance:** “Preventing and Tackling Bullying” (2017), “Keeping Children Safe in Education” (2024), and “Tackling Hate Crime” resources.
- **Public Sector Equality Duty:** Promoting equality and eliminating discrimination.

17. Contact

For concerns, reports, or support:

SEN & Youth Pathways Manager

Email: laura.davis@bespokementoring.org

Address: Bespoke Mentoring and Training Services, Regents Walk, Newerne Street, Lydney, Gloucester, GL15 5RF.

Complaints can be made via our Complaints Policy or to:

- **Ofsted:** www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted
- **Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO):** For safeguarding concerns.
- **Police:** For hate crimes (call 101 or 999 in emergencies).

18. Related Policies

- Behaviour and Learning Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- IT Acceptable Use Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- SEN Policy

Approval

This policy was approved by the Senior Leadership Team on April 28, 2025, and is effective immediately.

