

Guardians — UK —

Anti-Bullying & Cyberbullying Policy

Overview

This policy has due regard to the following documents:

- DFE Advice 'Preventing & Tackling Bullying' (2017)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)
- Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSPs)
- The Equality Act (2010)

This policy should be read in conjunction with Guardians UK Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Mental Health Policy and the A-Z of Behaviour Guidelines in the Student Handbook.

Aims

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination of any kind
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Value qualities of respect, tolerance, inclusion and kindness
- Promote diversity and a culture of inclusion

Bullying

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally. It can be defined by the victim and not by the perpetrator. For example, the perpetrator may argue their actions were 'just banter' and not meant to offend but if the victim has shown their unhappiness over these actions and asked the perpetrator to stop then Guardians UK views this as bullying. Bystanders in bullying incidents can also be perpetrators if they do not intervene to support the victim.

Due to the nature of bullying, the child may find it difficult to tell anyone for fear that things will get worse if they do. Bullies rely on this fear to continue bullying, resulting in the bullied child feeling ashamed or embarrassed about what's happening.

There are 3 identified types of bullying:

- **Indirect bullying** also known as social bullying or relational bullying (spreading rumours, social exclusion, disclosing another's secrets to a third party).

- **Direct verbal bullying** (yelling abuse at another, name-calling, insulting someone, using verbal threats)
- **Direct physical bullying** (pushing, hitting, punching, kicking)

Early intervention in bullying is crucial to ensure that light-hearted 'banter' does not cross the line into bullying and to ensure that boundaries are set. Where it is thought a child is suffering 'significant harm' the bullying incident will be treated as a child protection concern.

Bullying itself is not a criminal offence in the UK but some types of harassment are, as these could be defined as a hate crime. If this were to be the case, Guardians UK would notify the police.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using technology. Whether on social media sites, through a mobile phone, or gaming sites, the effects can be devastating for the young person involved.

Guardians UK would liaise closely with the student's school in any cyberbullying cases using, if necessary, powers prescribed in the Education Act 2011 to enable the searching and deletion of electronic images or files on electronic devices including phones.

If Guardians UK believes the police need to be involved because of pornographic images of a child or extreme pornography, then images must not be deleted.

Training

Guardians UK staff, host families and drivers receive basic training in anti-bullying and cyberbullying during their induction and regular updates at least once a year as part of their ongoing safeguarding training.

Procedures

Guardians UK fosters an ethos of inclusion, inculcating respect for others, their property and their individuality. These values also pay heed to the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs. All Guardians UK staff are aware that bullying is unacceptable and should not be tolerated at any time. All staff are prepared and skilled to recognise, listen and act upon any bullying incident. Advice and support are offered to all.

Guardians UK does not tolerate any form of bullying involving students or staff and investigates all allegations of bullying/cyberbullying, dealing with each incident swiftly and effectively. Our aim is to protect the victims of bullying and to educate the perpetrator about the consequences of their inappropriate behaviour. It is hoped, in most cases, that all people involved will learn from the experience and that relationships can be rebuilt positively.

Host families may find themselves in a situation where the young person opens up and tells them that they are being bullied. If this does happen, the host family member would need to adopt the same protocol as for any safeguarding incident; not promising confidentiality, listening without judging, supporting the young person, making notes and then informing Helen Lewis, Director and

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) by email helen.lewis@guardiansuk.com or by calling the emergency number 01823 703199 (ext. 1 if outside office hours).

In more serious cases, some of which have been mentioned above, the DSL may need to refer the matter to outside agencies. It is likely that Guardians UK will involve the young person's school in the process as well as their parents, but it must be appreciated that each case is investigated on an individual basis.

Further Resources

The following websites provide useful advice and guidance for recognising, supporting and dealing with bullying incidents:

www.thinkuknow.co.uk

www.childline.org.uk

www.nspcc.org.uk