

# National Specialist SCITTs

## National Mathematics and Physics SCITT

## National Modern Languages SCITT

## Bullying and Harassment Policy

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The accredited provider for both the National Mathematics and Physics SCITT and the National Modern Languages SCITT, is Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs.

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## 1. Introduction

This policy sets out how the SCITT will support and manage issues that breach the dignity and respect of its trainees and staff and should be read in conjunction with the Chorus Education Trust [Anti-Bullying Policy](#). Such breaches are not acceptable and may constitute misconduct or gross misconduct and may potentially lead to dismissal of the perpetrator in accordance with this policy or the individual school's disciplinary policy where a trainee is based or within the **SCITT Disciplinary Policy**.

As a training provider we are committed to a culture of respect and expect all employees and trainees to adopt positive behaviours that are ethical and socially responsible.

All associated with the SCITT have rights and responsibilities for creating and upholding those standards of behaviour that support the ethos of the SCITT as we lead and establish in our trainees' positive attitudes and relationships that will help them learn and grow. If trainees or staff are subjected to behaviours of bullying and harassment, these matters will be dealt with in accordance with the principles of this document or the **Dignity at Work** procedures at the school where the trainee is based. If the trainee is the perpetrator of such behaviours this will be managed through the **SCITT Disciplinary Policy**. If a member of staff of the SCITT is the perpetrator of such behaviours this will be managed through the [Chorus Education Trust Capability Procedure](#).

All employees and trainees have a responsibility to behave in a manner that supports the ethos, vision and aims of the SCITT and to have professional, constructive relationships with colleagues. Trainees and employees should ensure that their behaviour is consistent with what constitutes a positive role model for pupils/students and families/carers.

All trainees and employees are accountable for their actions, challenging inappropriate behaviour and ensuring a safe and non-threatening workplace. This includes accountability for individual actions and actively seeking to put things right as well as collective responsibility for creating a culture of openness and transparency within the SCITT to ensure that all trainees and employees are valued and treated fairly.

## 2. Aims and Values

The SCITT recognises that bullying and harassment exists and sees the issue of this as a serious matter. All incidents will be dealt with promptly as laid down in the trust/school guidelines.

Bullying and harassment of any kind are in no-one's interest and will not be tolerated. The aim of this policy is to prevent and deal with any behaviour deemed as bullying and to promote an ethos where bullying is regarded as unacceptable, so that a safe and secure environment is created for everyone to learn and work in.

**The fundamental principle underlying this policy is the absolute right of each and every trainee and member of the SCITT's staff and partnership not to be bullied in any way and their right to seek help to combat bullying if it occurs.**

### 3. What is bullying?

Bullying can be defined as “behaviour by an individual or a group, repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally”. ([DfE “Preventing and Tackling Bullying”, July 2017](#)).

Although there is no legal definition of bullying, it can be described as unwanted behaviour from a person or a group that is either:

- Offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting
- An abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

A person may not be aware that their behaviour is bullying, however, it can still be bullying even if they do not intend to bully someone or unaware that their actions or language are having a negative effect on someone else.

Bullying can include name calling, taunting, mocking, making offensive comments; kicking; hitting; taking belongings; producing offensive graffiti; gossiping; excluding people from groups and spreading hurtful and untruthful rumours.

This includes the same unacceptable behaviours expressed online, sometimes called online or cyberbullying. This can include: sending offensive, upsetting and inappropriate messages by phone, text, instant messenger, through gaming websites, social media sites and apps, and sending offensive or degrading photos or videos.

Bullying is recognised by the SCITT as being a form of peer-on-peer abuse. It can be emotionally abusive and can have profound impacts on a person’s mental, emotional, physical, and social well-being, often causing long-lasting harm and in the case of children affect their development.

Bullying can also happen to someone more senior by one person or a group of colleagues or trainees. Upward bullying includes showing continued disrespect, refusal to complete tasks or follow policies and procedures, spreading rumours, constantly undermining someone’s authority and challenging their expertise or ability to do their job.

#### Emotional

Any actions that impact on the emotional wellbeing of another person:

- Deliberately causing harm or offence to another person or group of people by using unkind language, teasing, name-calling, taunting and making negative personal comments
- Excluding individuals from conversations, activities or groups
- Ridiculing or causing humiliation – either face to face, through spreading rumours or inappropriate use of technology
- Tormenting others by taking their possessions, hiding books, threatening gestures, using social media to provoke a reaction.

#### Physical

Any form of actual physical violence or threat of violence including intimidation, for example:

- Hitting including any variation of kicking, slapping, punching, pushing or using an object to have the same effect
- Theft of property or possessions
- Intentionally causing damage to property or possessions.

## Harmful sexual behaviour

This includes any unwanted physically contact or sexually abusive comments for example:

- Using sexually explicit words and phrases
- Inappropriate touching
- Using sexual threats or violence
- Forced or exploitative sexual activity
- Sexual harassment
- Forcing another person to look at sexual body parts.

## Online bullying & inappropriate use of social media

More commonly known as 'cyber bullying' – which is the misuse of technologies or communications to cause harm, injury or offence. For example:

- Mobile threats by text messaging and calls
- Misuse of associated technology i.e. cameras and video facilities, games consoles
- Persons who engage in 'group chats' which are created to target an individual with the intention of being unkind or to cause offence
- Sharing of inappropriate material online – including material that is racist, homophobic, sexist, includes extremist content or discriminatory language against people with special needs and disabilities
- Sharing inappropriate material of a sexual content (including sexting)
- Deliberate attempts to contact staff via social media or use their online profile to harass, intimidate, make threats or cause offence to any member of staff and / or adult
- Using social media to humiliate, harass, intimidate, make threats or cause offence or anxiety to another student.

## Prejudice based bullying

Prejudice-based bullying (also known as identity-based bullying) refers to any form of bullying related to the characteristics considered unique to a child's identity. These forms of bullying are not only targeted at an individual but reflect negative attitudes towards a wider sub-community or group to whom that individual identifies with.

Prejudice-based bullying can be separated into 9 characteristics unique to a child's identity, these are:

- Race or ethnicity: bullying directed towards an individual which relates to their skin colour, ethnicity, or national identity. Includes racial taunts, graffiti or gestures

## Bullying and Harassment Policy (version 2.1)

- **Gender:** bullying based around sexist attitudes or sexually inappropriate behaviours, intended to either demean or humiliate an individual because of their sex
- **Homophobic, bi-phobic and transphobic:** bullying because of or focusing on the issue of sexuality or gender identity
- **Religion or belief:** bullying motivated by prejudice against an individual's perceived or actual religious or spiritual beliefs and practices
- **Learning disability/difficulty:** Bullying of children who have an impairment which affects the way they learn, understand, socialise and communicate (i.e. speech and language difficulties)
- **Disability:** Bullying of children who have a physical or mental impairment, for example, mobility, visual or hearing impairments, epilepsy, diabetes or a progressive condition such as multiple sclerosis
- **Asylum seekers and refugees:** because of or focusing on being from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds
- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller:** because of or focusing on being a member of a travelling community.

By law (Equality Act 2010), bullying can be discrimination if it relates to any of the protected characteristics. Bullying that is not classed as discrimination could still lead to other legal issues.

All SCITT staff, members of the SCITT partnership and trainees have a mutual duty to treat each other honestly and with respect.

Trainees have the right to have trust and confidence in the SCITT and the right to expect not to be bullied. All SCITT staff and members of the SCITT partnership have the right to expect trainees not to bully each other and the right to expect trainees to treat all colleagues on the partnership and SCITT central team administrators and managers with respect and follow reasonable instructions.

The SCITT has a legal duty of care to protect trainees and colleagues in the partnership from harm. This includes bullying issues.

## 4. What is not bullying?

### One-off incidents

Bullying is persistent and repetitive and generally fits a pattern of behaviour. However, there will be occasions when a one-off incident is so significant that it causes long term effects and is therefore categorised as bullying. One example may be extreme public humiliation that deters someone from engaging in discussions or social events.

### Mutual conflict

A disagreement, argument or fight in which both parties have equally participated and where there is no imbalance of power.

## 5. Recognising bullying or harassment

Behaviour that is considered bullying by one person may be considered firm management by another.

Below are some examples of unacceptable behaviour including:

- Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly on the ground of age, race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- Ridiculing or demeaning someone – picking on them or setting them up to fail
- Exclusion or victimisation
- Unfair treatment
- Unwelcome sexual advances – touching, standing too close, display of offensive materials, asking for sexual favours, making decisions on the basis of sexual advances being accepted or rejected
- Vexatious allegations and behaviour including abusive, threatening or offensive language, unreasonably persistent emailing or calling, unreasonable demands to speak or engage with a particular individual, unreasonable refusal to accept the outcome of an investigation, multiple allegations raised against an individual or group, all of which are found to be without substance and reporting those who are not perceived to have sufficiently helped the person
- Malicious allegations which are without substance and are raised solely to cause harm or damage to the reputation of a person or a group including repetitious behaviour aimed at a particular person or group
- Frivolous allegations which are allegations that may be trivial, insignificant, and have no serious purpose or value, to such a degree that they do not merit an investigation including allegations which have not been brought in good faith because they clearly have no reasonable prospect of success and/or are not significant enough to be investigated, multiple minor complaints all at once or in quick succession.

Possible signs of bullying or harassment can lead someone to:

- Become withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- Become aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Start bullying others
- Be frightened to say what is wrong
- Become distressed, stop eating
- Refuse to say what is wrong
- Be absent from training/school or other setting - giving bogus reasons for their absence
- Become attention seekers
- Give improbable excuses for any of the above.

**N.B. These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and investigated.**

## 6. What should we do about bullying and harassment?

The SCITT will ensure the complaint is investigated promptly and objectively and taken seriously. The following aims and strategy will be adhered to when dealing with an issue around bullying and harassment.

### Aims

- To ensure that each trainee and member feels safe and secure in the learning environment
- To promote the principle that all trainees, SCITT staff and members of the SCITT partnership have a fundamental right to be free from bullying and intimidation in all its forms
- To ensure that all reported cases of bullying are efficiently and effectively dealt with.

### Strategy

- To ensure that trainees, SCITT staff and members of the SCITT partnership are aware of procedures to follow if bullying occurs
- To pursue a 'no blame' approach if appropriate
- To ensure that cases of bullying are monitored and followed up as appropriate.

Our aim is to ensure that all trainees and staff feel secure and confident that they are able to work together within our teacher training programme, completely free from any fears of being bullied, threatened or intimidated in any way.

### Procedures

1. All trainees will be made aware of the ***Bullying and Harassment Policy***.
2. All SCITT staff and members of the partnership are likewise aware of the policy and are alert for any signs that a trainee may be being bullied.
3. In our efforts to encourage trainees to inform us if they, or others, are being bullied we must be as receptive as possible to all such reports, however trivial they may at first appear. All SCITT staff must be vigilant and sympathetic to any situations which may indicate that a trainee is being bullied.
4. In all instances the SCITT Director with the co-operation of the school (if allegations relate to a trainee's placement in a school) should make arrangements to investigate the complaint promptly and objectively and take the complaint seriously.
5. The strategy for dealing with any case of bullying or harassment will be at the discretion of the SCITT Director, with appropriate HR advice taken and will be within the guidelines laid down in this policy.

6. The SCITT Director will determine whether within the scope of the policy and procedure and depending upon the nature of the complaint whether dialogue should take place with both parties which are involved in the complaint, to establish what the problem is and how it should be resolved.
7. If the problem does persist or is considered to be so serious that informal resolution is not possible and is so serious as to warrant alternative strategies, it should be managed in accordance with the SCITT **Disciplinary Policy**.
8. If a trainee feels that the problem has not been sufficiently addressed, they should refer to the SCITT **Complaints Policy**.

**If any trainee feels that they have been the victim of bullying or harassment, they must complete the *incident report form* and email the form to the SCITT Director copying in the SCITT Course Leader or the SCITT Administrative Manager. If the incident report form implicates the SCITT Director, the form should be emailed to the Chief Executive Officer of Chorus Education Trust.**

## **7. Publishing this Policy**

This policy is available through the SCITT website and the SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be requested via the SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs, and the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT, is a member of this scheme. If a trainee is unhappy with decisions made by the SCITT regarding this Policy, they may be able to ask the OIA to review this decision. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.