

THE HAVEN

Operated by the Autistic Girls Network charity — 1196655 (England and Wales), SC054837 (Scotland)

Anti-Bullying Policy

Specialist online education for neurodivergent young people

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1. Purpose and statement

The Haven provides a learning environment in which every young person can take part without fear of bullying, harassment or discrimination, online or in person. Bullying is not tolerated. This policy sets out what bullying is, how The Haven prevents it, and how staff respond when it happens.

2. Definition

Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another person physically or emotionally, where there is an imbalance of power. A single serious incident can also be treated as bullying. Bullying can be:

- **Verbal:** name-calling, insults, threats.
- **Indirect or social:** exclusion, rumours, manipulating friendships.
- **Online:** see section 4.
- **Prejudice-based:** targeting someone because of a protected characteristic or another aspect of who they are (section 3).
- **Coercive:** pressuring others into unwanted behaviour.
- **Physical:** at any in-person Haven event.

3. Prejudice-based bullying and the protected characteristics

The Equality Act 2010 names nine protected characteristics. Bullying that targets any of them is treated as **prejudice-based bullying** and as a serious concern:

1. Age

2. Disability, including autism, ADHD and other neurodivergence, mental health conditions and long-term illness
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race, including colour, nationality and ethnic or national origin
7. Religion or belief, including lack of belief
8. Sex, including sexist and misogynistic bullying and sexual harassment
9. Sexual orientation

The Haven also treats as prejudice-based bullying behaviour that targets a learner's SEND, appearance, being a young carer or care-experienced, or a family member's characteristics, including where the target is *perceived* to have a characteristic or is associated with someone who does.

Many Haven learners have experienced bullying in mainstream education, often linked to their neurodivergence, gender identity, sexuality, race or faith. Staff take every report seriously and with this history in mind.

4. Online bullying (cyberbullying)

Most of The Haven's teaching happens online, so online bullying is a central risk, not a side issue. It includes:

- unkind, threatening or discriminatory messages in lesson chat, breakout rooms or comments on shared work;
- leaving someone out of, or turning on someone in, group chats and online spaces;
- impersonating someone or creating fake accounts;
- sharing screenshots, recordings or images of someone without consent, or threatening to;
- creating or sharing digitally altered or AI-generated images (deepfakes) of another person;
- pile-ons, coordinated reporting or "doxxing" (sharing someone's personal details);
- sharing nudes or semi-nudes of another young person. This is also a criminal offence and is always a safeguarding matter.

Where it happens. Online bullying can happen on Haven platforms (Google Meet, Google Classroom) or on apps and social media outside The Haven's control, at any time of day. Where it affects a Haven learner's safety or learning, The Haven responds regardless of where it took place, working with families and, where needed, the commissioning school, the platform and the police.

Evidence. Learners and families are asked to keep evidence (for example the date, the platform, and screenshots of messages) and to block and report on the platform. They must **not** screenshot, save or forward nude or semi-nude images; staff follow UKCIS guidance and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and never view or copy such images.

Platform controls. Staff moderate chat and screen sharing in live sessions and can restrict chat or remove a participant. The Haven does not filter learners' own devices or home networks; its position is set out in the *Risk Assessment – Learner Access from Personally-Owned Devices*.

5. Prevention

- A relational culture under the Relational Behaviour and Regulation Policy.
- Explicit teaching about respect, difference, the protected characteristics, online behaviour and digital citizenship through PSHE, RSHE and Neurodiversity University.
- Staff modelling and active moderation in every shared digital space.
- Regular learner voice mechanisms to find out how learners are experiencing The Haven.
- Promoting mutual respect and tolerance as part of fundamental British values.

6. Reporting

Learners, families and staff can report bullying by:

- speaking to a trusted educator or mentor;
- contacting the Head or DSL;
- using the family or learner contact channels;
- anonymously, where the learner prefers.

All reports are taken seriously. Anonymity does not prevent action, although it may limit what can be done.

7. Response

- Listen to and support the learner who has been harmed.
- Record the concern in TutorCruncher under the Behaviour Incident Reporting Procedure, noting whether it was prejudice-based and which characteristic was targeted, and whether it was online.
- Investigate proportionately, with families where appropriate.
- Work with the learner whose behaviour caused harm on understanding, repair and change, under the Relational Behaviour and Regulation Policy.
- Review the environment, including platform settings, for anything that contributed.
- Escalate to the DSL and follow the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy where the behaviour reaches a safeguarding threshold, including prejudice-based abuse, sexual harassment, image-based abuse, child-on-child abuse or possible criminal behaviour.
- Follow up with the learner who was harmed to check that the behaviour has stopped and they feel safe.

8. Bullying involving staff or volunteers

Allegations that an adult has bullied a learner are handled under the Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy. Bullying between adults is addressed under the Staff Conduct, Whistleblowing and Grievance policies.

9. Records and monitoring

All bullying concerns are recorded in TutorCruncher. The Head and DSL review records termly, including by protected characteristic, type (online or in person) and outcome, to spot patterns and any group of learners being disproportionately targeted. A summary goes to governors as part of the Quality Assurance Policy.

10. Roles and responsibilities

- **Head / DSL:** oversees the response to bullying and safeguarding escalation.
- **Educators and mentors:** notice, listen, record and escalate; moderate online spaces.
- **Learners:** empowered to speak up for themselves and others, and trusted to be believed.
- **Families:** partners in spotting and responding to concerns, including online.

11. Related documents

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy; Child-on-Child Abuse Policy; Relational Behaviour and Regulation Policy; Behaviour Incident Reporting Procedure; Online Safety & Acceptable Use; Equal Opportunities, Equality & Diversity Policy; Anti-Racism Policy; SEND Policy; Quality Assurance Policy.

12. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Head / DSL and approved by the Proprietor and governing body.

This PDF was generated from the published policy at policies.thehavenonline.school on 22 October 2026. The website is the authoritative, most current version of this policy.