

## **ANTI ONLINE BULLYING POLICY**

**June 2024**

| <b>Date of Approval</b> | <b>Designated Safeguarding Lead</b> | <b>Safeguarding Trustee</b> | <b>Review Date</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| 01/02/2024              | Andrew Quartermain, CEO             | Jane Fenoulhet              | 01/01/2025         |

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## **1.0 Aims**

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Course participants, staff and parents are familiar with online bullying and its consequences;
- We have the knowledge, policies and procedures to prevent and, if necessary, to deal with online bullying at Pro Corda or within the Pro Corda community;
- We monitor the effectiveness of our procedures.

## **2.0 What is online bullying?**

Online bullying includes sending or posting harmful or upsetting text, images or other messages, using the internet, mobile phones or other communication technology.

- It can take many forms, but can go even further than face to face bullying by invading home and personal space and can target one or more people.
- It can take place across age groups and target course participants, staff and others.
- It can include threats and intimidation, harassment, defamation, exclusion or peer rejection, impersonation and unauthorised publication of private information or images.
- It can include messages intended as jokes, but which have a harmful or upsetting effect.

Online bullying may be carried out in many ways, including:

- Threatening, intimidating or upsetting text messages;
- Threatening or embarrassing pictures and video clips via mobile phone cameras;
- Silent or abusive phone calls or using the victim's phone to harass others, to make them think the victim is responsible;
- Threatening or bullying emails, possibly sent using a pseudonym or someone else's name;
- Menacing or upsetting responses to someone in a chat-room;
- Unpleasant messages sent during instant messaging;

- Unpleasant or defamatory information posted to blogs, personal websites and social networking sites (e.g. Facebook & Twitter)

In some cases this type of bullying can be a criminal offence.

### **3.0 Prevention of Online Bullying**

#### **Understanding and information**

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will act, as an Online Safety Officer, to oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and monitor their effectiveness.
- The Online Safety Officer will ensure that Pro Corda maintains details of agencies and resources that may assist in preventing and addressing bullying.
- Staff will be trained to identify signs of online bullying and will be helped to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use.
- The Code of Advice (see Appendix 1) will be communicated to help course participants protect themselves from being caught up in online bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Course participants will be informed about online bullying through curricular and pastoral activities.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on online bullying.

#### **Practices and Procedures**

- The responsibilities of Pro Corda and of course participants as set out in the Anti-Bullying Policy apply also to this policy.
- Pro Corda will encourage safe use of computing, emphasising, for example, the importance of password security and the need to log out of accounts.
- Pro Corda will promote the message that asking for help is the right thing to do and all members of the Pro Corda community will be informed how online bullying can be reported.
- Confidential records will be kept of all online bullying incidents.

#### **4.0 Responding to online bullying**

Online bullying will generally be dealt with through Pro Corda's Anti-bullying policy. An online bullying incident might include features different to other forms of bullying, prompting a particular response.

Key differences might be:

- Impact: possibly extensive scale and scope
- Location: the anytime and anywhere nature of online bullying
- Anonymity: the person being bullied might not know who the perpetrator is
- Motivation: the perpetrator might not realise that his/her actions are bullying
- Evidence: the subject of the bullying will have evidence of what happened

#### **5.0 Support for the person being bullied**

As with any form of bullying, support for the individual will depend on the circumstances. Examples include:

- Emotional support and reassurance that it was right to report the incident
- Advice not to retaliate or reply, but to keep the evidence and show or give it to their parent or a member of staff
- Advice on other aspects of the code to prevent re-occurrence
- Advice on how the perpetrator might be blocked from the individual's sites or services
- Actions, where possible and appropriate, to have offending material removed
- Advice to consider changing email addresses and/or mobile phone numbers
- Discuss contacting the police in cases of suspected illegal content

#### **6.0 Investigation**

Again, the nature of any investigation will depend on the circumstances. It may include, for example:

- Review of evidence and advice to preserve it, for example by saving or printing (e.g. phone messages, texts, emails, website pages)
- Efforts to identify the perpetrator, which may include looking at the media, systems and sites used. Witnesses may have useful information.

- Contact the police or the Local Authority Safeguarding Team if images might be illegal or raise child protection issues
- Requesting a course participant to reveal a message or other phone content or confiscating a phone. Staff do not have the authority to search the contents of a phone.

## **7.0 Working with the perpetrator**

Work with the perpetrator and any sanctions will be determined on an individual basis, in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy, with the intention of:

- Helping the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
- Holding the perpetrator to account, so they recognise the harm caused and do not repeat the behaviour.
- Helping bullies to recognise the consequences of their actions and facilitating change in their attitude and behaviour.
- Demonstrating that online bullying, as any other form of bullying, is unacceptable and that Pro Corda has effective ways of dealing with it.

## **8.0 Evaluating the effectiveness of counter bullying procedures**

- Members of staff will report any incidents of online bullying to the DSL.
- The CEO will review any serious incident within three months of Pro Corda dealing with any reported cases and will ensure that an annual review of Online Bullying and the Anti-Bullying procedures are carried out.
- The review will take into account comments and suggested areas for improvement from staff and course participants.

# **Appendix 1**

## **Online Code of Advice**

### **Three Steps to Safety**

1. Respect other people - online and off. Don't spread rumours about people or share their secrets, including phone numbers or passwords.
2. If someone insults you online or by phone, stay calm. Ignore them, but tell someone you trust.
3. "Do as you would be done by!" Think how you would feel if you were bullied. You are responsible for your behaviour - so don't distress other people or encourage others to do so.

### **If you are being bullied**

It is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.

- Don't ignore the bullying. Don't reply, but do tell someone you can trust, such as a member of staff or parent, or call an advice line such as Childline (0800 1111).
- Try to keep calm. If you seem frightened or angry it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.

### **Text / video messaging**

- You can turn off incoming messages for a couple of days
- If bullying persists you can change your number (ask your mobile phone provider).
- Do not reply to abusive or worrying messages. You can report them to your mobile phone provider.

### **Email**

- Never reply to unpleasant or unwanted messages
- Don't accept emails or open files from people you don't know.
- Don't delete bullying emails – print them or save them as evidence in a separate folder.

### **Social networking sites, chatrooms and instant messaging**

- Change privacy settings so you can choose who to be friends with and who can see your profile. Don't add anyone you don't know to your friend list.
- Don't use your real name in chatrooms.
- Never give out your photo or personal details, like your address, phone number or which school you go to. Don't post any pictures or videos you wouldn't be happy for your parents or teachers to see. Once they are online they can be copied and posted in other places where you can't get rid of them.
- Keep your passwords private and don't tell anyone, not even your best friend.
- To report suspicious behaviour online and to learn more about keeping yourself safe online visit [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

***Always report bullying incidents. Not doing that allows the bully to continue. That's not good for the victims, for those who witness the incidents or for the bully, who may need help to change their behaviour***