Anti-bullying Policy

November 2026

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1. Applies to:

- The whole school inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours
- All staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietor and volunteers working in the school.
- All pupils
- All Physis Academy activities both on and away from the school site

2. Related documents:

- ICT-Based Forms of Abuse (including Cyber-Bullying) Policy
- Anti-Bullying: Parents/Carers and Pupils Information Sheets, Anti-Bullying Code
- The School Rules, What to Do if You are Worried.
- Positive Behaviour Management Policy (including Sanctions, Rewards, and Exclusions)
- Equality and Diversity including Equal Opportunities and Racial Harassment
- Safeguarding Policy and Procedures including Child Protection
- E-Safety Policy including ICT Acceptable Use
- Personal, Social, Health, Economic Education (PSHE) and Citizenship
- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) Policy

3. Availability:

This policy is made available to parents/carers, staff and pupils from the school office and website in accessible formats upon request.

4. Monitoring and Review:

This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Headteacher.

The Proprietor will undertake a formal review of this policy every 3 years for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Equality Impact Assessment: This policy is subject to equality impact assessment to ensure it does not discriminate against pupils or staff with protected characteristics and that it effectively addresses prejudice-based bullying.

5. Principles - Aims and Objectives

At Physis Academy, we are committed to a culture in which bullying of any kind, whether directed at pupils or adults, is not tolerated by any member of the school community. Bullying can harm pupils' mental health and disrupt their education. We ensure that pupils, staff and parents/carers understand what bullying is and know that it is unacceptable. In line with our behaviour policy, we believe every pupil has the right to learn in a safe, supportive, and secure environment, free from physical threats, verbal abuse and harassment. As bullying undermines this right and causes significant distress, we are committed to preventing it in all its forms.

We provide a clear framework for dealing with incidents of bullying, ensuring that bullies are dealt with swiftly and firmly. Our straightforward procedures make it easy to report bullying, including cyber-bullying and bullying outside of school. Therefore, if bullying does occur, all pupils should be able to tell and know that incidents will be dealt with promptly and effectively. All adult members of our school community should be vigilant in recognising that bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Our aim is to promote positive relationships amongst all members of the school community and to develop a culture in which individuals are listened to and their concerns taken seriously.

We believe that the principle means of prevention is through the maintenance of conditions where bullying is less likely to flourish and is more easily detected. All pupils are known to us personally and it is therefore easier for us to detect signs of possible distress. Moreover, we feel that it is important that pupils have free and informal access to the Headteacher and other staff.

We aim to promote transparency in human relationships so that pupils, by default, are held to account for the feelings they may evoke in others. This policy applies to all Physis Academy activities both on and away from the school site. In the event of bullying taking place among the staff, the Headteacher should be

informed and appropriate decisions made with possible reference to the relevant school Employment Policies and Procedures. Accusations of bullying of a pupil (pupils) by members of staff will be investigated thoroughly. Each pupil is treated fairly and with respect.

Members of staff to whom disclosures are made should initiate the following procedures themselves and/or consult with the relevant staff as appropriate. All disclosures, whether from a pupil, a carer, a member of staff or a volunteer should be taken seriously and treated with sensitivity. The victim(s) should be made aware that their safety is considered to be of paramount importance.

We are a TELLING School. This means that anyone who knows that bullying is happening is expected to tell the staff. Posters to this effect are displayed in the school. All members of our school community should be vigilant to recognise where bullying is taking place, and deal with it thoroughly and with sensitivity. Records are kept evaluating the effectiveness of the approach or to enable patterns to be identified.

6. Anti-Bullying and Equality

6.1 Our Equality Commitment

Physis Academy recognises that our anti-bullying work is intrinsically linked to our duties under the Equality Act 2010. We acknowledge that:

- Some pupils are more vulnerable to bullying due to protected characteristics (disability, race, religion or belief, sex, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, age, marriage and civil partnership)
- Bullying motivated by prejudice against protected characteristics is particularly harmful and unacceptable.
- Our anti-bullying procedures must be implemented in a way that promotes equality and does not discriminate.
- All forms of prejudice-based bullying will be taken seriously, recorded, and addressed effectively.

6.2 Intersectionality

We recognise that pupils with multiple protected characteristics may face compounded vulnerability and will ensure our anti-bullying approach considers intersectionality. For example:

- A Black girl may experience both racist and sexist bullying.
- An LGB pupil with SEND may face homophobic bullying and disability-based bullying.

- A Muslim girl may experience both religious and sexist bullying.

Our responses will consider pupils' whole identities and intersecting experiences.

6.3 Monitoring and Action

We will monitor bullying data by protected characteristic to identify whether pupils with particular protected characteristics are disproportionately affected by bullying and will take action to address any disparities identified.

6.4 Staff Training on Equality

All staff will receive training on recognizing and responding to prejudice-based bullying related to all protected characteristics, including understanding of:

- Different forms of prejudice-based bullying (racist, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, disablist, sexist, religious, etc.)
- How to respond sensitively to disclosures, particularly for sensitive protected characteristics
- When and how to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with SEND
- The importance of confidentiality and appropriate information sharing
- Understanding intersectionality and compounded discrimination

6.5 Reasonable Adjustments

When applying sanctions for bullying, we will make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities, considering whether behaviour may be related to their disability while maintaining clear expectations that bullying is unacceptable. We will:

- Conduct individual assessments before applying sanctions to pupils with SEND.
- Consider whether the behaviour is related to the pupil's disability.
- Provide appropriate support alongside any sanctions.
- Ensure sanctions are proportionate and take account of individual circumstances.

6.6 Positive Representation

We will ensure our curriculum and school environment include positive representation of all protected characteristics, challenging stereotypes and promoting respect for diversity. This includes:

- Diverse examples and role models in teaching materials

- Displays celebrating diversity.
- Books and resources representing different identities and experiences.
- Assemblies and enrichment activities promoting equality.

6.7 External Support

We will provide access to external organisations that support pupils with specific protected characteristics, including:

- Anti-racist organisations
- LGBT+ support groups (e.g., Mermaids, Stonewall, LGBT Foundation)
- Disability charities (e.g., Scope, Mencap)
- Religious support services
- Organisations supporting victims of hate crime.

7. Definition of Bullying

Bullying can be defined as a deliberate, unprovoked and repeated (over time) action to intentionally humiliate, threaten, frighten or hurt an individual or group physically or emotionally. It is often motivated by prejudice against particular groups, for example, on grounds of race, religion and belief, culture, sex, gender, homophobia, special educational needs and disability (as defined in the Equality Act 2010), or because a child is adopted or is a carer. It may occur directly or through cyber-technology such as social websites, mobile phones, text messages, photographs and email.

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour. A feature of bullying in schools is that its existence is not always immediately known or suspected by those in authority. The school recognises the seriousness of both physical and emotional bullying in causing psychological damage and even suicide.

Although bullying in itself is not a specific criminal act in the UK, some types of harassing or threatening behaviour or communications could be a criminal offence; for example, under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Malicious Communications Act 1988, the Communications Act 2003 and the Public Order Act 1986. If our staff consider that an offence may have been committed, we will seek assistance from the police.

As part of our Behaviour Policy, Physis Academy believes that all pupils and adults have the right to live in a supportive, caring environment in which pupils feel safe and free from bullying and harassment.

8. Protected Characteristics and Bullying

It is specifically recognised that bullying behaviour may be related to one or more of the following protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010:

8.1 Disability

Recognition: Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities may be particularly vulnerable to bullying and may also experience barriers to reporting bullying.

Our response:

- We invest in specialized skills to understand the needs of pupils with SEND.
- We use accessible communication methods (social stories, drawings, visual aids) to help pupils understand what bullying is and how to report it.
- We are alert to signs of distress that may manifest differently in pupils with SEND.
- We make reasonable adjustments when applying sanctions to pupils with SEND who engage in bullying behaviour.
- We provide individualized anti-bullying support plans for pupils with SEND where needed.

8.2 Sex

Recognition: Girls and boys may experience different types of bullying and may face gender-based harassment and stereotyping.

Our response:

- We recognise and address sexist and sexual bullying.
- We challenge gender stereotypes in how bullying incidents are perceived and responded to
- We ensure equal treatment and avoid assumptions (e.g., that boys should "toughen up" or girls are "being dramatic")
- We link serious sexual bullying with safeguarding procedures.
- We monitor sexist bullying by gender to identify patterns.

8.3 Gender Reassignment

Recognition: Transgender and gender-questioning pupils face significantly elevated risks of bullying based on their gender identity.

Our response:

- We explicitly prohibit transphobic bullying.
- We provide staff training on supporting transgender pupils and recognizing transphobic bullying.
- We ensure confidentiality when pupils report transphobic bullying to prevent "outing"
- We use inclusive language and examples in anti-bullying education.
- We monitor incidents of transphobic bullying separately.
- We provide access to specialist LGBT+ support organisations.

8.4 Pregnancy and Maternity

Recognition: Pupils with pregnant family members or young mothers in their family may face bullying or stigma.

Our response:

- We address any form of prejudice-based bullying related to pregnancy or maternity.
- We respond sensitively to disclosures.
- We ensure pupils understand that bullying related to pregnancy or family structure is unacceptable.

8.5 Age

Recognition: Pupils of different ages may experience bullying differently and may have different capabilities in recognizing and reporting bullying.

Our response:

- We use age-appropriate educational methods (social stories, role-plays, discussions)
- We ensure younger pupils can articulate experiences of bullying.
- We tailor sanctions to be age appropriate.
- We recognise that younger pupils may be more vulnerable and require additional support.

8.6 Religion or Belief

Recognition: Pupils from religious minority backgrounds may face bullying based on their faith, religious practices, or religious identity.

Our response:

- We explicitly prohibit religious bullying.
- We promote understanding of different faiths through education.
- We provide staff training on recognizing religious bullying and understanding diverse religious practices.
- We celebrate religious diversity through the curriculum.
- We monitor religious bullying incidents separately.
- We ensure anti-bullying education includes respect for different faiths.

8.7 Sexual Orientation

Recognition: Lesbian, gay, and bisexual pupils (or those perceived to be LGB) face disproportionately high rates of bullying and may be reluctant to report due to fear of being "outed."

Our response:

- We explicitly prohibit homophobic and biphobic bullying.
- We recognise that "heterosexual young people subject to homophobic bullying are less reluctant to report it" and provide sensitivity and positive support for all victims.
- We invest in specialized skills to understand LGBT pupils.
- We ensure confidentiality when pupils report homophobic bullying.
- We use inclusive language and examples (acknowledging diverse family structures)
- We create visible support for LGBT pupils.
- We monitor homophobic bullying incidents separately.
- We link with external LGBT support organisations.

8.8 Race

Recognition: Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds may be particularly vulnerable to racist bullying.

Our response:

- We explicitly prohibit racist bullying.
- We keep statistics about racist bullying incidents as required.

- We provide staff training on recognizing and responding to racist bullying, including microaggressions.
- We celebrate cultural diversity through the curriculum.
- We ensure parents from ethnic minority backgrounds are engaged and informed.
- We monitor racist bullying to identify patterns.
- We respond seriously and sensitively to all reports.

8.9 Marriage and Civil Partnership

Recognition: While less relevant to school-age pupils, the policy protects any pupil whose family includes same-sex married parents or civil partners from bullying based on their family structure.

Our response:

- We ensure our comprehensive approach addresses any form of prejudice-based bullying.
- We use inclusive language that recognises diverse family structures.

9. Types of Bullying

Bullying can take many forms:

9.1 Emotional (Indirect Bullying)

Including isolation of others by a refusal to co-operate with them and exclusion - being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (e.g. hiding books, threatening gestures), deliberately excluding from social groups or an activity by refusal to sit next to/talk to/work/co-operate with others and refusal to follow staff instructions to do the above, or malicious rumours, emails or text messages, and also exclusion from play/discussions etc. with those whom they believe to be their friends.

9.2 Physical

Physical harm or its threat including the abuse of personal property – jostling, serious fighting, pushing, kicking, hitting, taking or hiding belongings, punching or any use of violence; deliberately destroying or damaging work or possessions or removing personal property, use of weapons/threatening use of weapon (or any object which could be used as a weapon), intimidation through physical gestures and actions.

9.3 Cyber-Bullying

Not occurring face to face but rather through electronic means including, but not limited to, social networking sites, internet and intranet sites, email, instant messaging, by mobile phone including through text messages and phone calls, photographs both real and manipulated and so on. For more details see the specific ICT-Based Forms of Abuse (including Cyber-Bullying) Policy and E-Safety Policy.

9.4 Racist

Bullying directed at individuals of a certain race, culture, ethnicity, language, faith, community, national origin or national status. The distinctive feature of racist bullying is that the victim is attacked not as an individual but as the representative of a family, community or group. This is an area where schools are required to keep statistics about incidents.

We recognise that:

- Racist bullying causes significant harm and trauma.
- Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds may face barriers to reporting.
- Racist bullying includes microaggressions and subtle forms of discrimination.
- We must respond seriously and sensitively to all reports.

9.5 Cultural

Focusing on and/or playing off perceived cultural differences or similar.

9.6 Sexist

Covers a wide range of behaviour from name calling to physical sexual assault. It is the use of sexual language or negative stereotyping on the basis of gender or gender identity (transphobic).

We recognise that:

- Girls may be disproportionately affected by sexual bullying and harassment.
- Gender stereotypes may influence how bullying is perceived and responded to
- Both girls and boys can be victims of sexist bullying
- Serious sexual bullying may constitute child-on-child abuse and requires safeguarding response.

9.7 Sexual

Unwanted or inappropriate physical contact or sexual innuendo.

We recognise that:

- Sexual bullying is a serious safeguarding concern.
- We will link with safeguarding procedures for serious sexual bullying.
- We will provide education on consent and respectful relationships.

9.8 Sexual Orientation - Homophobic or Biphobic

This is bullying, which is directed towards people who are openly gay, bisexual, are perceived as gay, or show certain characteristics. Heterosexual young people subject to homophobic bullying are less reluctant to report it as this may enforce the stereotypical way that they are already viewed by others, so sensitivity and positive support is required for victims.

We recognise that:

- LGB pupils experience disproportionately high rates of bullying.
- Pupils may be reluctant to report homophobic bullying due to fear of being "outed".
- Homophobic bullying can have severe mental health impacts.
- We must provide confidential, sensitive support.

9.9 Transphobic

Bullying based on gender identity, including misgendering, deadnaming, and harassment of transgender or gender-questioning pupils.

We recognise that:

- Transgender pupils face significantly elevated bullying risks.
- Privacy and confidentiality are critical.
- We must use correct names and pronouns.
- We will provide specialist support and training.

9.10 Religious

Attacking faith, belief, religious practice or custom.

We recognise that:

- Pupils from religious minority backgrounds may face bullying based on faith or religious practices.

- Religious bullying includes targeting pupils who wear religious dress or observe dietary restrictions.

- We must promote understanding and respect for diverse faiths.

9.11 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

Remarking upon, drawing attention to, or discriminating against persons with physical disabilities or learning difficulties or other identified special educational needs such as emotional and behavioural disabilities (EBD) and Specific Learning Difficulties (SLD) - (Dyslexia, Dyscalculia and Dyspraxia).

We recognise that:

- Pupils with SEND are significantly more likely to experience bullying.

- Pupils with SEND may struggle to recognise or report bullying.

- We must make reasonable adjustments and provide accessible support.

- We will use individualized approaches.

9.12 Verbal

Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, making snide comments, teasing, humiliating others, threatening others, inciting others to humiliate and threaten others.

9.13 Written

Spreading rumours, writing or printing unkind or malicious content on paper.

Bullying can take place between pupil and pupil, staff and staff, and staff and pupil. We consider the pastoral care of pupils and staff to be of prime importance. All staff and volunteers at Physis Academy are expected to treat each other with a professional level of respect. Bullying is not tolerated, and all accusations are to be taken seriously and dealt with.

5. Roles and responsibilities

In the event of an online safety incident, the following people will be informed within school (Headteacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead/Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Headteacher (DSL)	James Nation
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Katherine Mooney
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)	Domoni Supple

Senior Leadership Team

The school senior leadership team is responsible for determining, evaluating, and reviewing E-Safety policies to encompass teaching and learning, use of school IT equipment and facilities by pupils, staff and visitors, and the agreed criteria for acceptable use by pupils, school staff and governors of Internet capable equipment for school related purposes or in situations which will impact on the reputation of the school, and/or on school premises.

The online safety policy is a result of a continuous cycle of evaluation and review based on new initiatives, and partnership discussion with stakeholders and outside organisations, technological and Internet developments, current government guidance and school related online safety incidents. The policy development cycle develops good practice within the teaching curriculum and wider pastoral curriculum. Regular assessment of strengths and weaknesses help determine INSET provision for staff and governors and guidance provided to parents, pupils, and local partnerships.

Online safety provision is always designed to encourage positive behaviours and practical real-world strategies for all members of the school and wider school community.

The leadership team is encouraged to be aspirational and innovative in developing strategies for online safety provision.

Equality responsibilities:

- Ensure online safety provision addresses the needs of all pupils with protected characteristics.
- Monitor online safety incidents by protected characteristics to identify patterns of discrimination.
- Report annually to governors on equality dimensions of online safety.
- Ensure filtering and monitoring systems do not discriminate.
- Oversee equality impact assessments of online safety systems and practices.

Teachers and support staff

Teaching and support staff need to ensure that they are aware of the current school online safety policy, practices, and associated procedures for reporting online safety incidents.

Teaching and support staff will be provided with online safety training.

All staff need to ensure that they have read, understood, and signed (thereby indicating an agreement) the Acceptable Use Agreement relevant to Internet and computer use in school.

All staff need to follow the school's social media policy, regarding external off-site use, personal use (mindful of not bringing the school into disrepute), possible contractual obligations, and conduct on Internet school messaging or communication platforms, for example email and forums.

All teaching staff need to rigorously monitor learner Internet and computer usage in line with the policy. This also includes the use of personal technology such as cameras, phones, and other gadgets on the school site.

Teaching staff should promote best practice regarding avoiding copyright infringement and plagiarism.

Be aware of online propaganda and help pupils with critical evaluation of online materials.

Internet usage and suggested websites should be pre-vetted and documented in lesson planning.

Equality responsibilities:

- Recognise and respond to online discrimination and hate speech across all protected characteristics.
- Ensure online safety teaching is accessible to all pupils including those with disabilities.
- Adapt communication methods for pupils with communication needs.
- Model respectful online behaviour regarding all protected characteristics.
- Challenge discriminatory language and behaviour in online spaces.
- Support pupils experiencing online discrimination or harassment.
- Ensure equal access to technology and online learning for all pupils.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is trained in specific online safety issues. Accredited training with reference to child protection issues has been accessed.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead can differentiate which online safety incidents are required to be reported to CEOP, local Police, Local Safeguarding Children's Board, social services, and parents/carers; and also determine whether the information from such an incident should be restricted to nominated members of the leadership team.

Possible scenarios might include:

- Allegations against members of staff

- Computer crime – for example hacking of school systems.
- Allegations or evidence of 'grooming'
- Allegations or evidence of cyber bullying in the form of threats of violence, harassment, or a malicious communication
- Producing and sharing of Youth Produced Sexual Imagery
- Hate incidents targeting protected characteristics (racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, sexist, religiously discriminatory content)
- Outing of LGBTQ+ pupils
- Image-based abuse and non-consensual sharing of images

Acting 'in loco parentis' and liaising with websites and social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, and Facebook to remove instances of illegal material or cyber bullying.

Equality responsibilities:

- Receive specialist training on online safety and protected characteristics.
- Understand specific online risks faced by pupils with protected characteristics.
- Ensure reporting mechanisms are accessible to all pupils.
- Protect confidentiality particularly for LGBTQ+ pupils and those exploring identity.
- Coordinate support for victims of online discrimination.
- Work with specialist organisations (LGBTQ+ support, anti-racism organisations, disability services)
- Monitor patterns of online safety incidents by protected characteristics.

Pupils

Pupils are required to use school Internet and computer systems in agreement with the terms specified in the school Acceptable Use Policies. Pupils are expected to sign the policy to indicate agreement, and/or have their parents/carers sign on their behalf.

Pupils need to be aware of how to report online safety incidents in school, and how to use external reporting facilities, such as the Click CEOP button or Childline number.

Pupils need to be aware that school Acceptable Use Policies cover all computer, Internet, and mobile technology usage in school, including the use of personal items such as phones.

Pupils need to be aware that their Internet use out of school on social networking sites such as Instagram is covered under the Acceptable Use Policy if it impacts on the school and/or its staff and pupils in terms of cyber bullying, reputation, or illegal activities.

Pupils are expected to:

- Treat others with respect online regardless of protected characteristics
- Report discrimination, hate speech, and bullying they witness online.
- Use technology to celebrate diversity and promote equality.
- Understand that the same standards of behaviour apply online and offline.
- Seek support if they experience online discrimination or harassment.

The school will ensure:

- Reporting mechanisms are accessible to all pupils including those with disabilities.
- Pupils with communication needs have alternative ways to report concerns.
- Online safety information is available in accessible formats.
- All pupils understand how to access support.

Parents/carers and families

It is hoped that parents/carers will support the school's stance on promoting good Internet behaviour and responsible use of IT equipment and mobile technologies both at school and at home.

The school will:

- Provide online safety information in accessible formats and multiple languages where needed.
- Work in partnership with families from diverse backgrounds
- Respect diverse family structures in all communications.
- Provide culturally sensitive guidance on online safety.
- Support families to access online safety resources.

- Communicate clearly about the school's approach to equality in online spaces.

Other users

Other users such as school visitors, or wider school community stakeholders or external contractors should be expected to agree to a visitor's Acceptable Use Agreement (AUA) document specific to their level of access and usage.

External users with significant access to school systems including sensitive information or information held securely under the Data Protection Act should be DBS checked. This includes external contractors who might maintain the school IT systems – which may facilitate access to cloud file storage, website documents, and email.

All users must:

- Respect the Equality Act 2010 in all online communications.
- Not engage in discriminatory behaviour online
- Report concerns about discrimination or hates speech.
- Maintain professional standards regarding protected characteristics.

6. Curriculum

From September 2020, Relationships and Sex Education has been compulsory for all secondary aged pupils. Through these subjects, pupils are taught about online safety and harms. This includes being taught what positive, healthy and respectful online relationships look like, the effects of their online actions on others and knowing how to recognise and display respectful behaviour online. Throughout these subjects, teachers address online safety and appropriate behaviour in an age-appropriate way that is relevant to pupils' lives.

'Teaching online safety in school' (DfE, June 2019) outlines to schools the importance of helping children and young people not only use the internet safely but also give them opportunities to learn how to behave online. Throughout the compulsory Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education, pupils are taught what positive, healthy and respectful online relationships look like.

There are also other curriculum subjects which include content relevant to teaching pupils how to use the internet safely. For example, citizenship education covers media literacy - distinguishing fact from opinion as well as exploring freedom of speech and the role and responsibility of the media in informing and shaping public opinion. It also supports teaching about the concept of democracy, freedom, rights, and responsibilities.

PSHE curriculum underpinning knowledge and behaviours:

How to evaluate what they see online

This enables pupils to make judgements about what they see online and not automatically assume that what they see is true, valid or acceptable.

This includes:

- Is this website/URL/email fake? How can I tell?
- What does this cookie do and what information am I sharing?
- Is this person who they say they are?
- Why does someone want me to see this?
- Why does someone want me to send this?
- Why would someone want me to believe this?
- Why does this person want my personal information?
- What's behind this post?
- Is this too good to be true?
- Is this fact or opinion?
- **Is this content discriminatory or hateful toward any group?**
- **How do algorithms and online platforms perpetuate stereotypes and discrimination?**

How to recognise techniques used for persuasion

This enables pupils to recognise the techniques that are often used to persuade or manipulate others. Understanding that a strong grasp of knowledge across many areas makes people less vulnerable to these techniques and better equipped to recognise and respond appropriately to strongly biased intent or malicious activity.

This includes:

- Online content which tries to make people believe something false is true and/or mislead (misinformation and disinformation)
- Techniques that companies use to persuade people to buy something.
- Ways in which games and social media companies try to keep users online longer (persuasive design)
- Criminal activities such as grooming.
- How discriminatory content is spread online.

- Radicalisation and extremist content (balanced with religious freedom)

Online behaviour

This enables pupils to understand what acceptable and unacceptable online behaviour look like. Pupils are taught that the same standard of behaviour and honesty apply on and offline, including the importance of respect for others.

This includes:

- Looking at why people behave differently online, for example how anonymity (you do not know me) and invisibility (you cannot see me) affect what people do.
- Looking at how online emotions can be intensified resulting in mob mentality.
- Teaching techniques (relevant on and offline) to defuse or calm arguments, for example a disagreement with friends, and disengage from unwanted contact or content online.
- Considering unacceptable online behaviours often passed off as so-called social norms or just banter. For example, negative language that can be used, and in some cases is often expected, as part of online gaming and the acceptance of misogynistic, homophobic, biphobic, transphobic, racist, ableist, and religiously discriminatory language that would never be tolerated offline.
- Understanding that discrimination, hate speech, and harassment online are serious and unacceptable.
- Recognizing and challenging stereotypes about protected characteristics online
- Being an active ally and upstander when witnessing online discrimination
- Understanding consent and respectful relationships in digital spaces

How to identify online risks

This enables pupils to identify possible online risks and make informed decisions about how to act. This should not be about providing a list of what not to do online. The focus is to help pupils assess a situation, think through the consequences of acting in different ways and decide on the best course of action.

Schools help pupils to identify and manage risk by:

- Discussing the ways in which someone may put themselves at risk online.

- Discussing risks posed by another person's online behaviour
- Discussing when risk taking can be positive and negative.
- Discussing "online reputation" and the positive and negative aspects of an online digital footprint. This includes longer-term considerations, i.e., how past online behaviours could impact on their future, when applying for a place at university or a job
- Discussing the risks vs. the benefits of sharing information online and how to make a judgement about when and how to share and who to share with
- Asking questions such as what might happen if I post something online? Who will see it? Who might they send it to?
- Understanding specific online risks related to protected characteristics:
  - LGBTQ+ pupils: outing, conversion therapy content, homophobic/transphobic harassment
  - Girls: sexual harassment, image-based abuse, misogyny
  - Boys: pressure to engage in risky behaviour, exposure to violent content
  - Pupils from minoritized ethnic backgrounds: racism, racial harassment.
  - Disabled pupils: increased vulnerability to exploitation, ableist bullying
  - Religious pupils: religious discrimination, extremist content

How and when to seek support

This enables pupils to understand safe ways in which to seek support if they are concerned or upset by something they have seen online. Pupils understand how to:

- Identify who trusted adults are.
- Look at different ways to access support from the school, police, the National Crime Agency's Click CEOP reporting service for children and young people, and 3rd sector organisations such as Childline and Internet Watch Foundation. This links to wider school policies and processes around reporting of safeguarding and child protection incidents and concerns to school staff (see KCSIE)
- Understand that various platforms and apps have ways in which inappropriate contact or content can be reported.
- Access specialist support organisations:

- LGBTQ+ support: Mermaids, LGBT Foundation, Stonewall, Mind Out
- Anti-racism support: Show Racism the Red Card, Kick It Out
- Disability support: Scope, Mencap
- Religious support: Faith-based organisations

- Understand that reporting mechanisms are accessible (visual tools, communication apps for non-verbal pupils)

Teaching about potential harms

Throughout the curriculum teaching about potential harms includes, following consultation and agreement with parents/carers, social workers (where applicable) and Physis Group Clinical Services:

Technical risks:

- Age restrictions
- Content: How it can be used and shared
- Disinformation, misinformation, and hoaxes
- Fake websites and scam emails
- Fraud (online)
- Password phishing
- Personal data
- Persuasive design which keeps 'users online for longer than they might have planned or desired'.
- Privacy settings
- Targeting of online content

Content risks:

- Abuse (online)
- Challenges [to do something and post about it]
- Content which incites hate, violence
- Fake profiles
- Grooming
- Live streaming

- Pornography
- Unsafe communication
- Discriminatory content targeting all protected characteristics:
  - Racist content, language, symbols
  - Homophobic, biphobic, transphobic content
  - Misogynistic and sexist content
  - Ableist content and disability hate speech.
  - Religious hate speech and discrimination
  - Content promoting harmful gender stereotypes.

Contact risks:

- Impact on confidence (including body confidence)
- Impact on quality of life, physical and mental health, and relationships
- Online vs. offline behaviours
- Reputational damage
- Suicide, self-harm and eating disorders.
- Harassment and bullying related to protected characteristics.
- Outing of LGBTQ+ individuals
- Image-based abuse and non-consensual sharing
- Sexual harassment and gender-based violence

Equality in online safety teaching

All online safety teaching will:

- Be delivered in age-appropriate and developmentally sensitive ways.
- Be accessible to all pupils including those with learning disabilities (simplified language, visual supports, concrete examples)
- Represent diverse pupils and experiences in examples and case studies.
- Be culturally sensitive and inclusive.
- Address specific risks faced by pupils with protected characteristics.

- Promote positive use of technology to celebrate diversity and access support.
- Challenge discrimination and promote equality.
- Teach digital citizenship that includes respect for all protected characteristics.

Specific equality content includes:

- Understanding protected characteristics and the Equality Act 2010
- Recognizing and challenging online discrimination across all protected characteristics
- Understanding minority stress and its impact on mental health
- Consent, healthy relationships, and respect in digital spaces.
- Gender stereotypes and their reinforcement online
- Critical evaluation of discriminatory content and algorithms
- Being an active ally and upstander
- Celebrating diversity online
- Accessing support for identity-related concerns

Online safety is accessed as part of tutor time activities and assemblies as well as online safety events – such as Safer Internet Day and Anti-Bullying Week.

7. Training

A programme of online safety training opportunities is available for staff including:

- Whole staff training
- Online training opportunities (for example Online Safety Support courses)
- External CPD courses, accredited CPD courses (for example CEOP) and Coordinator training

Equality and diversity in online safety training

All online safety training will include:

Understanding protected characteristics and online experiences:

- How protected characteristics affect online experiences and risks.
- Specific vulnerabilities faced by pupils with protected characteristics.
- Intersectionality and compounded discrimination online

Recognizing discrimination and hate speech:

- Racist content, language, symbols, and microaggressions
- Homophobic, biphobic, and transphobic content and behaviour
- Misogyny, sexism, and gender-based harassment
- Ableist content and disability discrimination
- Religious hate speech and discrimination
- Recognizing subtle and overt forms of discrimination

Responding to incidents:

- Appropriate, sensitive responses to incidents affecting pupils with protected characteristics.
- Supporting victims of online discrimination
- Protecting confidentiality (particularly for LGBTQ+ pupils)
- Working with specialist organisations
- Balancing safeguarding with privacy and respect for identity

Legal duties:

- Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty
- Data protection and privacy for pupils with protected characteristics
- Prevent Duty and balancing with religious freedom.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

Accessibility and inclusion:

- Making online safety teaching accessible to pupils with disabilities
- Adapting communication for pupils with communication needs
- Ensuring equal access to technology and online learning
- Cultural sensitivity in online safety provision

Unconscious bias:

- Recognizing unconscious bias in digital spaces
- Avoiding stereotyping based on protected characteristics
- Ensuring equitable monitoring and filtering

Positive practice:

- Using technology to celebrate diversity
- Promoting digital citizenship that includes respect for all.
- Creating inclusive online learning environments

Specialist training

The DSL and DDSL will receive specialist training on:

- Advanced safeguarding for pupils with protected characteristics
- LGBTQ+ online safety and mental health risks
- Racial trauma and supporting pupils experiencing online racism.
- Cultural competence in online safety
- Disability and online safety
- Working with diverse families
- Coordinating with specialist support organisations

All staff will receive annual updates on:

- Emerging online risks for pupils with protected characteristics
- Changes to legislation and guidance
- New technologies and platforms
- Incidents and lessons learned.
- Best practice in inclusive online safety

Signatures:	
Headteacher:	
Chair of Governors:	