



EDClass

Anti - Bullying

Policy

POL070

Issue number 2

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EDClass Anti - Bullying Policy

Overview and Operational Context

EDClass provides accredited, alternative online provision designed to support the education and reintegration of learners who cannot access mainstream settings. This includes learners navigating:

- ✓ Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) and school phobia
- ✓ Mental health conditions (e.g., acute anxiety, depression)
- ✓ Medical and physical health conditions
- ✓ Behavioural interventions, Internal Alternative Provision (IAP), isolation, off-site packages, and suspensions (fixed-term exclusions)

Zero-Peer-Interaction Architecture

The EDClass platform is built on a proprietary isolated architectural design to structurally prevent peer-on-peer bullying, harassment, and digital victimisation:

- ✓ **No Learner-to-Learner Visibility:** No learner on the platform can see, hear, message, or identify any other learner.
- ✓ **Proprietary Environment:** EDClass does not run through third-party video software or open public networks. All interactions, live virtual classrooms, and support channels operate strictly one-to-one (teacher-to-learner) through our own purpose build teaching, wellbeing and safeguarding platform.
- ✓ **Full Session Logging:** Every live stream, webcam feed, text interaction, and academic submission is captured, time-stamped, and archived for safeguarding and auditing purposes.

The Modern Threat Landscape

While our platform architecture eliminates in-platform peer bullying, learners remain vulnerable to:

- ✓ External cyberbullying, social media harassment, or community intimidation that impacts their mental health and attendance while remote.
- ✓ Inappropriate, abusive, or discriminatory behaviour directed toward EDClass teaching or pastoral staff.
- ✓ Bullying disclosures regarding historical or ongoing peer abuse occurring within their commissioning school or local community.

EDClass ensures all learners receive a safe, equitable, and supportive educational experience aligned with Key Stage 2 through Key Stage 4 curriculum standards, safeguarding them from disadvantage relative to their mainstream peers.

Statutory Framework and Legislation

This policy complies with all relevant legislation and statutory guidance, including:

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (Duty to prevent bullying)
- Education Act 2011
- Equality Act 2010 (Protected characteristics and public sector equality duty)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) (Statutory guidance on child-on-child abuse)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children
- Protection from Harassment Act 1997
- Malicious Communications Act 1988
- Communications Act 2003 (Section 127)
- Children Act 1989 and Children Act 2004
- Public Order Act 1986 and Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994
- DfE Guidance: *Preventing and Tackling Bullying*

Definition of bullying

EDClass aligns with the Department for Education (DfE) definition: Bullying is behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally.

Bullying is not an occasional disagreement, isolated argument, or falling out between peers. It is characterised by a systematic imbalance of power, premeditation, and persistence.

Specific Examples of bullying

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| - Emotional | = someone being unfriendly, tormenting and teasing |
| - Verbal | = name calling, spreading rumours, making fun of someone |
| - Physical | = pushing, kicking, hitting, biting and spitting |
| - Racial | = racial taunts, making fun of culture, colour, creed or religion |
| - Sexual | = unwanted physical contact |
| - Homophobic | = because of/or focusing on the issues of sexuality |
| - Transphobic bullying | = Behaviour or language that makes a child or young person feel unwelcome or marginalised because of their perceived or actual gender identity |
| - Coercive behaviour | = a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim |
| - Online/cyber | = setting up hate websites, offensive text messages, and emails |

Bullying is not the occasional falling out with friends or the odd silly joke. It is something done on several occasions with the intention of upsetting or harming the victim

Roles and Responsibilities

- ✓ **Head of Safeguarding (Kim) / DSL:** Has executive ownership over safeguarding, child-on-child abuse protocols, and external multi-agency liaison. The Head of Safeguarding holds operational seniority over the SEND department regarding risk interventions and child welfare.
- ✓ **Deputy DSLs and Pastoral Team:** Monitor live platform logs, process instant welfare alerts, triage student distress, and coordinate evidence packages for partner schools.
- ✓ **Online Tutors and Support Staff:** Model respectful, trauma-informed communication at all times; challenge any inappropriate or discriminatory language immediately; log all disclosures on the internal safeguarding register.
- ✓ **Commissioning Schools / Local Authorities:** Retain statutory responsibility for on-roll learners; collaborate with EDClass to act upon evidence packs, implement local behaviour sanctions, and facilitate reintegration plans.

Prevention Strategies

Architectural and Platform Safeguards

- ✓ **Enforced Learner Isolation:** Zero shared spaces, forums, group chats, or peer directories.
- ✓ **Automated Keyword and Content Filtering:** Real-time linguistic filtering screens chat consoles for offensive phrases, self-harm language, threats, and hate speech.
- ✓ **Rotational Seat Integrity:** For schools rotating access (e.g., using a single seat across multiple pupils for inclusion, part-time timetables, or isolation), profiles and pastoral logs remain isolated by specific learner ID rather than generic seat logins.

Curricular and Cultural Interventions

- ✓ **PSHE and Pastoral Modules:** Direct instruction embedded across the curriculum addressing healthy relationships, digital citizenship, online footprints, and emotional resilience.
- ✓ **Praise Culture:** Rewarding positive academic engagement, effort, and respectful interactions with educators through positive reinforcement.
- ✓ **Trauma-Informed Staff:** Staff are trained to work with vulnerable learners who may express defensiveness or past trauma through frustration, redirecting behaviour without labelling the child.

Incident Response and Escalation Workflow

When a learner discloses external bullying, exhibits trauma from past harassment, or displays abusive behaviour toward staff during a session:

Stage 1: Identification and Detection

The process starts the moment an incident or disclosure surfaces on the platform. Because EDClass operates remotely, this detection occurs through digital touchpoints rather than a physical classroom:

- ✓ A direct comment or cry for help in a one-to-one live text chat.
- ✓ Visual indicators or background events caught on a learner's webcam.
- ✓ Verbal remarks or distress picked up over the audio feed.
- ✓ An automated keyword flag triggered by the platform's linguistic monitoring system.
- ✓ A written disclosure embedded within an uploaded assignment, worksheet, or pastoral check-in.

Stage 2: Immediate De-escalation and Reassurance

The staff member working with the learner responds in real time with a trauma-informed, supportive approach:

- ✓ **Listen Neutrally:** Allow the learner to speak or type freely without leading questions, judgment, or interruption.
- ✓ **Reassure:** Validate their courage in speaking up, letting them know they did the right thing by sharing what is happening.
- ✓ **Manage Boundaries:** Remind the learner gently that absolute confidentiality cannot be kept because staff have a duty of care to ensure they are safe and supported.
- ✓ **Capture Exact Detail:** Note down the precise words spoken or written, specific time codes, and factual observations rather than assumptions or personal opinions.

Stage 3: Immediate Internal System Logging

The staff member converts their notes into a formal internal safeguarding record without delay:

- ✓ The report is entered into the platform's safeguarding and behaviour logging system within **one hour** of the event.
- ✓ The alert is routed directly to the Head of Safeguarding (Kim) and the on-duty Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- ✓ This creates a permanent, time-stamped audit trail tied to the learner's individual profile, not a generic seat login.

Stage 4: Evidence Compilation and Digital Packaging

Before external notifications are made, the operational safeguarding team preserves the digital evidence to support statutory investigations:

- ✓ Raw, unedited video and audio recordings of the session are extracted.
- ✓ Full time-stamped text chat logs and submitted lesson files are downloaded.
- ✓ Technical audit records (IP details, session duration, login timestamps) are attached to ensure chain-of-custody integrity for external agencies or the police.

Stage 5: Multi-Agency Liaison and Commissioning School Escalation

Because the commissioning school, academy trust, or local authority holds statutory responsibility for the child on roll:

- ✓ The EDClass Head of Safeguarding (Kim) or DDSL formally contacts the commissioning school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and pastoral lead.
- ✓ The compiled evidence dossier and factual report are securely transferred to the school for their records and follow-up.
- ✓ A joint strategy is agreed upon between EDClass and the home school regarding ongoing online attendance and pastoral welfare monitoring.

Stage 6: Severity Triage and Action Pathways

Depending on the gravity, threat level, and context of the incident, the case diverges into one of two operational pathways:

Pathway A: Low to Medium Severity Used for matters such as minor disputes, external online friendship drama, or early signs of disengagement:

- ✓ **School Follow-up:** The home school's pastoral team conducts direct check-ins with the learner and contacts their parents/carers.
- ✓ **Platform Monitoring:** EDClass teachers are briefed to provide heightened pastoral support and vigilance during subsequent live sessions.
- ✓ **Provision Adjustments:** Timetables, session lengths, or seat rotations are adapted to maintain the learner's emotional stability and support eventual reintegration.

Pathway B: High Severity or Criminal Threshold

Used when there is an immediate risk of significant harm, threats to life, hate crime, sexual harassment, blackmail, or illegal communications:

- ✓ **Statutory Strategy Meetings:** Immediate referral into a multi-agency Section 47 enquiry alongside Children's Social Care.
- ✓ **Police Escalation:** Formal reporting to law enforcement under relevant legislation (such as the Malicious Communications Act, Protection from Harassment Act, or Communications Act).
- ✓ **Safeguarding Partnership Activation:** Direct coordination with the Local Authority Safeguarding Children Partnership and the home school to implement rapid protective interventions.

Zero-Tolerance in Live Environments and Group Sessions

EDClass enforces a strict **zero-tolerance stance toward any form of bullying, harassment, intimidation, derogatory language, or discriminatory behaviour across all live provision.**

While our primary platform architecture is built around isolated one-to-one delivery, where any collaborative learning, interactive cohort work, or group sessions take place:

- ✓ **Absolute Zero Tolerance:** Bullying of any kind—whether verbal, written in live chat, visual via webcam feeds, or implied through non-verbal gestures—will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

- ✓ **Immediate Removal and Sanctions:** Any learner engaging in behaviour that belittles, excludes, harasses, or intimidates a peer or member of staff will be removed from the live session immediately by the hosting teacher or support staff.
- ✓ **Referral to Commissioning School:** Incidents in group or live settings are immediately logged as high-priority behavioural breaches and formally escalated to the commissioning school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and pastoral leads alongside raw, unedited session logs.

Live Teaching and Anti-Bullying Safeguards

During all live academic instruction:

- ✓ **Staff-Moderated Communication:** All live chat consoles and interactive workspaces are continuously moderated by qualified teaching staff.
- ✓ **Strict Communication Boundaries:** Learners may only use chat and audio functions for academic engagement and teacher-directed learning. Off-topic, personal, or passive-aggressive comments toward others are flagged instantly.
- ✓ **Immediate Intervention:** Teachers are empowered to mute microphones, disable student chat consoles, or terminate video streams instantly if an individual attempts to undermine, tease, or disrupt another learner's education.
- ✓ **Permanent Session Capture:** All live teaching sessions are fully recorded and archived. This ensures an incontrovertible visual and auditory audit trail to investigate any reported unkindness, exclusion, or conflict.

Live Support (EDSupport) and Anti-Bullying Protocols

The **EDSupport** environment provides continuous real-time academic, behavioural, and pastoral assistance:

- ✓ **Safe Reporting Haven:** EDSupport acts as a secure, immediate channel for learners to report bullying experienced outside the platform (e.g., historical incidents at their mainstream school, community harassment, or external social media abuse).
- ✓ **De-escalation and Reassurance:** EDSupport staff are trained in trauma-informed de-escalation. When a learner contacts support in distress, staff listen neutrally, document the facts in the student's own words, and never dismiss allegations as minor banter.
- ✓ **Protection of Support Staff:** Tutors and pastoral staff providing live support have the right to work in an environment free from hostility. Any abusive, profane, sexually inappropriate, or threatening messages directed at support workers will result in immediate session isolation, logging, and home school intervention under the *Behaviour and Sanctions Policy*.

Protocol for EDClass Staff on EDSupport:

- ✓ **Immediate Support:** Listen calmly, take the disclosure seriously, and reassure the learner that they were right to speak up.

- ✓ **Clear Boundaries on Confidentiality:** Remind the learner gently that disclosures cannot be kept secret because staff have a legal duty to protect them.
- ✓ **Capture Evidence:** Secure chat logs, screen captures, and exact time indexes of video streams.
- ✓ **Log Incident:** File a formal Safeguarding and Behaviour Incident entry immediately.
- ✓ **School Handover:** Transmit the formal referral and evidence pack to the commissioning school's main point of contact and DSL for investigation within their physical setting or local community.
- ✓ **Support Follow-Up:** Maintain an ongoing pastoral watch during future online sessions to support the learner's emotional stability.

Live Wellbeing and Pastoral Protection

Learners accessing EDClass frequently do so due to acute anxiety, Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), SEND needs, or prior trauma from severe bullying in mainstream environments. Our **Live Wellbeing** provision safeguards these vulnerabilities:

- ✓ **Psychologically Safe Spaces:** Wellbeing check-ins and pastoral support sessions are engineered to eliminate performance pressure, anxiety, and fear of judgment.
- ✓ **Safe Expression and Anonymity:** In any multi-learner wellbeing activity or themed workshop, strict platform controls (including anonymous participation handles and disabled public peer-to-peer messaging) are maintained so that no learner can be targeted, singled out, or exposed to scrutiny by peers.
- ✓ **Proactive Wellbeing Flagging:** If a student reveals in a live wellbeing session that bullying is the root cause of their school avoidance, self-harm ideation, or mental health decline, staff initiate an immediate safeguarding notification to the **Head of Safeguarding (Kim)** and the home school DSL to ensure rapid wrap-around care.

Zero-Tolerance Expectations: Learner-to-Staff Abuse

While learners cannot interact with one another, EDClass maintains a firm duty of care toward its employees:

- ✓ Any abusive, sexually explicit, racially aggravated, or threatening behaviour targeted at EDClass teachers or support staff will trigger immediate session termination.
- ✓ Incidents will be logged under the **EDClass Behaviour and Sanctions Policy**.
- ✓ Evidence (video and text logs) will be issued to the commissioning school leadership immediately, requiring school-level disciplinary sanctions prior to platform access resumption.

Guidance for Learners and Parents/Carers

If you are experiencing bullying outside of EDClass (in your community, from your previous school, or online):

- ✓ **Use the Platform Alert:** You can notify your EDClass teacher in your one-to-one chat at any point. Our staff are here to listen and help you.

- ✓ **Keep the Evidence:** Do not delete nasty messages, texts, or screenshots. Save them so adults can take action.
- ✓ **Do Not Suffer in Silence:** Bullying thrives on secrecy. If you find it hard to say out loud, write it in your live chat window to your teacher.
- ✓ **Independent Confidential Support:**
 - **Childline:** 0800 1111 (Free, 24/7 confidential support)
 - **The Mix:** Free support for under-25s via text (Text THEMIX to 85258)

Information for Parents and Carers

- ✓ **Watch for Warning Signs:** Changes in sleeping patterns, sudden anxiety, reluctance to log on, or acute distress when receiving phone notifications.
- ✓ **Listen Without Blame:** Reassure your child that the bullying is not their fault. Record names, dates, platforms, and frequencies of incidents.
- ✓ **Contact the Commissioning School:** Reach out to the pastoral head or DSL at your child's home school to formally report incidents occurring outside the home.
- ✓ **Liaise with EDClass:** Inform our pastoral team so our online teachers can provide additional sensitivity and monitor wellbeing during live sessions.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing

Staff cannot promise absolute confidentiality to any learner seeking help. In line with **KCSIE**, staff must explain that information will need to be shared with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the commissioning school to keep the learner safe.

Judgments regarding third-party referrals depend on:

- ✓ The severity of the harm and vulnerability of the young person.
- ✓ The child's age, maturity, and capacity.
- ✓ The presence of external criminal offences (e.g., blackmail, extortion, sexual abuse, or hate crime).

All referrals are managed strictly in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Monitoring, Equality and Quality Assurance

- ✓ **Annual Review:** This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Safeguarding (Kim) and the Senior Leadership Team.
- ✓ **Equality Commitment:** In accordance with the Equality Act 2010, EDClass ensures that prejudice-based incidents targeting protected characteristics receive immediate escalation and rigorous reporting.
- ✓ **Audit Trail:** Termly reporting is conducted on all logged incidents, tracking pastoral outcomes and working alongside commissioning schools to ensure effective long-term reintegration.